2018 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report

A presentation to: Joint Advisory Group
By: Miguel Jiménez Pont, Head Independent Evaluation Unit
Date: 10 July 2018
Sixth edition of the AESR

Purpose:
- convey the critical learning points generated through evaluation
- generate informed debate

Scope:
- 10 recently completed evaluations (within April 2017 – March 2018)
- 12 Project Completion Reports (projects ending in 2017)

Variety of sources and contexts:
- different types of evaluation
- heterogeneous projects with varying budgets ($347 K to $5.5 MM), and diverse context and roles for ITC support
- majority of projects evaluated were launched before 2015
Key learning theme of sustainability

Work in progress:
• performance: relevance and effectiveness > efficiency, sustainability and impact
• sustainability: a repeated focus of discussion of past AESRs
• better each year but not yet at the required level of satisfaction

What works well:
• ITC’s comparative advantage: recognized as a reliable, technically competent partner
• improvements in SMEs’ marketing capacity, exports and competitiveness
• uptake and absorption by TISIs as good practice, through training, coaching and information systems development

What needs improvement:
• need for better support and engagement strategy for longer-term results
• major challenge continues to be project implementation duration
• fostering ownership, is essential for ensuring sustainability
Challenges affecting sustainability

inception/launch:
- overly ambitious objectives, weak initial buy-in by either beneficiaries or other stakeholders, insufficient appreciation of local conditions

implementation:
- shortcomings in quality of engagements of implementing partners and beneficiaries, weaknesses in coordination, and/or the failure to harness local capacity/leveraging opportunities
- decisive factors, their fulfilment is necessary to address the myriad of other challenges that traditionally emerge during the course of a project

changes required of beneficiaries and partners:
- often formidable involving transformation in multiple dimensions, economic, social, cultural and political
- multitude of small, interrelated changes and adaptive innovations, where failure in any one part can affect others
Lessons learned

• Sustainability is rooted in local ownership and local long-term commitment
• Continuous appreciation of local conditions, capacities and relationships is essential
• Beneficiaries and partners’ context is often uncertain, innovation cycle is complex and risky, change takes time
• Beneficiaries and partners are in essence, ‘start ups’
• Risk and contingency planning is key
• Stay focused on the successful transfer of capacity, skills and competencies to beneficiaries and partners
Incentivize innovation in projects in a more widespread and systematic way

Further strengthening the programmatic approach:
  • integration of innovation in project design
  • more effectively measuring/assessing local ownership

Flexibility in implementation:
  • continuous attention and adaption to local conditions, beneficiaries and partners
  • innovation criteria used for the allocation of resources

Skills and perspective:
  • less the scientist/engineer and more the social innovator/entrepreneur
  • innovation leadership training for project managers
  • entrepreneurship and innovation leadership dimension in HR systems

Innovation-enabling framework:
  • innovation cycle that goes beyond the limits of the project cycle
  • project framed within larger, longer-term local ownership perspective
  • indications that ITC is heading in this direction - funders, partners and beneficiaries also have a role to play