



International  
Trade  
Centre

EVALUATION REPORT

---

# Evaluation of ITC's Work on Agricultural Value Chains

---

Independent Evaluation Unit

February 2024

This evaluation report makes reference to the following SDGs:



## EVALUATION OF ITC'S WORK ON AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. ITC is the only international agency dedicated to the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Formed in 1964, ITC is the focal point for trade-related technical assistance within the United Nations system.

For all of ITC's interventions, evaluation is a key instrument to ensure accountability against expected results and to support organizational learning. Evaluations inform ITC's decision-making in policy, programme and project management, with the purpose of improving performance and enhancing ITC's contributions towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The ITC Independent Evaluation Unit has carried out this evaluation under its 2023 Work Programme and is responsible for this publication.

[www.intracen.org/evaluation](http://www.intracen.org/evaluation)

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Trade Centre concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Mention of company names or commercial products does not imply endorsement by the International Trade Centre. This document has not been formally edited.

# Contents

Acronyms.....	I
<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>1. Introduction and methodology .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Context, purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation.....	1
1.2 Evaluation process and approach.....	2
1.3 Data collection .....	4
1.4 Limitations.....	4
<b>2. Global context and programme overview .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Global context.....	6
2.2 ITC's agricultural value chain support and areas of action .....	7
2.3 Funding of ITC's work on agricultural value chains .....	8
2.4 Geographical scope of ITC's agricultural value chain interventions.....	8
2.5 The theory of change .....	10
<b>3. Findings.....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Relevance.....	12
3.2 Effectiveness .....	19
3.3 Cross-cutting themes .....	34
3.4 Efficiency and Coherence .....	39
3.5 Sustainability.....	46
<b>4. Lessons and good practices.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>5. Conclusions and recommendations.....</b>	<b>52</b>
5.1 Conclusions .....	52
5.2 Recommendations .....	56
5.3 Evidence trail of findings, conclusions and recommendations .....	59
Annex A: List of projects .....	62
Annex B: Evaluation matrix .....	65
Annex C: Bibliography.....	69
Annex D: List of interviews.....	72
Annex E: Site visits .....	80
Annex F: Project duration and budget .....	81
Annex G: OECD sector (ITC projects) .....	82
Annex H: Contribution to SDGs – Selected Projects .....	83
Annex I: Examples of Export Strategies in the Agriculture Sector.....	84
Annex J: ODA to Agriculture in 2021 – Top 15.....	85
Annex K: Number of projects and budget by Section .....	86
Annex L: ITC Country engagement .....	87

## Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AESR	Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank
ARISE+	ASEAN Regional Integration Support by the EU Plus
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BSO	Business support organization
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CCITF	Consultative Committee of ITC Trust Fund
CHED	Cocoa Health and Extension Department
COCOBOD	Ghana Cocoa Board
COTED	Council for Trade and Economic Development
CRIG	Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESG	Environmental, social and governance
EU	The European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
FSSC	Food Safety System Certification
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GRASP	Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
ITC	International Trade Centre
KKFU	Kuapa Kokoo Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union
LDC	Least developed country
LLDC	Land-locked developing country
LMIC	Low-middle income country
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit (ITC)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ITC	International Trade Centre

---

MARKUP	Market Access Upgrade Programme
MSME	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NTF V	The Netherlands Trust Fund - Phase V
SAAVI	Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
T4SD	Trade for Sustainable Development
TBT	Trade Barriers to Trade
TISI	Trade and Investment Support Institutions
WTO	World Trade Organization
UKTP	United Kingdom Trade Partnerships
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WACOMP	West Africa Competitiveness Programme
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

# Evaluation of ITC's Work on Agricultural Value Chains

Independent Evaluation Unit, International Trade Centre

## Executive summary

### Introduction and methodology

1. The International Trade Centre (ITC) supports sustainable and inclusive livelihoods by boosting the competitiveness of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), placing trade-led growth at the centre of public policy, and building supportive ecosystems in developing countries.<sup>1</sup> Central to ITC's mission is to connect MSMEs to value chains. One of the five impact areas defined in ITC's [Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) is the "Sustainable and resilient value chains."
2. Projects to support agricultural value chains make up a large part of ITC's activities. The projects supporting agricultural value chains are diverse in approach, scope, and focus. In the second half of 2022, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) launched the *Evaluation of ITC's Work on the Agricultural Value Chains* to provide a **comprehensive overview of the ITC portfolio in this area and to assess the quality and effectiveness of related activities.**<sup>2</sup>
3. The **scope** of the evaluation encompasses all projects providing support to agricultural value chains. The timeframe includes the entire period of the last [Strategic Plan 2018–2021](#), starting January 1, 2018, to June 30, 2022.<sup>3</sup> The **intended users** of the evaluation include ITC staff, particularly those working in supporting agricultural value chains, and ITC Senior Management to make informed organizational decisions and management in relation to ITC's strategic approach in general and specifically to support agricultural value chains
4. The evaluation adopted a participatory and collaborative approach to ensure that it is utilization-focused and, at the same time, results (outcome) oriented. The evaluation used a mixed-method approach. Desk review (including corporate and project documents and relevant literature), semi-structured interviews (in-person and virtual), an online survey (of national project coordinators of selected projects), case studies (of selected projects), semi-structured interviews and site visits were used to collect data. A total of 227 stakeholders were interviewed (30% women and 70% men). Country missions were undertaken to Ghana (multiple projects) and Pakistan (largest single-country project). A mission to Geneva was also conducted to interview ITC stakeholders.<sup>4</sup>
5. The evaluation faced challenges, including the lack of systematic tracking of results on value chain indicators (related to the lack of a programmatic approach). With several ongoing projects, assessing outcomes and sustainability proved to be a challenge. Also, the availability of data on financial and human resources, including the scope and extent of the specific involvement of members of project teams, was a constraint to addressing some of the evaluation questions, as desired. In corporate evaluations, even if it is thematic, the scope expands to look into the impact of various organizational aspects on the portfolio. Limited donor discussions also constrained the evaluation. The evaluation made efforts to mitigate the limitations to the extent feasible.

### Global context and programme overview

6. Agriculture is a critical sector within the global economy, specifically in low-middle-income countries (LMICs). The [World Bank data](#) indicates that agriculture accounted for 15.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in LMICs, employing over half the labour force in these countries. Food and agriculture trade expanded rapidly in the new

<sup>1</sup> ITC (2022). Strategic Plan 2022-2025, p22.

<sup>2</sup> Although the purpose of the evaluation was not explicitly articulated in the Terms of Reference, the underlying purpose of the evaluation as clarified by IEU at the time of drafting the report is to provide clarity on the work done by ITC to support agricultural value chains and provide a basis for a structured approach to this portfolio of interventions carried out by various Divisions in ITC. The preliminary work during inception phase provided a comprehensive overview of the ITC portfolio of agricultural value chain interventions between 2018 and mid-2022. This evaluation is both formative and summative in nature to provide a strategic diagnostic (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) that could guide ITC Management to further strategize on support to agricultural value chain interventions as well as funders in their support to ITC.

<sup>3</sup> All projects identified as contributing to the "sustainable value chain" ITC impact area and then to the "agricultural sector" in the ITC Project Portal with a start date of January 1, 2018, or later up to June 30, 2022, were selected.

<sup>4</sup> Missions to Geneva and Ghana was done during March – April 2023. The Pakistan in-country data collection was done in June 2023.

millennium, catalyzed by trade liberalization at multilateral and regional levels. More countries trade with each other. Emerging economies have become important players, and low-income countries are better integrated into global markets.<sup>5</sup>

7. Countries have different patterns of engagement. At the same time, value chains are extending their reach into domestic markets as retail markets evolve to meet the needs of urban and semi-urban consumers. The global context for agriculture is facing rapid change and increasing inter-connected challenges. Several factors contribute to the changing context: increased and fluctuating food prices resulting in food price inflations, rising demand for commodities and biofuels, changing diets and consumer demands, natural resource degradation, climate change, increased diversification of rural economies and rural-urban linkages, and greater private sector investment. Services have increasingly become an important component of agri-food global value chains and a key driver of domestic value-added growth.
8. The conceptualization of the value chain has evolved and is a multilayered system. In essence, it is a system in which the behaviours and performance of farms and other agrifood enterprises are determined by a complex environment.
9. Sixty percent of the ITC's projects supporting agricultural value chains are between one and four years in duration. The rest, 30%, have more than four years, and another 10% have a duration of less than one year. Six out of ten projects have a single project budget of less than USD 2.5 million;<sup>6</sup> however, they account for only nine percent of the total sector portfolio budget.
10. ITC's agricultural value chain support work is primarily funded and dependent on the European Union (82.7%). South Korea<sup>7</sup> (5.9%) is the second largest and the only major funder outside of Europe (Figure 4). Six European countries (the United Kingdom,<sup>8</sup> the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland) account for another 8.6% of the funding.
11. The primary support focus continues to be in Africa (sub-Saharan) and the Asia-Pacific regions. Sixty-eight percent of the projects and the portfolio budget are concentrated in these two regions. Although ITC's support to agricultural value chains covered several countries, 25 percent (17/68) of the projects in the portfolio were concentrated in seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, two projects (one in Pakistan and the other in Iraq)<sup>10</sup> accounted for 26 percent of the portfolio value.

## Findings

### Relevance

12. ITC's agricultural value chain interventions are relevant and coherent with the **organizational mandate** and strategic objectives. At the same time, **donor priorities**, especially the European Union, play a key role in ITC's work supporting agricultural value chains. ITC's project-oriented support to agricultural value chains broadly **aligns** with the development needs and priorities at the country, regional and global levels. A country/regional programming framework or strategy would help better addressing needs and priorities at country/regional level.
13. ITC has a corporate project design mechanism. Project designs incorporate lessons learned and recommendations from previous phases/projects where viable. Nevertheless, there is a need to **re-engineer the design process to ensure ONE ITC within and among agricultural value chain interventions**. There is also potential to improve local consultations and contextualization in agricultural intervention project designs.
14. Connecting MSMEs to international markets, credibility and experience with the private sector, flexibility, customized offerings, a market-oriented approach, and strong research on trade and public goods and tools are perceived as the **core competitive advantages** for ITC. The strategy to rely more on specialized external consultants rather than on exhaustive technical expertise at the HQ level, combined with fragmented work, large share of

<sup>5</sup> FAO (2022). The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Number of projects with < USD 1 million single project budget is 34%.

<sup>7</sup> KOICA – Korea International Cooperation Agency.

<sup>8</sup> FCDO – Foreign Commonwealth Development Office.

<sup>9</sup> Gambia, Ghana, and Guinea had three projects each, while Eswatini, Senegal, South Sudan and Uganda had two projects in each country. This does not include regional projects.

<sup>10</sup> Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Programme (GRASP) in Pakistan and Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI) in Iraq.

funding from the EU, project-oriented approach and competition are threats to ITC's work on agricultural value chains. **Key opportunities** for ITC include value chains beyond the current agricultural commodities/crops, tapping into other key donors in agriculture, leveraging climate funds, supporting local/regional trade, building on success in post-conflict countries, better synergies in the countries and a more holistic approach to agricultural value chain development at the corporate level.

### *Effectiveness and Impact*

15. **ITC's support to the agricultural value chains has positively contributed to strengthening MSMEs** and increasing their competitiveness through training, coaching, technical assistance, and introduction to buyers/markets. Strengthening MSMEs is at the core of ITC's work on agricultural value chains. ITC's support has increased local sales (e.g. Coconuts II in the Caribbean, PUEDE in Colombia, UKTP Ghana, SAAVI in Iraq, GRASP in Pakistan, Eswatini I and SheTrades West Africa). Higher exports were reported in UKTP Fiji, UKTP/NTF V (Ghana), Eswatini I, and Tajikistan projects. Increased production and/or income for farmers were reported in Colombia (PUEDE), Iraq (SAAVI), Sankofa (Ghana) and Pakistan (GRASP).
16. **ITC's support contributed to varying degrees of improved processes and practices in MSMEs in agricultural value chains.** For example, Rain Forest Alliance 2020/FSSC 22000 certifications in Rwandan and Tanzanian MSMEs due to MARKUP, ISO 9001 certification by a Ghanaian Shea MSME, direct negotiation by farmers with buyers instead of through middlemen and grading of tomato for increased net price in Iraq (SAAVI) and quality and packaging improvement by artisanal chocolatiers in Ghana (UKTP/NTF V).
17. **ITC's access to finance work varies with each project due to a lack of a strategy on what has to be done and what role to play.** Awareness creation has been the focus/key activity of ITC in accessing finance. Nevertheless, positive examples of successful linking of MSMEs with local financial institutions to access finance were noted in UKTP Fiji, UKTP Zimbabwe and MARKUP projects. Digital trade/e-commerce is an emerging area for ITC and MSMEs in agricultural value chains. ITC is currently focused on providing training.
18. **ITC support has strengthened organizations, associations, and networks in the agricultural value chain, leading to improved operational and managerial performance.** Examples include BSOs in East Africa through MARKUP, Kuapa Kokoo Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union Limited in Ghana through Sankofa and NTF V, the Laos Coffee Association through Lao PDR ARISE +, ACRAM (Robusta Coffee Agency for Africa and Madagascar) through ACP and East Africa Community through MARKUP.
19. **Many agricultural value chain projects focused primarily on vertical linkages; however, a few of ITC's agricultural value chain interventions strengthened both horizontal and vertical linkages.** Examples of horizontal and vertical linkages were seen in projects such as SAAVI in Iraq, UKTP Fiji, ACP in Ghana and Coconuts II in the Caribbean. The WTO accession project in Uzbekistan is an example of strengthening horizontal linkages.
20. **A few ITC agricultural value chain projects have strengthened value chain governance<sup>11</sup>** in respective countries. Examples include Coconuts II in the Caribbean (national stakeholder platforms in project countries), SAAVI in Iraq (farmer groups created with a governance structure and committees and formally registered), UKTP Fiji (buyer contracts and crop liens) and National Competitiveness Council in Eswatini.
21. **There is potential to create stronger synergies through agricultural value chain projects. Currently, many projects tend to operate in silos at the country level.** Laos PDR (ARISE+), ACP in Ghana, and Coconuts II are examples that fostered stronger synergies at the country level. In Iraq, SAAVI leveraged synergies at various levels in a fragile humanitarian context to ensure economic value creation. MARKUP, WACOMP and ACP leveraged synergies and collaborations with regional institutions.
22. **ITC engages with diverse partners to mobilize resources and implement agricultural value chain interventions. Partnerships are critical for ITC's success.<sup>12</sup> Corporate guidance is required to define types of partnership at the country level to ensure common understanding.** A few projects with UN agencies, for example, GRASP (Pakistan) with FAO, SAAVI (Iraq), MARKUP and WACOMP with UNIDO. In a few agricultural projects, partnerships were noted with international/regional or specialized institutions such as the International Potato Centre, CARDI, CIRAD and a culinary institute in Spain. Private sector collaborations were noted with Lavazza, Nescafe, Starbucks, PEPSI, and

<sup>11</sup> Value chain governance refers to the relationships among buyers, sellers, service providers and regulatory institutions that operate within or influence the range of activities required to bring a product or service from start to its end use ([www.marketlinks.org](http://www.marketlinks.org)).

<sup>12</sup> Discussions primarily focus on partnerships at the country level (not the funders).



Carrefour. Strategically, the primary relationship with the Government is through the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce. Although there is an increasing number of projects addressing production, the relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture is still at a nascent stage in many countries.

23. **Interventions in the policy and regulatory environment are limited and an area of improvement for agricultural value chain projects.** Only 53% of the agricultural value chain projects contribute to the outcome – “a more conducive policy and regulatory environment.” While a few projects support the development of policies and strategies, as in GRASP (Pakistan) and SAAVI (Iraq), most of the national export strategy development work is done at the corporate level and forms the foundation of trade-related assistance. ITC's agricultural projects tend not link to this corporate work directly. At the corporate level, the World Export Development Forum is an annual flagship event and is also involved in global policy platforms such as Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence.
24. **Despite the positive contributions of some agricultural value chain projects, understanding about the importance of non-tariff measures<sup>13</sup> in trade within ITC varies,** and this was viewed as a bottleneck for better integration of non-tariff measures in agricultural value chain projects. Much of the work on non-tariff measures seen in agriculture in agricultural value chain projects is on quality, TBT/SPS and certification work, primarily carried out by the Quality Team as project managed by them or as components of other projects. Most agricultural value chain interventions do not leverage ITC's corporate-level work/strengths on non-tariff measures.
25. **Work on trade facilitation and reforms on cross-border trade is limited in agricultural value chain projects.** It is primarily done at the corporate level and is only leveraged by some regional projects. A few agricultural value chain projects contributed to the development of quality strategies/standards in countries.
26. In the past, ITC had dedicated South-South cooperation/trade projects. However, **South-South trade and regional integration are currently only a component or activity of primarily regional/multi-country agricultural value chain projects.** Past projects solely focused on South-South trade, such as the Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa project, facilitated investments between SMEs in India and Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda and Partnerships for Investment and Growth in Africa project, promoted investment and business partnerships in agro-processing sectors in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Zambia.
27. **There is a need for agricultural value chain projects to better leverage ITC's corporate-level work, tools, public goods and resources on business trade development and market intelligence.** Trade intelligence and public goods are the expertise of ITC; however, only 31% of the agricultural value chain projects contribute to "improved business trade and market intelligence."
28. **Agricultural value chain projects may, in the long term, contribute to the impact envisaged by ITC; however, establishing and measuring transformative change requires longer time commitment and evaluation approaches for which ITC is not currently resourced to undertake.** The nature of ITC's support to agricultural value chains also affects impact due to the short-natured and smaller projects that are sometimes spread thin. Also, many projects work only in specific nodes in a value chain, which does not mean the development of a value chain. In agricultural value chain development projects, it is often difficult to link outcome and impact with activities and scale of sustainability and impact due to the complexity of value chains.

#### *Cross-cutting themes*

29. **Inclusiveness addressed varies among projects across dimensions in agricultural value chain interventions.** While ITC has a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, gender equality and women's empowerment framework and various tools developed by the SheTrades initiative, there is little evidence of these resources/tools being used in most agricultural value chain projects. Portfolio analysis indicated that only 5% of the projects had gender as a sole purpose, and 44% contributed significantly to the gender dimension. The rest (51%) had limited or no contributions. Even when the project develops gender strategies, they are not sustained or maintained in practice. Gender dimensions highlighted in projects are most often focused on the involvement of women in project and training activities. The focus has been on participation count and the number of women-led enterprises. She Trade West Africa worked with men and women to improve gender dynamics within households and the value chain. A clear picture of the impact on gender was not evident in many ITC agricultural value chain projects.

<sup>13</sup> Non-tariff measures are official policy measures on export and import, other than ordinary tariffs, that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods, quantities traded and/or prices. These consist of mandatory requirements, rules or regulations legally set by the government of the exporting, importing or transit country.

30. Eighty-one percent of the agricultural value chain project indicated limited or no contribution to the youth dimension. However, positive examples were found, including SAAVI in Iraq, UKTP Fiji, MARKUP in East Africa, NTF V Tech Sector and INTEGRA in Gambia. While few projects have applied a rights-based approach (e.g., Thailand ARISE+ and SAAVI), there is limited evidence of projects addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. The project in Uganda focused on child labour.
31. **ITC's work on environmental sustainability in agricultural value chain interventions is fragmented and is usually one of the project activities and not mainstreamed.** ITC's methodology on climate change related risks and opportunities for SMEs in the agri-food trade could provide a useful framework for mainstreaming. ITC has a generic mainstreaming manual; however, a key limitation is the absence of guidelines for environmental assessment or mainstreaming of environmental sustainability/climate action aspects in agricultural value chain projects.

### *Efficiency and Coherence*

32. **The growth of the number, the complexity, and the size of projects has not been supported with technical capacity in ITC in the way of staff (even within specialized units). Adequate technical capacity is essential to support the agricultural value chain and the agri-food sector interventions to carve a niche and be competitive to achieve transformative results.** Instead, ITC has increasingly and primarily focused on project management expertise at HQ level. It was observed that when specific value chain experts have retired, ITC's strategy has been to increasingly rely on external expert consultants (including for projects in cocoa and farming) and not replace the expertise. External experts can sometimes be more knowledgeable of the local contexts and of the specificities of the value chains, however ITC should ensure adequate technical expertise at the HQ level. Similarly, although access to finance was identified as activity in several projects, it did not have an expert from the banking or finance sector.
33. **Project monitoring systems, tools and approaches and result-based management vary among agricultural value chain projects.** All projects have a results framework and log frame; however, there is inconsistency in understanding and the depiction of causal linkages from outputs to outcomes. Also, limited agricultural value chain indicators in project frameworks hinder monitoring and results-based management specific to those aspects of value chain development. Depending on the project budget, some projects may have a dedicated monitoring person, and some projects have third-party monitoring (e.g. GRASP in Pakistan, MARKUP in East Africa, and ACP in Ghana). Some ROMs have reported weak monitoring systems, no M&E strategy and an efficient, robust logical framework. There is a need for corporate guidance.
34. **Project management processes and styles vary in agricultural value chain projects and depend on the project manager.** Either country teams or technical units could manage projects. With agricultural value chain projects becoming more complex with larger budgets compared to 4 to 5 years ago,<sup>14</sup> there is potential to improve through better corporate tools, onboarding and internal coherence in project management.
35. **Internal communication and knowledge management/sharing are not institutionalized.** Personal relations were noted as a critical factor in accessing information and materials. Furthermore, many project-level staff highlighted the lack of knowledge of who does what in ITC or what is available in ITC as there was no such platform.
36. **The project-oriented business model, despite growing the agricultural value chain portfolio, undermines integrated programming and coordination and retention of technical capacity over time. ITC operates in silos, with reference to agricultural value chain interventions.** Eleven Sections led agricultural value chain projects in ITC. Three Sections (DECI/SEC, DCP/OA and DCP/OAP lead 54% of the projects and 63% of the total portfolio value (project budgets). Differentiation among Sections regarding coverage ITC core area in their respective agricultural value chain project is not evident. Despite the agricultural value chain portfolio accounting for more than half of ITC's portfolio, there is no overarching framework for the sector to have a cohesive programming.
37. **Country engagement and UNCT to the agriculture sector support to have a sustainable impact. However, engagement with UNCTs has only gained momentum in recent years and is still a learning process in ITC.** The engagement is through the Country Managers based in Geneva. Representation work is not the mandate of national coordinators or in-country project personnel and is not necessarily their skill set. The personnel in the country also do not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of ITC. Positive experiences of country engagement were

<sup>14</sup> The average project budget is USD 4.5 million, despite 58% of the projects having less than USD 2.5 million in budget.

noted in a couple of exceptional situations where the international staff was based in the country (e.g. Gambia and Lao PDR).

38. **ITC's agricultural value projects use different models and approaches. A few are well-packaged and promoted for visibility.** A participatory approach, bottom-up approach and partnerships were common across various project approaches. There is a general consensus that one model or approach cannot fit all contexts, and that ITC should remain flexible and not push one model. Projects are typically based on broad donor priorities and designed around country needs.
39. **Internal coherence is person-/project manager-dependent and is not institutionalized.** While analysis indicated that, on average, 4.4 Sections were involved in each project, including the lead Section, 10% of the projects did not collaborate with other Sections. DECI/SEC was the most (70%) included Section in projects led by other Sections, followed by DSIT/GIVC (49%) and DCP/OA (45%).<sup>15</sup> The lack of institutionalized platforms/mechanisms and framework and the project-oriented business model of ITC are key factors affecting internal coherence in agricultural value chain projects. In countries with multiple projects, activities and communication with the government should be better coordinated.

### Sustainability

40. **Due to capacity building through agricultural value chain projects, MSMEs have adopted new practices/business processes (including improvement in packaging, product quality, and/or adoption of climate-smart agriculture), committed to investing in the enterprise and trained peers.** In many projects (e.g., UKTP, NTF V, Coconuts II, ACP, Eswatini I, GRASP, and SAAVI), capacity building is provided to existing MSMEs, and therefore, they are likely to continue operations. However, the extent of the use of knowledge and skills may vary among MSMEs. Training MSMEs for certification, part of several ITC agricultural value chain projects, creates awareness; nevertheless, it may not always lead to certification unless there is continued handholding and coaching. ITC's use of training the trainers, quality champions, and lead farmers also facilitates sustainability regarding continuing practices. Access to finance is a constraint for MSMEs in terms of project activities scaling up.
41. **BSOs and local institutions/organizations have positively benefitted through ITC's support of agricultural value chain projects (e.g., commodity/horticultural associations and regional institutions, including Regional Economic Communities).** However, lack of/limited resources (human and financial) may limit the continuation or scale of activities/services post-project. Insufficient evidence is seen in strengthening training/academic institutions in developing training courses that could be availed locally by MSMEs and organizations.
42. **Fragmented contribution to policy and enabling environment affects the sustainability of agricultural value chain results.** A key contribution by ITC is the sector export strategies, mostly done at corporate level non-agricultural projects. However, a coordinated and systematic ITC follow-up post-design is minimal. There is little evidence that agricultural value chain projects directly contribute to implementing export strategies. Quality strategies developed in many countries are another example of an enabling environment; however, in most cases, these are not done under agricultural value chain projects. GRASP in Pakistan and SAAVI in Iraq are projects that have invested in developing sector strategies and policies with project budgets. Some projects have focused on creating an enabling environment, such as the national stakeholder platforms in the Caribbean and WTO accession in Uzbekistan.
43. **Overall, prospects of sustainability vary and are mixed.** Exit strategies (sustainability plans) are not always envisaged and/or incorporated at the design/inception stage of the agricultural value chain projects. There is no post-project monitoring of project outcomes and their sustainability over time. Furthermore, the presence of exit strategies (sustainability plans) in agricultural value chain projects could be anywhere in the continuum of no exit strategies to well-integrated from the design stage and implemented.

### Conclusions

44. **Conclusion 1.** Relevance of portfolio is high in terms of ITC strategic objectives but hampered by short-termism and lack of corporate strategic approach focused on better engagement at the country and regional levels.
45. **Conclusion 2.** The lack of a programmatic approach leads to fragmented work and limitations in terms of planning for relevant internal technical expertise. This could prevent ITC from fully benefiting from emerging opportunities.

<sup>15</sup> This information is based on ITC's Project Portal and does not indicate the extent of collaboration.

46. **Conclusion 3.** Capacities of MSMEs have been strengthened to access markets (particularly for exports) but facilitating access to finance largely remains a pending issue.
47. **Conclusion 4.** In terms of a more supportive business ecosystem for MSMEs, efforts were made to strengthen the capacity of institutions and networks. However, less emphasis was put on value chain governance and on enhancing the relationships among the buyers, sellers, service providers and regulatory institutions.
48. **Conclusion 5.** ITC agricultural value chain projects cannot operate in silos in the country. Stronger synergies, partnerships, and country engagement are critical for the sustainability of ITC's results.
49. **Conclusion 6.** Work on enabling a conducive policy and regulatory environment for MSMEs and enhancing business, trade and market intelligence is primarily carried out on a sector-neutral basis and at the corporate level. However, it is largely inadequate and not leveraged by most projects at the country level.
50. **Conclusion 7:** South-South trade, regional integration and cross-border trade are growing in importance for agricultural value chain development and yet are not the focus of most agricultural value chain projects.
51. **Conclusion 8.** Overall, there are intentions toward inclusiveness in projects, but they do not systematically ensure that the benefits in the value chain are proportionately distributed.
52. **Conclusion 9.** At the country level, whilst some projects have promoted discussions on environmental policies and industry standards most do not appear to have played a pivotal role in this field. Environmental sustainability work is fragmented and not systematically mainstreamed in agricultural value chain projects.
53. **Conclusion 10.** Project monitoring, project management, technical resources, project-oriented business model, internal coherence, internal communication, and knowledge management/sharing remain areas of concern.
54. **Conclusion 11.** The absence of a programmatic approach has led to stand-alone projects and potentially affected internal coherence. Without a shared conceptual framework, the complexity and results of agricultural value chain support cannot be holistically appreciated.
55. **Conclusion 12.** The potential for sustainability is mixed and, at times, uncertain. The capacity-building efforts of MSMEs, BSOs, and local organizations/institutions are great foundations for sustainability while working on policy and enabling the environment through projects is an area to improve. Projects are not designed with sustainability of results/impact in mind, and exit strategies are not common.

## Recommendations

56. Overall, recommendations have been made at an organizational level to ensure that support to the agricultural value chain is holistic with more robust stakeholder engagement, is more synergistic, considers local contextual realities, and is aligned with national priorities.
57. **Recommendation 1: Develop a synergistic and programmatic approach to support a wider range of agricultural value chains to meet priorities and needs at country, regional and international levels.** Value chain development in agriculture requires long-term engagement and multiple-phase support. Project designs should systematically assess the degree of preparedness for value chain support, considering local needs/priorities and previous experience of ITC, the government, and other partners. Based on this, project designs should focus on priorities and approaches for value chain strengthening. Under the UN Reform, the UNSCDF guides the country programming framework (for each agency involved), and ITC should strengthen its use as guidance to identify and address country priorities to support agricultural value chains. ITC should look at/build on the potential to develop and strengthen different value chains (as applicable to the country/region) to develop local and regional markets and trade.
58. **Recommendation 2: In addition to continuing to strengthen MSMEs to access international markets, expand strengthening efforts to MSMEs along the value chain. Be a facilitator and broker to facilitate access to finance for MSMEs.** Attention to value chains should be accompanied by organizational processes and structure, staff capacity/training (for project management and relevant skills and competencies), and technical guidelines. A more systematic approach should be applied to identifying and working across various nodes of the VC considering MSMEs as processors, aggregators, distributors, packers, packaging suppliers, transporters, storage handlers, and service providers (technical and inputs). It is crucial to strengthen MSMEs at various levels (nodes) of the value chain to avoid distortion in the market. Also, many MSMEs could operate in multiple value chains.

59. Access to finance/credit is critical for MSMEs to grow and scale and have multiplier effects across the value chain. While training is important to create awareness or enhance knowledge, getting credit/finance is important for MSMEs in the end. ITC should play a bigger role in acting as a facilitator/broker between financial institutions and MSMEs. It is important for ITC to better articulate its role in de-risking to ensure access to finance. ITC could also explore opportunities to facilitate approaches to value-chain financing.
60. **Recommendation 3: Identify and build stronger synergies and partnerships for sustainable value chain development, particularly at the country level.** ITC works extensively with partners; however it should develop a coherent approach to value chain development to facilitate more coordinated and effective partner engagement. Develop guidance on partnerships and build stronger synergies to guide project developers and project managers. Ensure engagement at different levels of the government for better buy-in in synergies depending on the scope of the project. Building robust strategic partnerships is required for policy work. In addition to working with diverse implementing partners, including research institutions, create synergies with training/academic institutions to ensure continued localized training support even after the project ends. Engage better at the country level for a robust synergy. Building stronger synergies will help leverage technical capacities and resources in the country and build on work already done in the country.
61. **Recommendation 4: Make a deliberate effort to design/implement inclusive agricultural value chain interventions.** Building on the experience of some projects, inclusivity elements should be more systematically incorporated in project design but also effectively mainstreamed during implementation and monitored: Gender analysis in projects should consider intersectional dimensions. Indigenous people, youth, and marginalized and vulnerable people (including refugees) face additional barriers to entering or expanding their trade practices. Projects should address structural causes for inequalities, including social norms and the distribution of economic resources at all levels of a value chain.
62. **Recommendation 5: Strengthen the attention paid to climate-friendly agricultural value chain development.** Environmental sustainability has to be mainstreamed in projects, and this requires further development of corporate-level guidelines tailored to agricultural value chain projects. Climate-friendly value chain development should not only be restricted to climate-smart agriculture or deforestation but also encompass processing, post-harvest losses, storage and handling, transportation, and packaging, among others. Greening agricultural value chains not only requires ITC to mobilize climate funds but also to engage in discussions on environmental policies and/or industry standards.
63. **Recommendation 6: Promote value chain governance and a conducive policy and regulatory environment promoting cross-border trade, South-South trade, and regional integration.** Strengthening policy dialogue is important to enhance the agricultural value chain ecosystem. This means not only having policy dialogue with government officials at the national level but also working together in an integrated manner with other value chain stakeholders in agricultural value chain development. Multistakeholder platforms are an essential feature of value chain governance and development. Value chain governance helps to advocate for appropriate policy and regulatory environments (market, trade, legal and financial) to promote and grow cross-border and South-South trade. Cross-border trade and South-South trade are fast-growing areas. The AfCFTA is a good opportunity for ITC to strengthen regional integration and intra-Africa trade.
64. **Recommendation 7: Develop an overarching corporate framework for agricultural value chain support to serve as a basis for common understanding and to strengthen agricultural value chain programming.** The framework should be developed in a non-biased, consultative, and inclusive manner (involving all divisions, sections and units). The framework should be harmonized with other relevant operational policies and overall objectives of ITC. It should provide a broad framework and not be one carved in stone.
65. The framework could cover the following areas, among others: a) value chains to focus on and which regions; b) work/value addition in the value chains - define in what areas of the value chain ITC will focus on - enabling policy and regulatory environment, markets (local, regional, international), value chain governance, synergies/relationships, distribution, processing, aggregation, production, services (technical, financial, inputs); c) potential categories of partners – strategic/implementing/others; d) potential private sector partners (global/regional companies); e) climate aspects and inclusiveness (to what extent – mainstreamed or an activity); f) potential funding partners; and g) identification of ITC contribution to value chain development.



# 1. Introduction and methodology

## 1.1. Context, purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

### Context

1. The International Trade Centre (ITC) supports sustainable and inclusive livelihoods by boosting the competitiveness of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), placing trade-led growth at the centre of public policy, and building supportive ecosystems in developing countries.<sup>16</sup> Central to ITC's mission is to connect MSMEs to value chains. One of the five impact areas defined in ITC's [Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) is the "Sustainable and resilient value chains."
2. ITC works with various groups and through a range of activities. This includes convening all sector stakeholders and building partnerships along the value chain. At the business ecosystems, regulatory and policy levels, ITC mobilizes policy makers, business support organizations (BSOs)<sup>17</sup> and the private sector to develop strategies and build alliances which are expected to create more value for producers at origin countries. At the enterprise level, ITC reinforces supply and production in view of market opportunities, strengthens managerial practices and drives innovation.
 

For comparability reasons, ITC classifies companies based on the number of full-time employees: micro (0-4), small (5-19), medium (20-99), and large (100 or more). MSMEs are, therefore, companies with less than 100 employees. In the context of specific interventions, ITC may also adopt the national MSME definition if one exists.

Source: SME Competitiveness Outlook 2021.
3. Furthermore, ITC's work includes a focus on rural MSMEs to promote competitiveness and income-risk diversification for smallholder farmers and MSMEs in the context of enhanced sustainable participation in value chains. Given the significance of support to agricultural value chains in ITC, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) envisaged carrying out an evaluation of this area. Building on the guidance of ITC's Senior Management Committee, the IEU has undertaken this evaluation as part of its 2022 work programme, and it has been requested to focus specifically on projects covering the agricultural sector.

### Objectives and scope of the evaluation

4. Projects to support agricultural value chains make up a large part of ITC's activities. The projects supporting agricultural value chains are diverse in approach, scope, and focus (refer to Annex A). In the second half of 2022, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) launched the *Evaluation of ITC's Work on the Agricultural Value Chains to provide a comprehensive overview of the ITC portfolio in this area and to assess the quality and effectiveness of related activities*.<sup>18</sup>
5. Key **objectives** of the evaluation include:
  - Providing a comprehensive overview of the ITC portfolio in agricultural value chain support and the different approaches being used.
  - Determining the relevance of interventions in this area to support the organization's mission and assess which interventions provide the most added value to ITC's work and mandate.
  - Assessing the quality and effectiveness of interventions in this area.

<sup>16</sup> ITC (2022). Strategic Plan 2022-2025, p22.

<sup>17</sup> BSOs are any organization or institution providing support or capacity-building services to businesses and entrepreneurs. ITC recognizes and classifies 18 different types of BSOs (<https://www.itcbenchmarking.org/resources-and-help/client-definitions>).

<sup>18</sup> Although the purpose of the evaluation was not explicitly articulated in the Terms of Reference, the underlying purpose of the evaluation as clarified by IEU at the time of drafting the report is to provide clarity on the work done by ITC to support agricultural value chains and provide a basis for a structured approach to this portfolio of interventions carried out by various Divisions in ITC. The preliminary work during inception phase provided a comprehensive overview of the ITC portfolio of agricultural value chain interventions between 2018 and mid-2022. This evaluation is both formative and summative in nature to provide a strategic diagnostic (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) that could guide ITC Management to further strategize on support to agricultural value chain interventions as well as funders in their support to ITC.

- Providing recommendations as well as lessons learned or examples of good practice that may benefit the design, implementation, and results of activities to ensure deeper sustainable and inclusive development focus in agricultural value chain interventions.
  - Ensuring accountability towards partners and funders by reviewing the organizational performance in this area.
6. The **intended users** of the evaluation include ITC staff, particularly those working in supporting agricultural value chains, and ITC Senior Management to make informed organizational decisions and management in relation to ITC's strategic approach in general and specifically to support agricultural value chains. The evaluation is also envisaged to provide insights into partners and funders.
  7. The scope of the evaluation encompasses all projects providing support to agricultural value chains. The timeframe includes the entire period of the last [Strategic Plan 2018–2021](#), starting January 1, 2018, to June 30, 2022.<sup>19</sup>
  8. This evaluation was planned to be **conducted in two main phases**. In 2022, the inception phase focused on conducting an analysis of ITC's portfolio in agricultural value chain support. In addition, a literature review was conducted summarizing key findings in agricultural value chain support. The portfolio and literature review informed the inception report. In 2023, the second phase of the evaluation was conducted, and this included data collection and analysis, presentations, and the report writing.

## 1.2 Evaluation process and approach

### Approach

9. The evaluation was conducted to enhance organizational learning, improve performance, and support strategic and operational decision-making. The evaluation adapted and followed the Appreciative Inquiry model by seeking to uncover and illustrate the success that can be built on and replicated. At the same time, challenges, barriers, and weaknesses have also been highlighted in the evaluation findings in order to support recommendations and lessons learned.
10. The evaluation process and methodological approach were in line with the principles set forth in the [ITC Evaluation Guidelines](#) (2018). Additionally, the evaluation adhered to the [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (2016) and the [Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#) (2020) published by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).
11. The evaluation adopted a participatory and collaborative approach. The approach was transparent and inclusive to ensure it is utilization-focused, at the same time ensuring that it is results (outcome)-oriented. As part of the approach, the evaluation created an impact pathway for ITC's agricultural value chain support (Figure 5 – Section 2.5).<sup>20</sup>
12. **Key evaluation questions** envisaged for the evaluation include:<sup>21</sup>
  - 1) To what extent is ITC's work on agricultural value chain support relevant to organizational mandate/strategic objectives and national/regional/global needs and priorities?
  - 2) To what extent are ITC's interventions supporting agricultural value chains effective and contributing to impact?

<sup>19</sup> All projects identified as contributing to the "sustainable value chain" ITC impact area and then to the "agricultural sector" in the ITC Project Portal with a start date of January 1, 2018, or later up to June 30, 2022, were selected. The list of projects is provided in Annex A.

<sup>20</sup> This was created to guide the evaluation as there was no framework or programme strategy for the sector in ITC.

<sup>21</sup> Refer to Approach and Methodology Section and Evaluation Matrix (Annex B) for more details, including sub-questions.

- 3) To what extent does ITC have the necessary organization, strategic and operational set-up, approaches, and capacities in place to support agricultural value chains efficiently and coherently?
- 4) To what extent are the effects/results of ITC's interventions supporting agricultural value chains sustainable?
13. Furthermore, an evaluation matrix was developed identifying the data required, key sources of data, and methods of data collection to address the key evaluation questions and sub-questions for each evaluation criterion (Annex B). The matrix guided the development of data collection tools/protocols.

## Methodology

14. The evaluation used a mixed-method approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data. A combination of the following methods was used to gather data and evidence.
15. **Desk Review:** A comprehensive review of various documents and literature as relevant to ITC's agricultural value chain support was undertaken (refer to Annex C). This included project documents, evaluation, and Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reports where available, corporate-level documents such as the Reports of the Consultative Committee of ITC Trust Fund (CCITF), Strategic Plans, Operational Plans, Annual Evaluation Synthesis Reports (AESR) and other corporate-level assessment, studies and reports. As mentioned earlier, a portfolio analysis and a literature review were also undertaken as part of the inception report.
16. **Semi-structured interviews:** Stakeholder consultations were conducted in person during missions to Geneva, Ghana, and Pakistan. Furthermore, virtual interviews were conducted with stakeholders from additional project countries and with ITC staff not met during the Geneva mission. Follow-up interviews were conducted virtually, as applicable. A total of 227 stakeholders (30% women and 70% men) were met for consultations and interviews (Table 1 and Annex D). ITC management and staff accounted for 33% of the stakeholders met. Overall, 45% were ITC staff (Geneva and in-country, and 55% were external stakeholders (partners, MSMEs and beneficiaries). However, 92% of the external stakeholders consulted were from Ghana and Pakistan missions.

Table 1. Snapshot of stakeholders consulted.

Category	Men	Women	Total
ITC management and staff in Geneva <sup>†</sup>	38	36	74 (33%)
ITC staff in Ghana	4	2	6 (3%)
External stakeholders in Ghana (partners and beneficiaries)	41	10	51(22%)
Virtual country interviews – ITC staff	6	4	10 (4%)
Virtual country interview – external stakeholders	9	2	11 (4%)
ITC staff in Pakistan	12	2	14 (6%)
External stakeholders in Pakistan	49	12	61 (27%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b> (70%)	<b>68</b> (30%)	<b>227</b> (100%)

<sup>†</sup> Includes in-person and virtual interviews

Source: Compiled from Annex D

17. **Online survey:** A survey was designed to gather perspectives from national project coordinators (NPCs) not covered during interviews. The survey was sent to 35 NPCs.<sup>22</sup> The response rate was 51% (18 NPCs – 7 women and 11 men).

<sup>22</sup> The survey was sent to 36 NPCs based on contact emails gathered from project managers. One email was returned as it was not current/valid. Three reminders were sent. It was extended once from the initial closing date of June 17, 2023. The survey was open from June 1 to June 28, 2023.



18. **Case studies:** Overall, projects selected for in-depth study met one of the following criteria, including a) large single-country project, b) multiple projects in a single country, c) single-country projects under a larger project, and d) regional/multi-country projects. For country missions, Ghana was selected because it had multiple projects in a single country, and Pakistan was selected primarily because it had the largest-ever single-country ITC project.
19. **Observations:** Semi-structured observations were carried out during project site visits to understand pre-post changes (as relevant) in activities, practices, and systems.
20. **Site visits:** The evaluation team visited project sites in Ghana and Pakistan. Project site visits in Ghana included farmers in three Districts (Goaso, Bibiliani, and Sankore), the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana's (CRIG) pilot plot on cocoa agro-forestry, and chocolate manufacturers in Kumasi and Accra. In Pakistan, the farmers and MSMEs were brought to ITC offices for discussions (Annex E).

### 1.3 Data collection

21. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected during data collection. The desk review started in March 2023 and continued into July 2023, as additional documents were collected, as relevant, during interviews or as identified subsequently.
22. Primary data collection included in-person and online interviews, a survey, and observations during project site visits during missions in Ghana and Pakistan between March 20, 2023, and June 28, 2023. Table 2 provides the time frame of primary data collection. Virtual country interviews were conducted with ITC staff/coordinators and/or external stakeholders in Fiji, Iraq, Laos PDR, Eswatini, Gabon, Rwanda, Tanzania, Dominica, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago (refer to Annex D).

Table 2. Time frame of primary data collection

Description	Time frame
Virtual interviews with ITC Geneva managers	March 20 – 24, 2023
Geneva mission and in-person interviews	March 27, 2023, to April 6, 2023
Ghana mission	April 10, 2023, to April 21, 2023
Virtual country interviews	May 1, 2023, to June 27, 2023
Virtual additional/follow-up interviews with ITC Geneva staff	May 1, 2023, to June 27, 2023
Pakistan mission <sup>†</sup>	May 29, 2023, to June 16, 2023
Survey of NPCs	June 1-28, 2023

<sup>†</sup> The mission was undertaken by a consultant based in Pakistan.

23. The online survey of NPCs, conducted in June 2023, had responses from 17 countries (10 from Africa, 3 from Asia and the Pacific, 2 from Latin America and the Caribbean, and one each from Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa).

### 1.4 Limitations

24. In Pakistan, the postponement of data collection to June (due to the ITC process and procedures) led to challenges in meeting government officials, as June is the financial year-end for the government. Furthermore, the security clearance challenges meant ITC Baluchistan could not arrange site visits. In Sindh, site visits had to be cancelled due to the cyclone. However, ITC was able to bring farmers and MSMEs to ITC's offices for consultations and interviews.
25. There were limited donor discussions due to various reasons. After several efforts, the evaluation was finally able only to interview representatives from embassies, one each in Ghana and Eswatini.

26. Despite the agriculture portfolio being more than 50% of the overall ITC portfolio, there was no sectoral programming strategy/framework. The evaluation during the inception phase developed a theory of change. The lack of systematic tracking of results on value chain indicators (linked to the lack of a programmatic approach) meant that evaluation had to rely on individual memory and anecdotal evidence triangulated through information from multiple sources and/or methods to the extent feasible.
27. Additionally, with several ongoing projects, assessing the outcomes and sustainability of projects proved to be a challenge. Nonetheless, the evaluation looked at potential contributions and/or progress (challenges) to achieving results.
28. When conducting corporate evaluation, even if it is thematic such as this evaluation, the scope expands to look into the impact of various organizational aspects on the portfolio. The availability of data on financial and human resources was a constraint to addressing some of the evaluation questions, as desired. Efforts were made to collect information/perspectives during interviews.
29. The majority of external stakeholders were primarily from Ghana and Pakistan. In order to get wider perspectives, virtual interviews were done by the evaluation. The project managers' support was sought to identify external stakeholders for virtual interviews.

## 2. Global context and programme overview

### 2.1 Global context

30. Agriculture is a critical sector within the global economy, specifically in low-middle-income countries (LMICs). The [World Bank data](#) indicates that agriculture accounted for 15.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in LMICs, employing over half the labour force in these countries. Food and agriculture trade expanded rapidly in the new millennium, catalyzed by trade liberalization at multilateral and regional levels. More countries trade with each other. Emerging economies have become important players, and low-income countries are better integrated into global markets.<sup>23</sup>
31. Over the last two decades, the value chain has established as one of the main paradigms in the development- thinking and practice. Globally, trade and agro-food global value chains generate, on average, 20 - 26% of total agricultural labour force income, but with large differences between countries and sectors. Agro-food trade is increasingly taking part in the global value chains, changing the impact of domestic agriculture and trade policies on the food system.<sup>24</sup> Agri-food global value chains are becoming more global as more countries, especially developing and emerging economies, while many developed countries remain significant drivers of agri-food global value chains. Nevertheless, countries have different patterns of engagement. At the same time, value chains are extending their reach into domestic markets as retail markets evolve to meet the needs of urban and semi-urban consumers.
32. The global context for agriculture is facing rapid change and increasing inter-connected challenges. Several factors contribute to the changing context: increased and fluctuating food prices resulting in food price inflations, rising demand for commodities and biofuels, changing diets and consumer demands, natural resource degradation, climate change, increased diversification of rural economies and rural-urban linkages, and greater private sector investment.
33. Services have increasingly become an important component of agri-food global value chains and a key driver of domestic value-added growth. They represent around 25% of the total value added in agricultural exports and 35% in food sector exports. The most important services are trade, transport, financial and business services, mostly sourced from the domestic market, underscoring the importance of the quality of the domestic services market for agri-food production and competitiveness.<sup>25</sup>
34. Furthermore, KMPG (2013) highlighted that there will be greater and more detailed traceability and labelling and continued growth in certification schemes. Agricultural trade will continue to grow in absolute, and quite possibly also relative (to overall production) terms. There will be more collaboration across different stages within the agribusiness chain, which will lead to ever more integration. These collaborations will take many different forms. As part of this, there will be a tendency to take a longer view. Africa will increasingly be seen as an opportunity by players within the value chain. Companies based in emerging markets will occupy an increasingly important place on the world stage. Whatever happens, agribusiness will remain an attractive and exciting sector for the foreseeable future.
35. The concept of the value chain, initially described by Porter in 1985,<sup>26</sup> is the sequence of value adding activities in the production of goods. However, Porter's value chain concept deals essentially with enterprise (firm)- level strategy and not with broader economic development. In today's context, the value chain often involves multiple enterprises and institutions that act to together toward a given target. It is in this setting it is important to understand the value chain framework conceptualized by Food and Agricultural

<sup>23</sup> FAO (2022). The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2022.

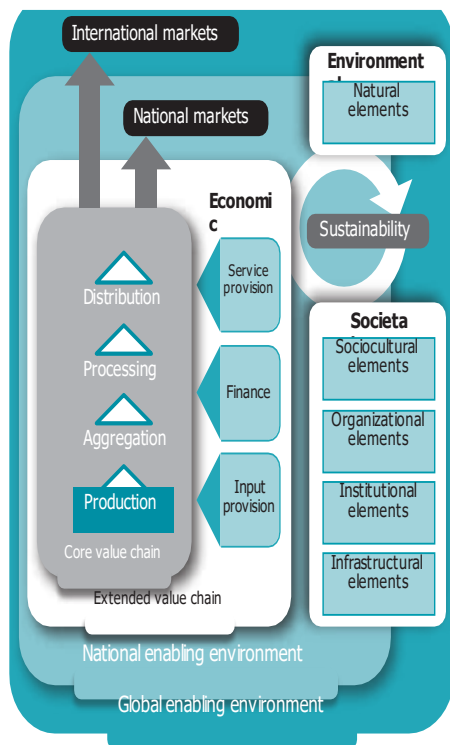
<sup>24</sup> OECD (2020). Global Value Chains

<sup>25</sup> OECD (2020). Global Value Chains in Agriculture and Food: A synthesis of OECD analysis. OECD Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Papers, No. 139. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/6e3993fa-en>).

<sup>26</sup> Porter, M.E. (1985). *Competitive Advantage: creating and sustaining superior performance*. Nova Science Publishers.

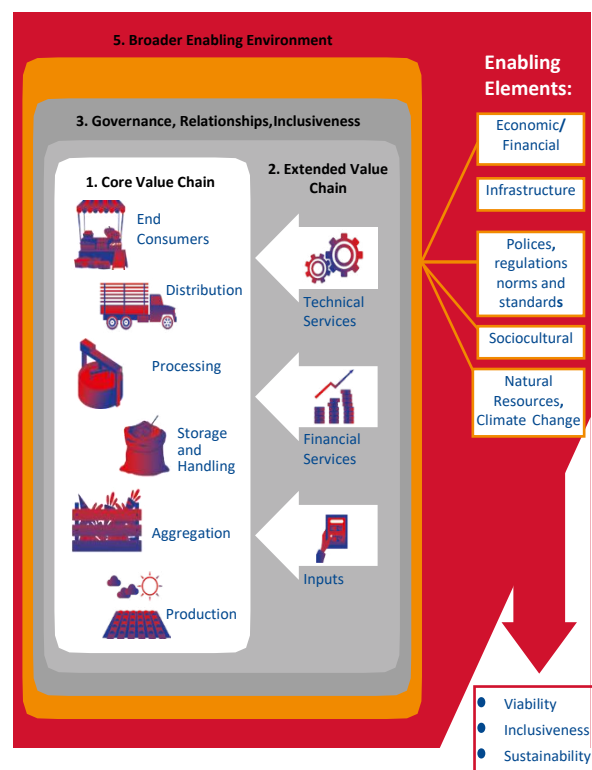
Organizations of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) based on many frameworks found in the literature and their experience. The conceptualization of the value chain by these two organizations indicates a multilayered system. In essence, it presents a system in which the behaviours and performance of farms and other agrifood enterprises are determined by a complex environment (Figure 1 & 2). As it could be seen from the frameworks depicted in Figures, a value chain could be broken down into several layers of constituents – core value chain, extended value chain, value chain governance, market and enabling elements.

Figure 1. The Sustainable Food Value Chain Framework



Source: FAO (2014)

Figure 2. A Conceptual Scheme of Value Chain System



Source: IFAD (2019) adaptation of FAO (2014) with inputs from GIZ (2018) and USAID (2014)

## 2.2 ITC's agricultural value chain support and areas of action

### Characteristics of the portfolio

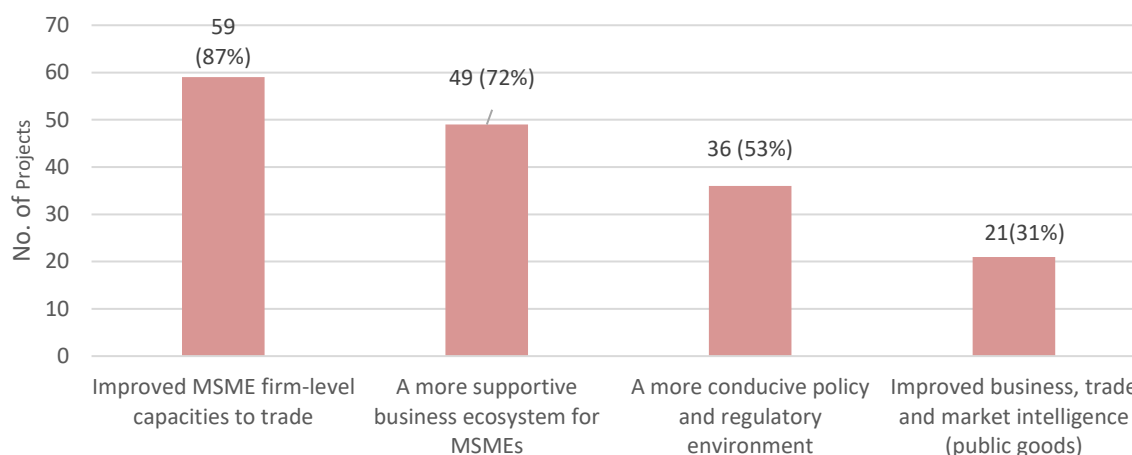
36. Sixty percent of the ITC's projects supporting agricultural value chains are of duration between one and four years. The rest, 30% have a duration of more than four years, and another 10% have a duration of less than one year. However, projects with four years and above comprise 64% of the portfolio budget. While projects of three-year duration or less constitute 36% of the projects, that comprises of only 9% of project budgets in the portfolio (Annex F).
37. Six out of ten projects have a single project budget of less than USD 2.5 million;<sup>27</sup> however, they account for only nine percent of the total sector portfolio budget. At the same time 13% (9/68) of the projects have project budgets of more than USD 10 million, which account for 57% of total sector portfolio budget. Another 21% of the portfolio budget consists of projects with a budget of USD 5 – 10 million (Annex F).

<sup>27</sup> Number of projects with < USD 1 million single project budget is 34%.

## Support to core areas

38. Each project covered one or more core areas of the Strategic Plan. Most projects (79%) covered at least two core areas. The analysis indicated most projects focused on “*improved MSME firm-level capacities to trade*” (87% - 59/68), followed by “*a more supportive business ecosystem for MSMEs*” (72% - 49/68). Relatively, fewer projects had approaches to address “*a more conducive policy and regulatory environment*” (53% - 36/68) and “*improved business, trade and market intelligence*” (31% - 21/68) – Figure 3.

Figure 3. Approach by core areas



## Areas of support

39. ITC's agricultural value chain interventions supported diverse areas – 36 OECD sectors (Annex H). In terms of budget expended on OECD sectors, more than two-fifths of the budget is focused on agricultural development (32.8%) and SME development (11.8%). Another 30% of the portfolio budget is focused on trade policy and administrative management (5.3%), industrial/export crops (5.2%), food crop production (4.8%), textiles, leather, and substitutes (4.4%), agricultural services (4.2%) and business policy and administration (3.9%). Overall ITC's work in the above eight sectors account for about three-fourths of the agricultural value chain portfolio budget (Annex G).

## 2.3 Funding of ITC's work on agricultural value chains

40. Within the scope period of the evaluation (2018-21), ITC's work on agricultural value chains support is primarily funded and dependent on the European Union (82.7%). South Korea<sup>28</sup> (5.9%) is second single largest funder and the only major funder outside of Europe (Figure 4, next page). Six countries in Europe (the United Kingdom,<sup>29</sup> the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland) account for another 8.6 percent of the funding. All other funders account for less than three percent of the funding of the portfolio. Basically, more than 90 percent of ITC's work in agricultural value chains is funded by the European Union (EU) and countries in Europe.

## 2.4 Geographical scope of ITC's agricultural value chain interventions

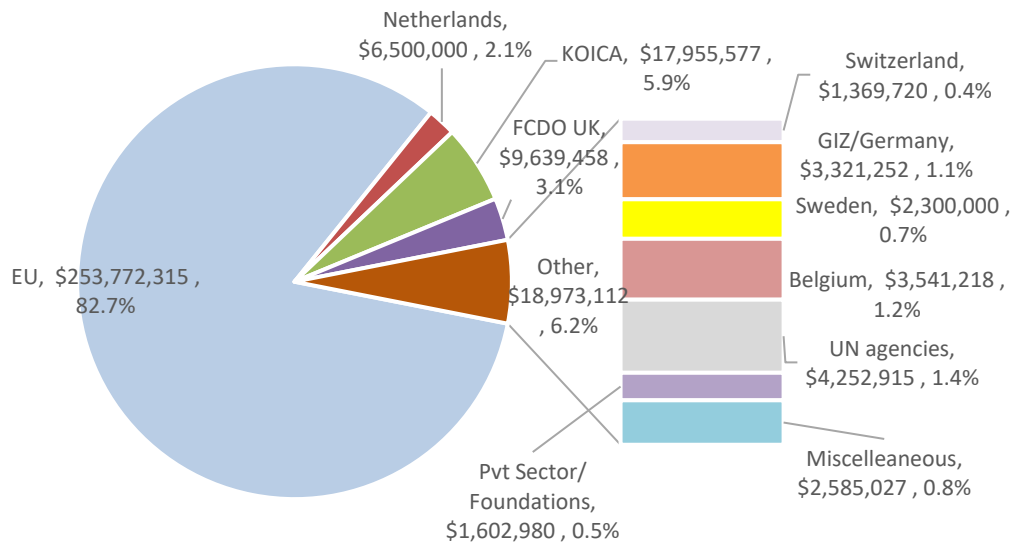
41. The primary focus of support continues to be in Africa (sub-Saharan) and the Asia-Pacific regions. Sixty-eight percent of the number of projects and the budget of the portfolio is concentrated in these two regions (Figures 5 and 6). A higher proportion of the budget than the share of the number of projects in the Middle

<sup>28</sup> KOICA – Korea International Cooperation Agency.

<sup>29</sup> FCDO – Foreign Commonwealth Development Office.

East and Northern Africa (MENA) and Asia and the Pacific regions is attributed to large projects (one in each region).

Figure 4. Key funders



42. ITC's support to agricultural value chains is largely through single-country projects – more than 70% of the number of projects and budget of the portfolio.<sup>30</sup> Although ITC's support to agricultural value chains covered several countries, 25 percent (17/68) of the projects in the portfolio were concentrated in seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, two projects (one in Pakistan and the other in Iraq)<sup>32</sup> together accounted for 26 percent of the portfolio value.

Figure 5. Projects by Region

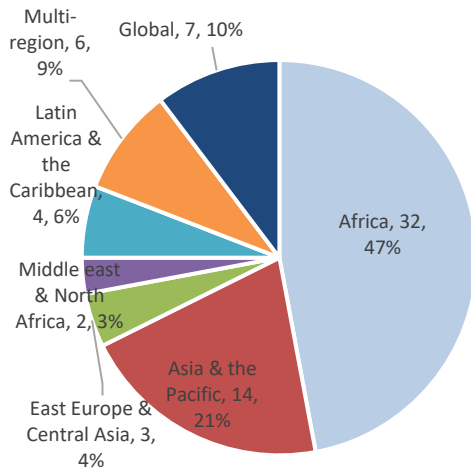
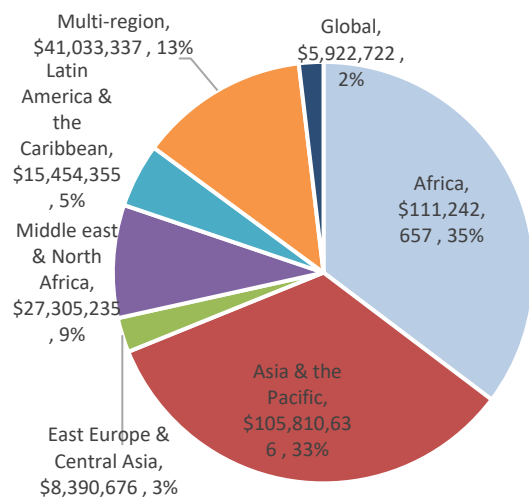


Figure 6. Project Budget by Region



<sup>30</sup> The portfolio analyzed for this evaluation included 68 projects. Refer to Annex A.

<sup>31</sup> Gambia, Ghana, and Guinea had three projects each, while Eswatini, Senegal, South Sudan and Uganda had two projects in each country. This does not include regional projects.

<sup>32</sup> Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Programme (GRASP) in Pakistan and Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI) in Iraq.

## 2.5 The theory of change

43. Despite the agricultural value chain support portfolio constituting more than half of ITC's overall portfolio, there is no overall organizational concrete strategy and/or conceptual framework for providing support to agricultural value chains. This combined with lack of programmatic approach has led to the absence of an explicit umbrella impact pathway or a theory of change for agricultural value chain support at the corporate level (ITC). Neither is there a common understanding and definition for the agricultural value chain and concept of ITC's specific focus or support in the sector. This has proven to be a major challenge in undertaking an evaluability assessment and starting the design of the evaluation. The lack of clarity of objectives and programmatic approach in agricultural value chain support and logic is expected to affect the sector's coherence, impact, and sustainability of interventions.
44. Nevertheless, individual projects have a results framework indicating activities, outputs, outcome(s), and impact.<sup>33</sup> As well the ITC Strategic Plan 2022-2025 provides ITC's results framework.<sup>34</sup> Given the primary constraint (lack of impact pathway/theory of change), the evaluation attempted to construct an impact pathway, based on a desk review of project results chains<sup>35</sup> and the overall ITC's results framework (2022-2025) with insights from the literature review, to overcome the challenge and ensure a theory-based evaluation.
45. The impact pathway (Figure 7) has been conceived as an evaluation tool to advise evaluation design and visually describe the causal relationships and paths of change, showing linkages in getting from inputs to impact related to agricultural value chain support<sup>36</sup> (refer to Approach and Methodology Section). The impact pathway will be tested and validated throughout the evaluation process.

---

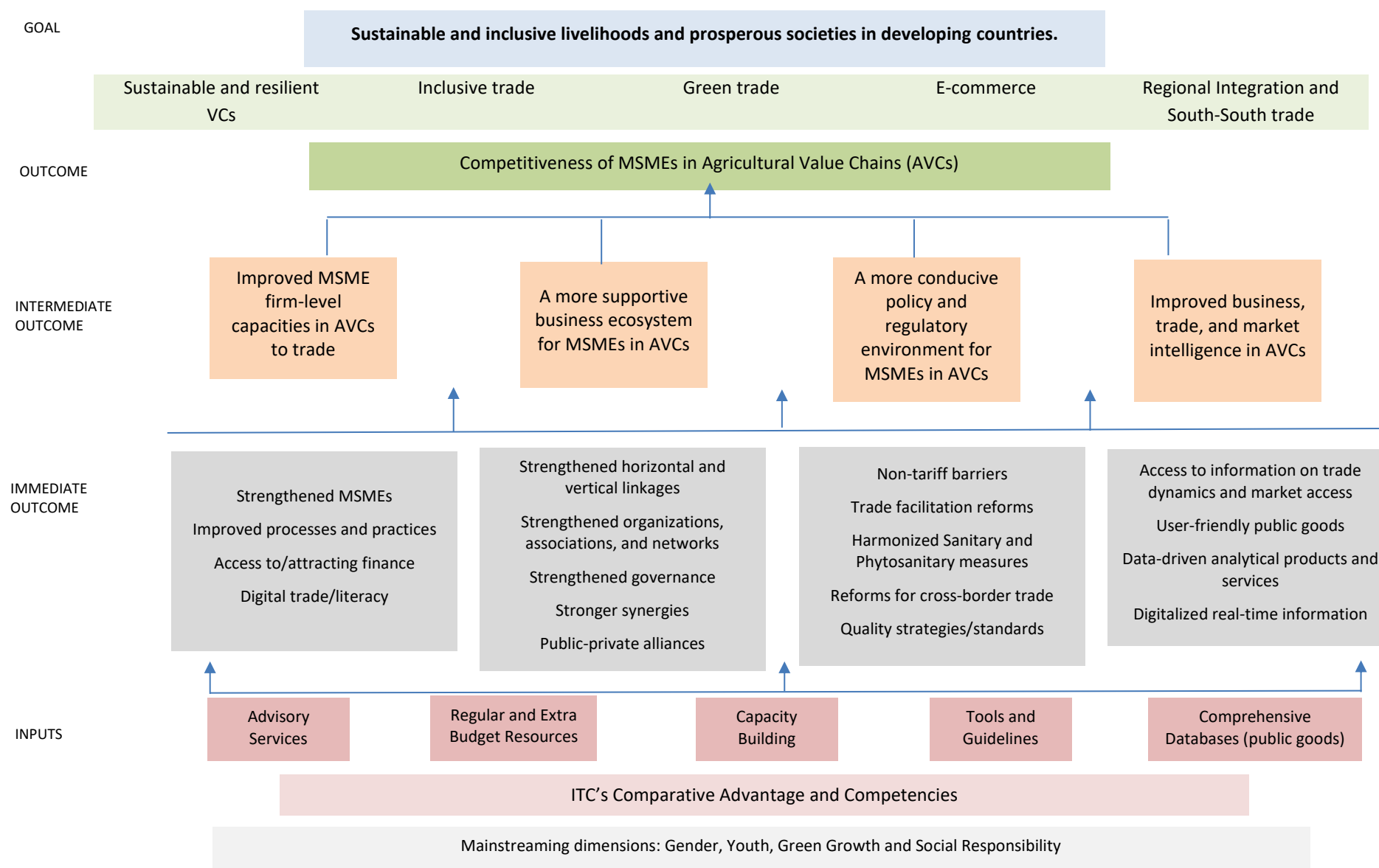
<sup>33</sup> ITC Project Portal.

<sup>34</sup> ITC Strategic Plan 2022-2025, p60.

<sup>35</sup> 68 projects identified for the portfolio review. Results chains from the Project Portal and other documents from units/Sections, as relevant, were reviewed. Refer to Annex A for a list of projects.

<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that developing a conceptual framework and strategy for ITC's agricultural value chain support is beyond the evaluability assessment and evaluation scope. ITC may use the impact pathway developed as a tool for this evaluation to further develop and institutionalize it.

Figure 7. Impact pathway for ITC's work on agricultural value chain support



Source: Adapted and modified from ITC's results framework and with inputs from project results chains and literature



## 3. Findings

46. This section presents findings based on evidence collected through various data collection methods from various sources. The findings are presented per evaluation criteria relevance, effectiveness and impact (including mainstreaming dimensions), efficiency and coherence, and sustainability. Coherence has been addressed in each criterion, as relevant.

### 3.1 Relevance

*To what extent is ITC's agricultural value chain support relevant to organizational mandate and national/regional and global needs and priorities?*

47. The sub-section presents findings and evidence of relevance of agricultural value chains interventions to ITC's Strategic Plan, needs and priorities at the country/regional and global levels. It also presents opportunities and threats for ITC and its competitive advantages in supporting agricultural value chains.

#### Relevance to organizational mandate and strategic objectives and funder priorities

**Finding 1: ITC's agricultural value chain interventions are relevant and coherent with the organizational mandate and strategic objectives. At the same time, donor priorities, especially the European Union, play a key role in ITC's work supporting agricultural value chains.**

48. ITC considers it as central to its mission to connect micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to value chains.<sup>37</sup> The support to value chain is clearly reflected in ITC's corporate planning – "*connecting to international value chains*" was Focus Area 4 in Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and "*sustainable and resilient value chains*" is one of the impact areas of Strategic Plan 2022–2025. As indicated earlier (Section 2.2.2), the primary focus of the projects was on "improved MSME firm-level capacities to trade" and "a more supporting business ecosystem for MSMEs" (87% and 72% of projects respectively). The high focus of agricultural value chain projects on these two core areas could be appreciated by the fact ITC's main clients are MSMEs, BSOs and governments in developing countries and economies in transition. Relatively fewer projects addressed "a more conducive policy and regulatory environment," and "improved business, trade and market intelligence," the other two core areas of the Strategic Plan.

49. Although the Strategic Plan is sector-neutral, the portfolio analysis highlighted that support for agricultural value chains accounted for 54% of ITC's operational budget for the period 2018 to mid-2022. Discussions emphasized that support to agricultural value chains has remained and is expected to remain an important part of ITC's work partly because of its mandate to prioritize specific categories of countries – least developed countries (LDCs), land-locked developing countries (LLDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), small and vulnerable economies (SVEs) and countries in conflict or at risk lapsing into one. Overall, 81% (55/68) of ITC projects supporting agricultural value chains are implemented in these priority categories of countries.<sup>38</sup> Literature highlights that more than 70% of the people in developing countries, including LDCs and low-middle-income countries (LMICs), are engaged in activities related to agriculture. Therefore, it is viewed that supporting projects in the agriculture value chain is not only a default but also a reality for ITC.

50. The Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2022 was USD 204 billion, of which five percent was focused on agriculture. Support for the agriculture sector and value chains is a priority for many donors. ITC's work in the agricultural value chain primarily depends on the European Union (EU) funding – the EU funds 83% of the ITC's agricultural value chain portfolio. ITC has a project-oriented approach to countries, and these projects are to a large extent, reliant on earmarked donor funding. Although ITC prioritizes broad categories of countries to support, the reliance on donor-driven projects leads to an ad hoc approach to select countries and projects. This may not ensure that ITC leverages its comparative advantage to match better

<sup>37</sup> ITC (2022). Strategic Plan 2022-2025, p.36-37.

<sup>38</sup> ITC's work in agriculture value chains covers 61% (28/46) of LDCs, 56% (18/32) of LLDCs and 49% (19/39) of SIDS around the world.

the needs of countries, sectors, and SMEs where it can achieve the greatest impact in reducing poverty or improving livelihoods. A 2018 OIOS review of ITC has also highlighted this.<sup>39</sup>

51. A 2015 OIOS assessment of ITC indicated the products and services of ITC are tailored to the priorities of donors, assisted Governments and some beneficiaries rather than being prioritized in a strategic, risk-based manner.<sup>40</sup> This mirrored several discussions at ITC headquarters, which is captured well in a stakeholder's comment – "*we are not setting the agenda – we are getting the agenda.*" The evaluation noted that these issues continue due to a lack of programming strategy for the agricultural value chains sector or strategy at the country or regional level.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the projects tend to be stand-alone.

### Suited to development needs/priorities at the country, regional and global levels.

**Finding 2. ITC's project-oriented support to agricultural value chains broadly aligns with the development needs and priorities at the country, regional and global levels. However, the absence of a country/regional programming framework or strategy is a limitation to better-addressing needs and priorities (at the country/regional level).**

#### Country-level

52. In general, single-country projects<sup>42</sup> are broadly aligned to national development strategies and/or sector strategies of respective countries. In the case of Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) in Pakistan,<sup>43</sup> the intervention is not only in line with the overall priorities of the Government of Pakistan but also at the **sub-national level** (in the provinces of Baluchistan and Sindh). The focus on MSMEs as an engine of growth and employment has been a priority for Pakistan's decision-makers regardless of the political party in power.
53. The majority (83% - 15/18) of NPCs<sup>44</sup> who responded to the survey indicated high degree of alignment of ITC's interventions on agricultural value chains to national needs and priorities as well as community needs. Timing of ITCs intervention – "*right time*" - was highlighted as significant in some countries (e.g., Ghana, Iraq, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe), especially during/after COVID-19 or post-conflict situations. Box 1 provides examples of perspectives from stakeholders from countries.

#### Box 1. Examples of country-level stakeholder perspectives on timeliness (relevance).

- "The project intervened in the coffee and tea sector, which are national priorities as the only exported products and the rural populations depend on the revenue of these two commodities." (Burundi)
- "The project has managed to capture the interest of the Government to include it in their programme to improve the cocoa value chain." (Peru).
- "ITC support came at the right time when the country was coming out of civil war." (South Sudan)
- "The support for the agricultural value chains is very relevant in that it brings in the trade component to the sector." (Zimbabwe)

Source: Interviews and survey for this evaluation

54. The Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policies (SAAVI), in Iraq was viewed as unique project for conflict/post-conflict areas, even by humanitarian actors in the country –

<sup>39</sup> OIOS/IEU (2018). Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of the International Trade Centre. E/AC.51/2018/8. p6.

<sup>40</sup> OIOS/IEU (2015). Evaluation of International Trade Centre. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations. E/AC.51/2015/8.

<sup>41</sup> The evaluation noted country export strategies are developed by ITC (headquarters) for some countries, even at the sector level. However, these are not used by agriculture value chain projects. (Also, later discussions on export strategies)

<sup>42</sup> 73% of the agricultural value chain interventions are single-country projects (portfolio analysis).

<sup>43</sup> GRASP is the single largest project in ITC at a country level.

<sup>44</sup> NPCs of selected projects who were not interviewed.

*“ITC’s work was developmental and not the routine humanitarian action.”* SAAVI’s work was aligned at various levels to meet needs/priorities and was reported to create better visibility for development partners by mitigating some of the limitations of the development work in the country.

#### Regional level

55. The regional/multi-country projects were aligned to strengthen frameworks in the regions and economic integration. The Coconuts II project (covering 12 countries in the Caribbean) was noted to be in good alignment with the Caribbean Community Agricultural Policy (2011) and the Revised Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Regional Agricultural Plan of Action 2012-2022. As well, the Coconuts II intervention was reported to be highly responsive to the needs of the target groups, stakeholders, and end beneficiaries in the participating Caribbean countries.<sup>45</sup> The intervention was also noted to address the needs of the coconut industry stakeholders in the project countries.
56. The West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) was noted to be in line with the Community Development Programme set up to implement Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) 2020 vision, the West African Economic Monetary Union (UEMOA) 2011-2020 Strategic Plan and the various national strategic development documents. It was also aligned to African Union Agenda 2063.
57. The Market Access Upgrade Programme (MARKUP) was noted to be highly relevant to broader Eastern African Regional Integration Strategy Paper 2018-2022. It was also reported to be greatly coherent with EU’s support for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and with African Development Bank’s Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa (2016-2025).<sup>46</sup> MARKUP was also aligned with national policies and national development strategies/plans in the six project countries in the East African Community (EAC). The Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) Regional Integration Support by the EU (ARISE+) projects in Asia were closely aligned with the five pillars of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025.
58. Many ITC projects that support agricultural value chains in Africa, even if they are single-country projects, could be in principle be aligned to African Union 2063 Agenda and/or AfCFTA; however, they are not always indicated so in the project documents.

#### Global level

59. ITC’s support to agricultural value chains directly contributes to 10 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption), SDG 16 (peace and justice stronger institutions), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).
60. The agricultural projects contribute to a combination of various SDGs. Annex H presents a list of selected projects and the SDGs they contribute to. Furthermore, the ACP spread across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific reported to be aligned with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (2015) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015).

### Project design and relevance

**Finding 3. ITC has a corporate project design mechanism. Project designs incorporate lessons learned and recommendations from previous phases/projects, where viable. Nevertheless, there is a need to re-engineer the design process to ensure ONE ITC within among agricultural value chain interventions. There is also potential to improve local consultations and contextualization in agricultural intervention project designs.**

<sup>45</sup> ROM report of Coconuts II.

<sup>46</sup> Mid-Term Evaluation of EU-EAC MARKUP – Draft Final Report. March 30, 2022.

61. The Project Design Taskforce (PDT)<sup>47</sup> including SPPG's Project Quality Assurance Officer (PQAO) provides customized support guidance and advice to staff developing projects in ITC's Technical Sections and Country Offices for the design and development of project proposals, irrespective of sector/area (including agricultural VC interventions). The PDT primarily works with project developers (from technical teams or with Country teams) on project development. It is noted that engagement with PDT was mandatory for all projects of value above USD 1 million before it goes for approval to SMC. The PDT's creation coincided with the growth of ITC and the agricultural value chain portfolio.
62. The PDT ensures that projects meet criteria and are bankable. Discussions highlighted that the PDT is more of internal and quality control than providing inputs on substance or technical. It may suggest composition of team (inclusion of certain units) but do not/cannot enforce. The PDT has developed a project development manual, and it is formalized and in place. It was noted that the project design has set project development guidelines which are in general aligned to the EU model.
63. Factors that influence project design (in agricultural VC interventions) include personal preferences, issues of money that affect collaborations within ITC and sometimes the project design is donor-tied and donor-driven. Discussions also highlighted that sometimes projects come 24 hours before SMC meetings for approval, and this does not provide adequate time to review and provide input.
64. A review of project documents and discussions indicated that all projects have a results framework/log frame. However, there is inconsistency in understanding and depiction of causal linkages from outputs to outcome(s). The evaluation noted that a project at the minimum, should have corporate indicators, and the "*rest is flexible.*"
65. At the design phase, where applicable, projects incorporated lessons learned and recommendations evaluations from previous phases or projects in the same sector or related country experience in the project design. Examples include Netherlands Trust Fund Phase V (NTF V) from NTF VI overall, NTF V in Ghana from the United Kingdom Trade Partnerships Programme (UKTP) Ghana, Coconuts II from Coconuts I, the projects in Gambia, SheTrades West Africa from overall SheTrades Initiative and also from NTF IV in relevant countries, the ACP in the Caribbean from the Coconuts project, WACOMP from other regional projects.
66. The evaluation noted that project designs could be very broad but are finetuned during the inception phase of the project. The inception phase, which could take six to twelve months, cuts into the actual implementation period.
67. The inception phase and needs assessment helped to adjust the project to meet the needs at the country level and be relevant during implementation. For example, the project in Malaysia wanted to focus on palm oil; however, upon the realization that there was another project supported by the EU on palm oil, it was taken out. In the SAAVI, the initial log frame was finalized by the EU and ITC HQ. However, after the inception phase, the log frame was revisited and revised in terms of targets. The original log frame also lacked outcome-level indicators (for planned activities). In Dominica, the project on coconut was designed pre-Maria hurricane; however, at the time of implementation, it had to be adjusted to fit the post-Maria hurricane situation. In Ghana, the number of MSMEs (chocolatiers) to support was set at 100 as a target; however, it was revised after the inception phase, as there are only 30 chocolatiers in the country. In Lao PDR, the sectors were sort of open, including coffee, which was not there in the beginning, and "*it came further down in the project.*" Furthermore, ITC made adjustments on many projects during COVID-19. Some agricultural VC projects used in-house CUBED<sup>48</sup> assessment.
68. The evaluation noted positive examples of contextualization in agricultural VC projects. These included the endogenous approach anchored in local socio-economic and cultural realities in meeting market-driven approach (Colombia – PUEDE). In Pakistan (GRASP), ethnic division has been taken into account while

---

<sup>47</sup> PDT was set up in 2017, as the previous Executive Director wanted to do more in project development.

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.itcbenchmarking.org/resources-and-help/due-diligence>.

targeting beneficiaries. At the same time, limited adequate local consultation affected appropriate contextualization. Furthermore, the need for a better understanding of others in the context for better contextualization and the need for the project to understand the local culture and context was emphasized by stakeholders in the country to ensure that the project is “*rooted locally*” during consultations with stakeholders in the Caribbean and Eswatini respectively.

69. In terms of incorporating mainstreaming dimensions, gender, youth, and environmental sustainability are not consistently incorporated in the design of agricultural value chain projects. Indicator on inclusiveness is primarily focused on capturing disaggregated data. Value chain mapping as input is not always evident or explicit in project design. Project design also does not have indicators to measure profitability or reduced transaction costs.

### Competitive advantage and disadvantage (threats) and opportunities

**Finding 4. Connecting MSMEs to international markets, credibility and experience with the private sector, flexibility, customized offering, market-oriented approach, strong research on trade and the public goods and tools are perceived as the core competitive advantage for ITC.**

70. ITC works towards global prosperity by connecting MSMEs in developing countries to international markets.<sup>49</sup> ITC is fully dedicated to supporting MSMEs improve their competitiveness and use trade as a level of growth and job creation.<sup>50</sup>
71. Interviews with internal and external stakeholders highlighted that **ITC's** niche is working with MSMEs in specialized trade and market linkages. ITC “*handholds MSMEs to go to market.*” The focus of ITC is on market dimensions and trade. ITC looks at the market side and not the production side. It was noted that due to track record and focus of ITC linking MSMEs to markets, it was seen to “*come naturally to ITC*” and others may do some market linkage work, they may not have institutionalized it. Many organizations/agencies are noted to be strong on production side in terms of support to agricultural value chains, a fact also highlighted by evaluations by other development partners.<sup>51</sup>
72. ITC has knowledge of markets and market partners and is able to connect buyers with sellers (the MSMEs in the countries), particularly in the coffee and the cocoa sectors and increasingly in tea, fruits and vegetables, and nuts among others.
73. In general, ITC is seen to be relatively more “*comfortable*” working with private sector vis-à-vis many UN agencies. ITC has been able to balance and work with farmer cooperatives and with multinationals, even though there could be conflict of interest, as viewed by some. The connections and credibility with private sector, enables ITC to connect MSMEs at country-level to global markets through multinationals and international companies. As part of connecting with international markets, ITC facilitated the participation of MSMEs in various trade fairs.
74. While ITC provides training to MSMEs on marketing, branding, packaging, creating pitching decks, product improvement and certifications, few MSMEs interviewed acknowledged that ITC also ensures one-on-one coaching, where required, and thereby a customized offering.
75. ITC's flexibility is echoed unanimously across the organization. In general, many reflected that “*we (ITC is) are more pragmatic than fundamentalists or theorists*”; however, few stated, “*sometimes more of a trial and error.*” ITC's flexibility has been resonated by external stakeholders,

*“We (ITC) look(s) at the market first and then go to the supply side instead of the other way – which is what most others do (production first and then market).”*

*“For each company, we have a specific strategy – we have a work plan based on where they are, their products and their markets” (Coconuts II).*

<sup>49</sup> <https://intracen.org/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=2824&menu=3170>

<sup>51</sup> Highlighted during the literature review conducted as part of the inception phase.

76. The Trade and Market Intelligence (TMI) unit in ITC brings strong research and analysis on trade, exports, and markets. This helps ITC to provide technical assistance with market decisions, products, certifications, non-tariff measures, and produce public goods and tools to help improve decisions. This is viewed as a strength of ITC, especially external stakeholders.
77. The results from the survey of NPCs of agricultural value chain interventions, in general, mirrored stakeholder perspectives from interviews. The top three competitive advantages of ITC vis-à-vis other UN agencies as reported by NPCs were, working with MSMEs, connecting MSMEs to international markets, and facilitating participation in trade fairs.

**Finding 5. Fragmented work, inadequate appropriate technical expertise at HQ level, dependency on limited number of donors, project-oriented approach and competition are threats to ITC's work on agricultural value chains.**

78. The evaluation noted that ITC's support to agricultural value chains is fragmented and not cohesive. Many agricultural value chain interventions are stand-alone projects. This is also attributed to issues mentioned earlier, including the lack of country/regional or sector strategy or framework in ITC and the project-oriented approach. Internal stakeholders also highlighted that while the current project-management-oriented business model has helped ITC "grow wide but not deep" (including in agricultural value chain support), this was seen as a threat. Many projects are small<sup>52</sup> and do not address issues relating to the entire agricultural value chain.<sup>53</sup> As summarized well by a stakeholder – "*we are small and in a niche market, so not everyone will know us, including inside the government.*"
79. ITC's support to the agricultural value chain is dependent on EU funding. A high proportion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to agriculture is already tapped by other UN agencies and international non-government organizations (NGOs). Several bilateral agencies, including those of the United States of America (USA), Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, are already engaged in value chain development through their implementing partners, who also have strong local presence. Not-for-profit organizations such as [TechnoServe](#), [TradeMark Africa](#), [SNV](#), [IDH](#), and [ACDI/VOCA](#) also attract diverse donor funding for agricultural value chain development and provide competition to access donor funding and external expertise.
80. ITC has been increasingly working with external expertise, to complement and reinforce internal expertise<sup>54</sup> in the agri-food/agribusiness sector, it faces the risk of other development partners (including UN agencies) gradually replicating or already carrying out similar work as ITC (building/expanding on their existing core strengths). Dependence on external technical experts also means limited institutional knowledge.<sup>55</sup>
81. The agriculture sector could be seen as a victim and a contributor to climate change. Not being able to tap into green funds<sup>56</sup> and inability to tap into technical expertise on climate action aspects could be a threat to addressing issues holistically in agricultural value chains. Many agencies/institutions (including UN agencies and Government Ministries) already tap into global green funds and bilateral and multilateral funds.
82. Threats discussed should also be seen as potential disadvantages for ITC. Some of these threats have also been discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

**Finding 6: Key opportunities for ITC include value chains beyond the current agricultural commodities/crops, tapping into other key donors in agriculture, leveraging climate funds, supporting local/regional trade, building on success in post-conflict countries, better synergies in the countries and a more holistic approach to agricultural value chain development.**

<sup>52</sup> 58% (39/68) of the agricultural VC projects are less than USD 2.5 million (portfolio analysis for this evaluation).

<sup>53</sup> ITC reported that it is partly due to a limited budget.

<sup>54</sup> The evaluation understands that the agri-food/agribusiness sector is vast and complex, and it is not possible to have all the expertise in-house.

<sup>55</sup> Refer to subsequent discussions in Section 3.3.

<sup>56</sup> Examples include the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund and REDD+ funds.



83. The agricultural sector and value chains are diverse and vast, and there is huge potential for developing and strengthening value chains at various levels and growing niche markets beyond the current key crop value chains focused by ITC. For example, AfCFTA has mandated which value chains to develop with 90% origin from Africa. It has identified countries and which countries have competitiveness. It has identified 94 sectors for tapping into growth, and 50% are in the agri-food sector. The evaluation noted that some projects covered work in some value chains, such as cassava, cashew, and honey.
84. ITC could potentially explore funding from other traditional donors beyond the EU. While the EU's ODA to agriculture was USD 1.5 billion in 2021. During the same period, Germany, France and the USA accounted for USD 4.9 billion – 47% of ODA to agriculture.<sup>57</sup>
85. There is potential to green the agricultural value chains. This means not only promoting climate-smart agriculture or deforestation but also looking holistically along the entire value chain, including post-harvest loss management, processing, packing materials, logistics and warehousing. This would not only require large funding but also emphasize the need to define the “green agenda” on what it means for ITC to develop and promote climate-friendly techniques and products and niche markets. This includes ITC having to look at carbon emissions in agriculture production, processing, markets, and transportation.
86. There is potential to tap into climate funds. In 2021, the largest bilateral donors of climate-related ODA were Japan, Germany, and France. Collectively, commitment from these three donors accounted for 71% of total bilateral climate change and mitigation funding (USD 34.5 billion) from all OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries.<sup>58</sup> While donor prioritization varies widely, climate-related projects accounted for 24 percent of total bilateral ODA. The top three sectors are infrastructure, energy, and agriculture. The 2021 bilateral ODA commitments only to climate change adaptation from OECD DAC donor countries stood at USD 22.9 billion. In terms of climate change adaptation-related ODA commitment, agriculture is the top priority sector.<sup>59</sup> This does not include funding from multilateral banks, multilateral funds, multi-donor regional/national funds, and the private sector.
87. There is potential to develop local and regional markets/trade in addition to the focus on international exports. Some of the agricultural value chain projects are already working on it.<sup>60</sup> As mentioned earlier, AfCFTA opens the intra-African trade potential/opportunity which ITC can decide to tap into. Emerging markets and developing economies now account for close to 80% of global economic growth, almost double their share from two decades ago. Their relevance for the global economy isn't simply as centers of production or trading hubs packaging and shipping goods to advanced economies. They have also become increasingly important as final destinations for consumer goods and services, now accounting for close to 85 percent of the growth in global consumption, more than double their share in the 1990s.<sup>61</sup> An example that highlights the above is the fact in 2021, Malaysia (USD 216 million) and Brazil (USD 115 million) were the top 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cocoa bean destinations from Ghana. They were the top two fastest-growing markets for Ghana cocoa beans.<sup>62</sup> This also emphasizes the potential and importance of South-South trade.

<sup>57</sup> Refer to the top 15 donors to agricultural ODA in Annex J.

<sup>58</sup> The total ODA to climate-related projects have declined compared to 2020.

<sup>59</sup> <https://donortracker.org/topics/climate>

<sup>60</sup> Refer to discussions in Section 3.2 for more details.

<sup>61</sup> Gruss, B, Nabar, M, Poplawski-Ribeiro, M (2017). Emerging Markets and Developing Economies: Sustaining Growth in a Less Supportive External Environment. IMF Blog. April 2017. (<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2017/04/12/emergingmarketsanddevelopingeconomiesustaininggrowthinalesssupportiveexternalenvironment>).

<sup>62</sup> OEC (2022). ([https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/cocoa-beans/reporter/gha#:~:text=The%20main%20destination%20of%20Cocoa,and%20Netherlands%20\(%2451.4M\)](https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/cocoa-beans/reporter/gha#:~:text=The%20main%20destination%20of%20Cocoa,and%20Netherlands%20(%2451.4M))). Netherlands (USD 230 million) was the top destination, USA (USD 130 million) was the 3<sup>rd</sup> and France (USD 96 million) was 5<sup>th</sup> top destination.

## 3.2 Effectiveness

### *To what extent are ITC interventions supporting agricultural VCs effective and contributing to development impact, including cross-cutting issues?*

88. The findings and evidence in effectiveness have been organized under ITC intermediate outcomes<sup>63</sup> and within each outcome, grouped under immediate outcomes identified during the inception phase (as shown in Figure 5). This Section also presents findings of mainstreaming dimensions (cross-cutting themes).

#### Improved MSME firm-level capacities in agricultural value chains to trade

**Finding 7. ITC's support to agricultural value chains has positively contributed to strengthening MSMEs and increasing their competitiveness through training, coaching, technical assistance, and introduction to buyers/markets. Strengthening MSMEs is at the core of ITC's work on agricultural value chains.**

89. ITC's agricultural VC interventions support MSMEs through training on marketing, packaging, and quality, and also on certification, organic agriculture, integrated pest management, EU regulations/requirements and/or market requirements. It also conducts studies on markets and their requirements/preferences and creates pitching decks for MSMEs. As noted in the portfolio analysis for this evaluation 87% agricultural VC interventions had activities to strengthen MSME capacities to trade.

90. The MSMEs benefitting include: a) established exporters (e.g., as in Ghana, Eswatini, and in the Caribbean) for whom ITC's support reinforced what they are already doing in addition to some tweaking as required; b) export-ready (or almost ready) MSMEs that got help with product quality, packaging, fine-tuning of flavours and taste, and food hygiene/safety; and c) other MSMEs that improved inventory management, or strengthened cottage enterprise or artisan operations.

91. Facilitating the participation of MSMEs in trade fairs has been a key aspect of ITC's support to MSMEs in agricultural value chains. As MSME's remarked – *"It opened our eyes."* Box 2 indicates some examples of MSME participation in trade fairs.

#### *Box 2. Examples of MSME participation in trade fairs*

- MSMEs (chocolatiers) in Ghana participated in trade fairs in France, Germany, and United Arab Emirates through UKTP and NTF V.
- MSMEs in the Caribbean were able to go the COCOTECH trade fair in Malaysia because of Coconuts II.
- The Eswatini I project enabled MSMEs in the country to go to trade fairs in the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and South Africa.
- Display of fruits and vegetables from South Sudan at trade fairs.
- For one of the chocolatiers in Ghana going to the United Kingdom also helped it to participate in the Great Taste competition which led to three of their recipes being selected and two of them getting stars – *"It boosted our confidence."*
- The distributor in the Netherlands took ginger products from Fiji to the trade fair in the United Kingdom to the Great Taste Competition and it led to the product getting an award for ginger products and 2-star rating. It helped in additional market linkages in the EU.

Source: Compiled by the evaluation team

<sup>63</sup> Intermediate outcomes of the ITC Strategic Plan were adapted for agricultural value chain intervention and presented in Figure 5. The impact pathway was developed and presented during the inception phase.



92. ITC's support to agricultural VC led to increased income to MSMEs in varying degrees. Increased local sales was reported in various projects, including Coconuts II (Caribbean), PUEDE (Colombia), UKTP (Ghana), SAAVI (Iraq), GRASP (Pakistan), SheTrades West Africa and Eswatini I. Higher exports by MSMEs were reported in UKTP (Fiji), UKTP/NTF V (Ghana), Eswatini I and in Tajikistan. Increased production and/or income for farmers were reported in Colombia (PUEDE), Iraq (SAAVI), Sankofa (Ghana) and Pakistan (GRASP).
93. While projects reported increased jobs created, it was not evident how much of it is due to the economy recovery after COVID-19 and if it has been factored in the reporting. Agricultural value chain projects also led to improved quality and /or packaging. Examples included modifications to chocolate packaging/labelling (Ghana – UKTP/NTF V), packaging (crates) for transporting tomatoes to markets, leading to reduced damage and loss (Iraq – SAAVI) and improved quality led to increased exports of apricots to the EU market (Tajikistan).
94. In general, ITC's entry point in agricultural VC projects is the MSME. However, where required and increasingly in recent years, ITC has worked with farmers to improve their practices and/or increase production to supply MSMEs. Box 4 highlights some key examples.

*Box 3. Examples of projects with activities related to farming/production.*

- Sankofa in Ghana promoted agroforestry (multi-tier inter-cropping) in cocoa replanting plots.
- UKTP Fiji increased ginger production to meet export demand.
- Coconuts II (Caribbean) educated farmers on production aspects (climate-smart agriculture) and in the development of nurseries.
- SAAVI (Iraq) increased tomato and potato production to supply buyers of international chains operating in Iraq.
- Working with beekeepers in Tanzania
- Creating awareness of organic coffee production in ACP Ghana and Lao PDR ARISE+
- New coffee planting in Eswatini.
- MARKUP worked with avocado farmers through farmer organizations in Kenya, and with targeted cinnamon farmers in Tanzania, and on agroforestry in Uganda. In Kenya, MARKUP also supported farmer organizations in getting Global GAP certification.
- GRASP has been increasing the production of fruits, vegetables, and livestock in Pakistan.
- Other examples include ACP (on coffee in Ghana), and WACOMP.

Source: Compiled by evaluation.

**Finding 8. ITC's support contributed to varying degrees of improved processes and practices in MSMEs in agricultural value chains.**

95. Companies in Rwanda (supported through MARKUP) have made changes and were ready for final audit due to coaching through the project activities on the Rain Forest Alliance 2020 standard. A Tanzanian MSME was able to get FSSC 22000 certification<sup>64</sup> as a result of capacity building through MARKUP.
96. Due to SAAVI, in Iraq, farmers are able to negotiate directly with buyers. Connection to buyers was made by the project. Prior to the project the farmers sold through middlemen or sold at local markets. Grading and sorting of tomatoes led to higher (at least 50% increase in) net prices for tomato farmers.<sup>65</sup> The project

<sup>64</sup> Certification of food safety management systems.

<sup>65</sup> Now tomato delivered to buyer ranged between IQD 375 to 390/kg Transport cost is 60 IQD. In the past the price was 225 IQD at farmgate. So, a new increase of about IQD 100/kg.

also facilitated the creation of “Made in Iraq” branding. Also, production scheduling enabled farmers to ensure consistent supply to buyers.

97. In Ghana (UKTP/NTF V), the artisanal chocolatiers reported improving quality and packaging to meet international standards. Some have started local online sales. One of the MSMEs has improved its inventory management, and some MSMEs in Ghana reported working towards HACCP certification. It was noted that some of the chocolatiers have started online sales; however, local financial regulations prevent payments through websites.<sup>66</sup> A Ghanaian MSME in shea products got ISO 9001 certification due to ITC's support through the Quality Team's project. Cocoa farmers in Ghana under Sankofa (in their replanting plots) reported that they are not using chemicals and fertilizers and they have been mulching to conserve soil moisture. In Tanzania improved beekeeping practices were reported.
98. Climate-smart agriculture and integrated pest management practices were noted to have been adopted by farmers in Coconuts II. In Belize (Coconuts II) one MSME went from doing things manually in their kitchen to building a shed and installing a packaging unit for coconut oil. Access to finance enabled ginger farmers in Fiji to expand the area under ginger cultivation, and thereby production, which helped the ginger processing companies to operate their facilities at 100% capacity (UKTP Fiji).

**Findings 9: ITC's access to finance work is not cohesive and varies with each project due to a lack of a strategy on what has to be done and what role to play. Awareness creation has been the focus/key activity of ITC in access to finance.**

99. Access to finance is a key aspect of strengthening MSMEs. Current ITC activities in projects where access to finance is an output include providing training on accessing finance or financial management/record keeping, hiring consultants to prepare loan applications/business plans, and, in some cases, organizing outreach. Another activity noted in ITC's agricultural value chain projects on access to finance is conducting studies on investors (e.g., ACP). Few agricultural value chain projects also provide grants from project budgets, although it is not the same as access to finance (e.g., SAAVI, GRASP, ACP, and Eswatini I). At times, it is matching grants as in SAAVI and Eswatini I.
100. Discussions in ITC highlighted that there is a structural risk that prevents ITC from doing more in access to finance, and this includes costs and risks in the sector in addition to regulations. Interviews also pointed out that there is a disconnect and common understanding of what has to be done/achieved in access to finance. The lack of cohesiveness in access to finance work is attributed to a lack of strategy or framework. An internal study in ITC indicated that less than 4% of ITC MSMEs have received funding (accessed finance) as of December 2022. Also, ITC estimates the cost per enterprise from mapping to finance as USD 1,300 – perceived to be very high.
101. The evaluation noted a few positive examples of projects helping MSMEs to access finance. As part of UKTP Fiji, ginger farmers in Fiji were trained to operate farming as a business and supported to prepare business plans to submit to the banks. The farmers were able to get working capital credit from Fiji Development Bank.<sup>67</sup> This enabled the farmers to increase planting area and their production. The key to success was de-risking by ensuring that each farmer contracts from exporters to supply ginger and bank marking crop lien.<sup>68</sup> In UKTP Zimbabwe, the microfinance institutions were trained and linked with lead farmers in horticulture. The lead farmers opened bank accounts and were subsequently able to avail themselves of loans. Although in GRASP (Pakistan), MSMEs were linked to financial institutions/micro-financial institutions and have accessed finance, it was reported that borrowing interest rates were high.

*“Training is our core product in access to finance” (ITC).*

<sup>66</sup> The buyer, call the telephone number to make payments through mobile money.

<sup>67</sup> In the first year, 42/50 farmers were able to get loans. In the second year, 113 of the 163 farmers could obtain finance from the banks. Some chose to self-fund additional area in ginger cultivation.

<sup>68</sup> This helped the bank to deduct from the crop sales.

102. MARKUP partnered with local financial institutions and conducted boot camps and individual coaching. It was reported that USD 8 million was financed in five countries to farmers/MSMEs. MARKUP also supported and facilitated the Financing Gateway, which is being hosted by various institutions in each country and at the regional level at EAC. Financing companies and terms are posted for comparison. Trained Fis in green finance so new products could be developed, which was linked to the European Sustainability Model.

*“Financial institutions have products for MSMEs – the issue is we are not facilitating in helping financial institutions in finding MSMEs and linking products to MSMEs” (ITC).*

103. In Ghana, training was conducted for MSMEs to create awareness. However, no linkage to local banks was facilitated despite local banks having financial products for MSMEs at attractive borrowing rates,<sup>69</sup> explicitly targeting men under 40 years and women under 45 years in the agri-food sector. It was reported that none of the training participants availed any finance, because of the training.<sup>70</sup> In fact, the majority of beneficiary MSMEs in Ghana were not investment ready and needed substantial technical support on basic areas such as book-keeping or business plan preparation. Despite MSMEs attending ITC's training activities they did not have the requisite qualifications to apply for funds. In this context, the evaluation noted a missed opportunity in facilitating these enterprises with access to finance, although the project management indicated that since then, they “are applying for funds and making good progress”. It was also noted that the EU has an “Access to Finance Fund” for agricultural VCs. While the EU has its modalities to conduct transactions through European companies as their subsidiaries, it was not evident in ITC's efforts to tap into this fund. Also, not much evidence was seen from the projects on facilitating access to trade finance and/or value chain finance (vertical approach to financing).<sup>71</sup>

104. Literature (including IFIs' evaluations of their respective support to agricultural value chains) highlights that access to credit is a requirement in a value chain and challenges to access restrict benefits. Part of the problem in securing finance was the lack of familiarity of banks with specific agribusiness finance systems and aversion to offering agricultural credit. Some ITC agricultural value chain projects also reported a lack of collateral and credit history as reasons hindering access to finance. It was also noted during some discussions that trade finance may not be an issue for MSME, but the challenge is to avail pre-shipment finance.

**Finding 10: Digital trade/e-commerce is an emerging area for ITC and MSMEs in agricultural value chains. ITC is currently focused on providing training to facilitate the supply and demand for digital services and piloting selected digital applications for agricultural value chains.**

105. Digital trade and literacy are critical to strengthening MSMEs and enhancing their competitiveness. In a recent paper, the World Trade Centre (WTO) highlighted that in over 90% of the trading world, trade and supply chain data is embedded in paper forms. It further states that digital networks have been created to drive common approaches and standards; however, there are no established means to connect “digital islands” to one another.<sup>72</sup> It is in this context the results achieved must be noted. This is an emerging area for ITC and MSMEs in agriculture. At this point, the primary activity is training in ITC's projects.

106. In Uganda, MARKUP included farmers/farmer groups in a digital registry/digital platform with GPS tracking to locate farmers to provide support. In Zimbabwe, local institutions were reported to have benefitted from the installation of Traceability Software, which helped them to ink and monitor the production of the out-grower smallholder farmers. Traceability is becoming important for the EU.

107. ITC's support/training through an innovation technology hub in Ghana has led to start-ups in the agricultural sector. Examples of start-ups include robotics using artificial intelligence to detect diseases in tomatoes and

<sup>69</sup> Fidelity Bank had a rate of 10%, and ABSA Bank had a rate of 9%. As against local rates, that can go up to 40%.

<sup>70</sup> At the time of drafting the report, it was clarified that 70% of the training participants were above the targeted age groups.

<sup>71</sup> In conventional finance, financial institutions provide financial services to a sector – a horizontal approach. The vertical approach looks at providing finance to actors within a value chain.

<sup>72</sup> WTO (2023). Digital trade for MSMEs: momentum and acceleration.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/icc\\_digital\\_trade\\_for\\_msme.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/icc_digital_trade_for_msme.pdf)

other perishables, artificial intelligence and sensors used in greenhouses for irrigation, solar-powered cold storage and using drones for spraying.

108. Although e-commerce was reported to have a big potential, the evaluation noted that it was not addressed by most ITC's current portfolio of agricultural value chain interventions. The portfolio analysis indicated that e-commerce was addressed in some of the projects when led by four Sections – Office of Africa (DCP/OA), Office of Asia and the Pacific (DCP/OAP), Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness (DECI/SEC) and Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business Section (DMD/TFPB). In Ghana while few MSMEs report starting online sales; however, payments cannot be made online due to regulations in the country.<sup>73</sup> Discussions highlighted that collecting customs duty online was reported to be in issue in some countries.

### A more supportive business ecosystem for MSMEs in agricultural value chains

**Finding 11: ITC support has strengthened organizations, associations, and networks in the agricultural value chain, leading to improved operational and managerial performance.**

109. Discussions and documents highlighted that support by MARKUP to BSOs in EAC countries led to improved organizational performance and service to benefit their MSME clients. The BSO were able to increase their membership by 40%. Furthermore, MARKUP worked with farmer organizations in Kenya to get Global GAP certification.

110. In Ghana, the Sankofa project strengthened the capacities of Kuapa Kokoo Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union Limited (KKFU)<sup>74</sup> extension workers in the project communities. It was noted that the NTF V in Ghana is supporting KKFU to develop its next strategic plan. The ACP (Ghana) brought together most coffee stakeholders for the first time for the validation of the coffee manual focused on post-harvest management. It was noted that it is being translated into the local language and that the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has taken it to promote the manual.

111. The Coffee Network is a good example of a strengthened network. The Coffee Guide (4<sup>th</sup> edition)<sup>75</sup> is a result of a co-creation process with coffee industry actors. The advisory panel of over 70 members (including coffee roasters and brands, policymakers, coffee organizations and academia) from across the globe helped shape The Coffee Guide's structure and content. The Laos Coffee Association was strengthened and linked to the World Coffee Market through the Lao PDR ARISE+ project. In Iraq, SAAVI established farmer alliances with governance structures and ensured they were registered with the government to give them legal status.

112. In the Caribbean, through funding from Coconuts II (and earlier through Coconut I), it has been able to carry out agronomic aspects of the project across the Caribbean, including planting materials, nurseries, climate-smart agriculture, good agricultural practices, and integrated pest management. In the Caribbean, the network connection created by Coconuts II has helped MSMEs to source within the Caribbean (instead of products from Southeast Asia). For example, Belize and Guyana have excess production to trade with Jamaica and Antigua. It was reported that these MSMEs were not aware of each other earlier.

113. The presence of regional coordinators of ITC's regional projects supporting the agricultural value chains in regional institutions has helped strengthen respective organizations in their processes and decision-making. Examples include ACP having its regional coordinator for Africa housed in Robusta Coffee Agency of Africa and Madagascar (ACRAM) in Gabon, and MARKUP has its regional coordinator in EAC in Tanzania. Furthermore, ACP working with ACRAM has given them a blueprint to continue.

<sup>73</sup> Payment has to be made through mobile money after one decides what and how much to buy.

<sup>74</sup> Formerly known as Kuapa Kokoo Farmers Union.

<sup>75</sup> Reported to be the most consulted ITC document. The Coffee Guide was reported to have been downloaded more than 4000 times between October 2021 and February 2022.

114. In addition to BSOs, ITC strengthens Trade and Investment Support Institutions (TISIs),<sup>76</sup> for example, the Ghana Export Promotion Agency. It was noted that ITC used to work only with TISIs and now has broadened to BSOs.

**Finding 12. Many agricultural value chain projects focused primarily on vertical linkages; however, a few of ITC's agricultural value chain interventions strengthened both horizontal and vertical linkages.**

115. Evidence indicated that although ITC highlights its support to agricultural value chain, the primary focus is market access/linkage. Most projects address vertical linkages, particularly in connecting MSMEs to markets and buyers (international/local) or ensuring the supply/production to the exporting MSMEs – more of supply chain development.

116. Nevertheless, a few examples were noted in terms of projects strengthening horizontal and vertical linkages more holistically in the respective value chains. In SAVVI (Iraq), besides facilitating the linkages of farmers to large buyers (e.g., PEPSI, Carrefour, etc.) and local retailers, farmers were organized into groups and registered formally with the government. Master Trainers were trained to strengthen extension services through the Ministry of Agriculture. Additionally, Chambers of Commerce were strengthened at various levels to provide better services and linkages at various levels. The project is also in the process of creating aggregation hubs and is working to improve transportation/logistics and packaging. SAAVI is also developing policies and strategies and is working with the government at various levels. It has linked with the International Potato Centre to supply good quality planting material.

117. In Fiji, the vertical linkage of ginger farmers and exporters existed, and the exporters were connected with buyers/export markets pre-UKTP. However, the exporters faced supply constraints to meet export demand. With ginger production requiring high set-up costs to expand the area, UKTP Fiji linked ginger farmers to Fiji Development Bank to access finance. The project also helped in de-risking financing. Additionally, the project also linked with local institutions and the Ministry of Agriculture for services (including extension). Aggregation services were also provided at the farm gate for one year (instead of delivery at the factory gate).

118. ACP in Ghana, in addition to working with the Department of Cooperatives to establish farmer groups, the project is also working with aggregators, roasters, local retailers and exporters. Due to a lack of private nurseries for coffee seedlings in Ghana, ACP has linked with the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) to develop and produce coffee seedlings and disseminate good practices for coffee farmers. ACP in Ghana is also working with a culinary institute in Spain for product innovation in coffee (as coffee drinking was reported to be not a general habit in Ghana). The project is also creating linkages to local, regional, and international markets.

119. In the Caribbean, Coconuts II established National Stakeholder Platforms, linked producers/MSMEs (involved in the project) to procure within the Caribbean instead of Southeast Asia,<sup>77</sup> and worked through CARDI on agronomic aspects (including establishing nurseries). Collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture (extension services and plant protection) and other institutions (such as the Coconut Industry Board in Jamaica and NAREI in Guyana) besides product development. Furthermore, Coconuts II linked regional and national laboratories in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to other Caribbean countries so that they do not have to send product samples to the USA and Canada for listeria testing in coconut water. The Coconut II's Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reported the progress on the strengthened and integrated coconut value chain as moderate, nonetheless, it demonstrates that there is a great potential for development.

<sup>76</sup> TISIs are local, national, and regional organizations that support businesses such as trade and investment promotion organizations, chambers of commerce, sector associations, enterprise development agencies, and supply chain management organizations (<https://hub.unido.org/multilateral-agencies/itc>).

<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, it was reported that logistics among Caribbean countries had been a perennial challenge for trade/good movement within the region, and it continues.

120. The technology sector projects<sup>78</sup> supported by ITC in Ghana were noted to be improving services in the agriculture sector.<sup>79</sup> Examples of technology sector start-ups include solar-powered cold storage, input financing (give seeds/fertilizers with guaranteed uptake), drone spraying, carbon trading and regenerating soil. In Uganda, due to MARKUP's Farmer Filed Service Delivery coaching, enterprises have established services for their farmer supplier network.

121. The WTO accession project in Uzbekistan is an example highlighting horizontal linkages. ITC's agricultural value chain interventions do not always integrate horizontally with services (technical, inputs, quality testing, etc.). Projects primarily focus on market, packaging, etc. Again, there is no evidence of projects addressing issues on standards on weights and measures and compliance and was noted to be a challenge in Africa.

**Finding 13: A few ITC agricultural VC projects have strengthened value chain governance<sup>80</sup> in respective countries.**

122. Literature highlighted that strengthening value chain governance is important for inclusiveness<sup>81</sup> and governance issues are of increasing importance in the agrifood system, given the greater emphasis on product differentiation, food safety and product standards required in a competitive market environment.<sup>82</sup>

123. In Coconuts II, National Stakeholder Platforms have been established to oversee all aspects related to the coconut sector in the project countries in the Caribbean. The evaluation noted that the National Stakeholder Platforms are emerging as the most important coordination mechanism for the coconut industry, as many of the project countries did not have a sectoral mechanism or organization; exceptions being Jamaica, Guyana and the Dominican Republic.<sup>83</sup> In countries where there is no other body overseeing the coconut sector it was reported that discussions are underway about making the Platform as an official body. The capacity of the National Stakeholder Platform may vary among countries. Overall, the Coconut I & II projects have helped structure the coconut industry development in the region.

The Ministry of Agriculture chairs the National Stakeholder Platform and includes representatives from plant protection, extension services, processors, farmers, and export-import agencies. CARDI acts as a Secretariat.

124. In SAAVI (Iraq), farmer groups have been created with governance structures and committees. At the time of the evaluation, ten groups created were functional and have been formally registered with the government. Each of these groups have a costed agricultural business investment plan with return on investment. It was noted that the investment plans gave the farmer groups the ability to present in platforms consisting of government officials and development partners to facilitate investments in areas the investors (funders) are interested. As noted in evaluations of IFIs supporting agricultural value chains, platforms represented a shift from market-based governance to a more relational governance.<sup>84</sup>

125. In Eswatini, with support from TMI unit (ITC headquarters) and using ITC's national export strategy development process and model, advice is being provided to the National Competitiveness Council. It was reported that the Council was chaired by the Prime Minister and co-chaired by the Ministry of Industry and

<sup>78</sup> These include non-agriculture ITC projects and NTF V (tech sector component).

<sup>79</sup> However, they are not linked to the current agricultural projects.

<sup>80</sup> VC governance refers to the relationships among buyers, sellers, service providers, and regulatory institutions that operate within or influence the range of activities required to bring a product or service from start to its end use ([www.marketlinks.org](http://www.marketlinks.org)).

<sup>81</sup> IFAD (2019) p7.

<sup>82</sup> ADB (2012).

<sup>83</sup> Jamaica has a Coconut Industry Board, Guyana has the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI), and the Dominican Republic has the Dominican Agribusiness Board (JAD).

<sup>84</sup> The platforms opened space for dialogue and coordination around issues such as input supply, market infrastructure, price level, market information and dispute resolution. A multistakeholder platform brings various stakeholders from the value chain together to improve communication, trust, and mutual understanding and establish commercial relationships. Establishing these platforms was seen as a more advanced intervention in value chain governance.



Commerce. It was emphasized that the work is ongoing, and the Council is at the macro level to strengthen competitiveness and is sector-neutral.

126. In UKTP Fiji, buyer contracts between ginger farmers and exporters of ginger products enabled the Fiji Development Bank to mark crop liens and provide finance to farmers. These purchase agreements/contracts enabled producers to sell directly to distributors or processors without intermediaries or access to finance, thereby improving value chain governance. Also, SAAVI (Iraq) established a purchase agreement between the farmer group and the buyer, either ex-farm or delivered. It was noted that producers were able to negotiate directly.

**Finding 14: There is potential to create stronger synergies through agricultural value chain projects. Currently, many projects tend to operate in silos at the country level.**

127. SAAVI has leveraged synergies at various levels in a fragile humanitarian context to ensure economic value creation. The International Potato Centre is supporting quality planting material for Iraq. In Iraq, the initial work in tomato and poultry has led to supporting the potato sector. The World Food Programme (WFP) is also exploring infrastructure support in value chains that are supported by SAAVI. Furthermore, interest from WFP in working with ITC on the olives value chain has led to a letter of intent to work together, where WFP would focus on the production aspects, and ITC would focus on the market linkages. The current work in Iraq and earlier work in Afghanistan is attracting interest from the WFP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to partner in other countries, especially in the MENA region. In Iraq, inviting the development partners and government officials to the presentation of the Agriculture Business Investment Plan has created synergies so that development partners can invest in areas that are their focus/expertise. For example, FAO has pledged to support cold storage investment in Basra. The presentation also creates awareness of the needs in the communities so that it could be integrated into government budgets as feasible.

128. The National Stakeholder Platforms in the Caribbean through Coconuts II have fostered stronger synergies among various coconut industry actors in each of the 12 project countries. In many of the project countries in the Caribbean, discussion to formalize the structure is a promising step to strengthen synergies further. The Lao PDR ARISE+ project was able to strengthen synergies in the coffee sector by bringing together various coffee sector actors to discuss the country's coffee road map moving forward. Similarly, in Ghana, ACP brought coffee stakeholders together to validate the coffee manual for the country, thereby strengthening synergies. It was noted that the coffee stakeholders were brought together for the first time in Ghana. This was also highlighted by the fact that COCOBOD (Ghana) has taken up to promote the manual.

129. In Ghana, FAO<sup>85</sup> and UNDP<sup>86</sup> are also working on agroforestry pilots with cocoa farmers in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and COCOBOD, respectively. FAO and UNDP were aware of each other's projects due to interactions in the country mechanism for the agriculture sector; however, ITC's interaction on the Sankofa with other development actors was not evident. The evaluation also noted a lack of synergies/linkages of ITC's Ghana cocoa projects with ongoing initiatives of AfDB's Cocoa Sector Institutional Support Project (COSISP)<sup>87</sup> to improve the performance of COCOBOD and/or the World Cocoa Foundation Cocoa and Forests Initiative.<sup>88</sup> in Ghana. The AfDB also provides a larger support facility for COCOBOD.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> FAO's work on sustainable cocoa production with successional and diversified agroforestry in Ghana is funded by Japan and is working in collaboration with a local foundation, the University of Ghana and CRIG

<sup>86</sup> UNDP works in collaboration with COCOBOD is working communities in integrating agroforestry approach in cocoa. Mondeléz Chocolate is a key partner. UNDP also works with the Forestry Commission on the Tree Tenure Policy to ensure an enabling environment in the cocoa value chain (for trees planted through the agro-forestry approach.)

<sup>87</sup> COSISP <https://projectsportal.afdb.org/dataportal/VProject/show/P-GH-KF0-003%20%20%20>

<sup>88</sup> The governments of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire and 36 leading cocoa and chocolate companies have joined together in the Cocoa and Forest Initiative to end deforestation due to cocoa farming (<https://www.worldcocoafoundation.org/initiative/cocoa-forests-initiative/>). The project reported linkage to the Cocoa and Forests Initiative as Chocolat Halba (one of the donors of Sankofa) was directly involved with the World Cocoa Foundation.

<sup>89</sup> This facility is to increase cocoa productivity and overall production, rehabilitate aged and disease-infected farmers, increase warehouse capacity, and support local cocoa-processing companies (<https://projectsportal.afdb.org/dataportal/VProject/show/P-GH-A00-007>).

This highlights the lack of attention to horizontal linkages and thereby strengthening synergies in ITC interventions (especially in the cocoa sector), as agricultural value chains cannot operate in silos. Examples of missed opportunities in Ghana to create synergies and/or leverage (creating linkages) also include the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), which was supporting MSMEs with the cost of certification and a German private sector firm investing in solar panels in the cocoa sector in the country.<sup>90</sup>

130. Regional Economic Communities in Africa play an important role in facilitating the private sector in regional value chains.<sup>91</sup> However, except for MARKUP with EAC and WACOMP with ECOWAS, projects in Africa did indicate synergies with regional economic communities. It is important for influencing/enabling regional policies to facilitate cross-border trade.

131. Synergies and collaboration with regional institutions include with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) in Coconuts II for agronomic aspects and ACRAM in ACP on robusta coffee in bring public and private sectors together. In Ghana, the association with CRIG much later in Sankofa for agroforestry in cocoa; however, ACP Ghana on coffee was linked with COCOBOD at various levels including CRIG and the extension division. Limited interaction with COCOBOD in the Sankofa project was noted in the annual reports. Also, Ministry of Agriculture is better connected with the ACP Ghana coffee project than the cocoa projects. Additionally, synergies were limited and not explicit in Sankofa at district/regional level with relevant line ministries and COCOBOD extension officers.<sup>92</sup>

132. Public-private alliances are required to scale up innovations in trade, logistics and finance. Evaluations of other development partners highlighted that encouraging private sector participation requires clarity on the roles for the government and the private sector. They further stated that building synergies through public-private alliances requires the identification of opportunities and the development of commercial models for the effective participation of both sectors.

133. Successful public-private alliances could be seen in UKTP Fiji, where the Ministry of Agriculture, the ginger exporters, farmers, and the Fiji Development Bank. Coconut II has forged public-private alliances at the national level through the multistakeholder platforms in the project countries in the Caribbean. SAAVI (Iraq) has facilitated a public-private alliance through the project. Both ACP Ghana and Lao PDR ARISE+ have also facilitated public-private alliances in the coffee sector in the respective countries.

134. The 2023 Sustainability Review conducted by ITC found that the continuity of the public-private mechanism put in place in each of the three case study countries – Burkina Faso, Sri Lanka, and St. Lucia. Making private and public sector work together – there is always mistrust. This has been vetted in several evaluations conducted on agricultural value chains by development partners.

**Finding 15. ITC engages with diverse partners to mobilize resources and implement agricultural value chain interventions. Partnerships are critical for ITC's success.<sup>93</sup> Corporate guidance is required to define types of partnership at the country level to ensure common understanding.**

135. There is clarity on partners and partnerships in terms of resource mobilization. In ITC, partnership, in the first instance, refers to funding partners. As an example, ITC's "Partnership4Purpose – Engagement strategy" is primarily focused on resource mobilization and does not address implementing or other partners explicitly. Similar to the complementary ITC paper "Business Sector Partnerships," ITC should have

<sup>90</sup> At the time of drafting, the evaluation was informed that Interactions with international organizations and technical agencies have happened at a later stage also given the need to assess the costs and benefits of the Dynamic Agroforestry Approach whose pilot-testing only started in 2019. It takes at least five years before the cocoa plants yield fruits and the carbon setting impact can be assessed.

<sup>91</sup> AfCFTA/UNDP (2021) "Which value chains for a made in Africa revolution", The Futures Report 2021, African Continental Free Trade Agreement Secretariat, Kigali/United Nations Development Programme, New York, [https://imanidevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AFCFTA-Futures-Report-2021-Which-Value-Chains-for-a-Made-in-Africa-Revolution\\_2021.pdf](https://imanidevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AFCFTA-Futures-Report-2021-Which-Value-Chains-for-a-Made-in-Africa-Revolution_2021.pdf).

<sup>92</sup> At the drafting time, the evaluation was informed that interactions with local communities as well as district/regional level line ministries have happened at a later stage.

<sup>93</sup> Discussions primarily focus on partnerships at the country level (not the funders).



a paper on implementing partners or strategic partners in the country/region. For agricultural value chain projects, the EU is the primary funding partner.

136. There is a growing need to work in partnership to achieve ITC's goals, as it is not possible to have all the expertise in ITC. However, with an increasing number of partnerships (other than funding partners), it is important to have the right people, systems and processes to identify and work with partners, as success and results are dependent on partners. ITC works with diverse types of organizations as implementing partners.
137. A few projects with UN agencies in the countries. For example, GRASP (Pakistan), FAO is the implementing partner for ITC. In Iraq, SAAVI is working with WFP. Additionally, SAAVI is also collaborating with WFP and UNICEF on procuring locally for the school feeding programme in Iraq. The SAAVI also partners with FAO and IOM. In Kenya, MARKUP collaborated with UNIDO. In WACOMP, UNIDO is the implementing partner in multiple countries.
138. A few examples of ITC collaborating with other development partners were also noted in agriculture value chain projects. Fairtrade Africa and Nature Development Foundation are implementing partners for Sankofa in Ghana. For MARKUP, GIZ is the third-party monitoring agency. SAAVI also works with the Norwegian Refugee Council and the International Committee of the Red Cross at the country level. Not much evidence of collaboration or partnerships with international financial institutions or bilateral agencies (other than the ones funding the project) at the country level was noted or explicit.
139. Several instances of partnerships with regional and/or government agencies were noted. CARDI (research institution) is the implementing partner for Coconut II, with 50% of the project budget. In MARKUP, EAC (a regional economic commission) was a key and strategic partner. ACRAM (a regional institution for robusta coffee) was an important partner for ACP. In GRASP (Pakistan), PPAF (a government agency) was the monitoring and implementing partner. The Coconut Industry Board in Jamaica is a key partner in Coconuts II. In Ghana, CRIG is a technical partner of cocoa (Sankofa) and coffee (ACP Ghana).
140. In a few agricultural projects, partnerships were noted with international research or specialized institutions. For example, collaboration with International Potato Centre in SAAVI to supply good seed material, with CIRAD<sup>94</sup> in Uganda for agroforestry in cocoa and with a culinary institute in Spain for specialty flavoured coffee in Ghana (ACP).
141. Some examples of private sector collaborations at the agricultural value chain project level include ACP working with Lavazza and Nescafe on specialty coffee and SAAVI (Iraq) facilitating alliances with Carrefour, PEPSI, VANO, and ZNC to buy locally. In Burundi, collaboration with Starbucks and Nescafe enables the linkage with farmers.
142. Strategically, the primary relationship with the Government is through the Ministry of Trade or Ministry of Industry of Commerce. Increasingly, with more projects addressing production, the relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture is still at a nascent stage in many countries. With decentralized governments in countries, it was noted that many times, projects made connections at the national level; this does not mean they are connected at the sub-national level where the project is implemented. Again, whether the association is at the policy level, or the operational level is not always explicit, as the officials may not exactly know about the project. Projects sometimes lacked the clarity of beneficiary organization vis-à-vis partner organization/institution. A mapping of partners/partnerships was not evident (for a particular country), which could be helpful in the case of multiple projects implemented in one country.

### A more conducive policy and regulatory environment for MSMEs in agricultural value chains

#### **Finding 16. Interventions in the policy and regulatory environment are limited and an area of improvement.**

<sup>94</sup> French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development.

143. Policy influence is important for transformative and systemic changes that take several years. There is general agreement that policy issues have to be addressed for wider impact – e.g., trade facilitation, logistical issues, etc. As well as for investment promotion for value addition. Creating an enabling environment was viewed to be critical for sustainable impact. However, only 53% of the agricultural value chain projects report to contribute to the outcome – “a more conducive policy and regulatory environment.”
144. In Lao PDR ARISE+, the project supported the Coffee sector Road Map<sup>95</sup> and facilitated the process, which ensured more active involvement of coffee value chain actors, including coffee and the government. In Uzbekistan, the project has helped the country ensure that the legislation conforms to WTO rules. ITC is supporting negotiations in accessions, including trade and agriculture, through the project.
145. In Iraq, SAAVI supports the development of the Tomato Sustainable Development Strategy, Potato Sustainable Development Strategy and Poultry Sector Strategy. The strategy for the poultry sector includes biosecurity measures, cooling and heating systems and feed formulation. All three strategies are developed for the whole of Iraq. GRASP Pakistan is at a subnational level; however, through the Trade Policy Unit in ITC a slaughterhouse ordinance is being drafted, which has to be finally endorsed by the cabinet. GRASP is also developing 10 Sector strategies.
146. MARKUP was seen as one of the important projects by EAC, as it directly contributed to the “development trajectory” of EAC strategy. In the Caribbean, on Coconuts II, although the project was formally approved and reports sent to the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM), it was noted more regular discussions and better communication with CARIFORUM, and the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) could have helped influence policy. In Sankofa, the policy push with COCOBOD on agroforestry in cocoa replanting plots is reported to be early stage; it requires a proof of concept at several levels, including the yield of cocoa from these plots and a seal of approval from CRIG. It also requires a collaborative approach along with other actors who are also doing the same concept (some of them in collaboration with COCOBOD), which is not evident yet. In addition, the Forestry Commission has to look into the Tree Tenure Policy<sup>96</sup> so that farmers can benefit from the timber/shade trees in the cocoa agroforestry plots.
147. ITC develops National Export Strategies at the request of countries and, in some instances, through projects (as in SAAVI or in GRASP) or by development actors (World Bank, EU). Subsequent to developing National Export Strategies, ITC develops sector strategies (e.g., agriculture, bio services, information technology or financial) and functional services (e.g., trade strategy, trade facilitation strategy or trade and investment promotion strategy) – refer to Annex I for a list of strategies developed relevant to the agriculture sector. The work is done at corporate level and most of them are funded by the countries. The strategies are endorsed by countries at Cabinet or parliament level. The sector strategies are adopted at the sector ministry level. These export strategies are the foundation of trade-related technical assistance. The issue noted was that ITC’s agricultural value chain projects do not link to this work directly. The World Export Development Forum is an annual flagship event of ITC. Also, ITC’s involvement at global policy platforms was noted as in Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D).<sup>97</sup>
148. Literature highlighted that even though progress has been made in support to strengthen policies, and regulations, the support was often fragmented and not specifically directed as the key constraints for value chain development.

<sup>95</sup> The coffee sector road map was already present in the country. UNDP is also working with support from Switzerland at the subnational level to have a platform on REDD+ and cocoa along with the Forestry Commission.

<sup>96</sup> Natural trees belong to the government. However, planted trees may belong to farmers if registered and geo-referenced. Registration can be done only after the tree reaches a particular girth (which may take 3-4 years). It was noted that UNDP is working with the Forest Commission on the Tree Policy.

<sup>97</sup> Adopted by the European Parliament in June 2023. The directives are expected to be adopted in 2024.

**Finding 17: Despite the positive contributions of some agricultural value chain projects, understanding about the importance of non-tariff measures<sup>98</sup> in trade within ITC varies, and this was viewed as a bottleneck for better integration of non-tariff measures in agricultural value chain projects. Most agricultural value chain interventions do not leverage ITC's corporate-level work/strengths on non-tariff measures.**

149. According to ITC, there is no single, specific type of non-tariff measure. Rather, they form a constellation of different types of regulations that accompany products throughout their life cycles, from creation through distribution and on to final consumption. They include, among other measures, quality requirements, tests, quotas, certification, and prohibitions. ITC's programme (at the corporate level) on non-tariff measures, which is sector-neutral, is aimed at increasing transparency and helping countries better understand the non-tariff obstacles to trade. The programme components include undertaking large-scale surveys of exports and importers to better understand their difficulties with non-tariff measures and regulatory mapping.

150. Since 2013, about 3000 new or modified non-tariff measures have been notified to WTO every year globally – most of which have been TBT and SPS measures.<sup>99</sup> This could be food safety, a laboratory and/or technical and regulatory aspects. A 2013 ITC study on NTMs indicated that MSMEs in Jamaica are more affected by non-tariff measures. About 40% of exporting companies identified non-tariff measures as a major deterrent to the success of their businesses. The imposing NTMs were seen as a cause for concern, specifically for processed food and agro-based industries.<sup>100</sup> Despite a decade-old study, the evaluation noted that non-tariff measures concern still existed, and not much evidence was seen in the ITC projects in the Caribbean in the agricultural value chain other than linking Caribbean project MSMEs to regional/national laboratories for testing of coconut water.

151. The project in Uzbekistan in helping its accession to WTO had activities to strengthen the capacities of technical barriers to trade (TBT) and SPS institutions in the country so that they could address TBT/SPS issues and help meet the EU market requirements. In Tajikistan, in enabling market access through improved food safety systems, specific issues (including residue of sulphur dioxide in apricots) were addressed and this helped honey and apricots access to the EU market. In the Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade (SYMST) project in Lao PDR and Vietnam work is being done to strengthen SPS measures in the fruits and vegetable sector.

152. Not many projects focusing on agricultural value chains seem to work or contribute to addressing difficulties with non-tariff measures at the country level although the non-tariff measure is a key part of trade and market intelligence for SME competitiveness.<sup>101</sup> Much of the work on non-tariff measures seen in agricultural value chain projects is on quality, TBT/SPS and certification work. Several of them are undertaken by the Quality Team as projects managed by them or as components of other projects. In Tanzania, MARKUP conducted a study on non-tariff measure and used it to inform and sensitize the government. Through the Alliance for Product Quality in Africa, among other quality and SPS-related activities, the project was able to support a shea processor/exporter in Ghana to obtain ISO 9001 certification.

153. The Thailand ARISE+ helped strengthen the capacities of TBT/SPS institutions in the country. In Tanzania, beekeeping cooperatives were supported in getting Global GAP certification. A few projects also indicated work supporting Fairtrade certification. There was no evidence of work on standards on weights and

<sup>98</sup> Non-tariff measures are official policy measures on export and import, other than ordinary tariffs, that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods, quantities traded and/or prices. These consist of mandatory requirements, rules or regulations legally set by the government of the exporting, importing or transit country.

<sup>99</sup> ITC and ESCAP (2013). Making Regional Integration Work (<https://intracen.org/file/makingregionalintegrationworkcompanyperspectivesonnon-tariffmeasuresinasia-pacificpdf>).

<sup>100</sup> ITC (2013). Jamaica Company Perspectives. (<https://intracen.org/resources/publications/jamaica-company-perspectives-an-its-series-on-non-tariff-measures>).

<sup>101</sup> Discussions highlighted the primary reasons for this limited coverage is because of the primary focus on marketing, branding, packaging, and trade fair facilitation. Lack of understanding and importance of non-tariff measures and cross-border trade among project teams is also the reason.

measures in the agricultural value chain projects; nonetheless, discussions and literature highlighted non-compliance and weak enforcement (of regulations when present), and older technologies of measurement were noted to be issues in Africa. Discussions and attention given to non-tariff measures in agricultural value chain projects highlight varied understanding of the importance of the non-tariff measures in a holistic manner.

154. In Ghana, the biggest hindering factor for MSMEs to export chocolates is the specification. It was noted that many MSMEs may not be testing the specifications at various stages of processing until the finished product. Ghana does not have an accredited laboratory to test the nutritional value of chocolate.<sup>102</sup>

**Finding 18. Work on trade facilitation and reforms on cross-border trade is limited in agricultural value chain projects. It is primarily done at the corporate level and is only leveraged by some regional projects.**

155. Work on trade facilitation and reforms in cross-border trade is largely done at the corporate level and/or by some regional agricultural value chain projects. The evaluation did not note any evidence related to trade facilitation/reform by single-country projects except in a few projects – e.g., projects facilitating WTO accession as in Uzbekistan.

156. At the corporate level, ITC supported the development of a trade facilitation portal for UNCTAD, including pre-border controls and border crossing procedures (non-agricultural projects). It was noted that while the software is in UNCTAD headquarters, the portal is hosted in the countries, and they have unlimited licenses. At the country level, it is embedded in the National Trade Facilitation Committee (e.g., Burkina Faso). It was reported that some countries have been able to simplify steps and processes, for example, Kenya reduced by 30% process time.

157. At the regional level, MARKUP helped build consensus among EAC countries. The project developed a trade paper for coffee and avocado and channeled it through EAC to member States through existing process systems – Trade Facilitation Committee and National Coffee Association. Not inventing parallel processes was viewed as good practice by external stakeholders. In Central Asia (work on ten agricultural value chains) bilateral agreements have been developed – for example, between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

158. While Coconuts II is working on sourcing planting material and mother palms within the Caribbean, the major bottleneck in terms of moving material within CARICOM is the phytosanitary conditions that have to be met. While stakeholders acknowledge the challenge, it was noted that it is necessary to prevent pests and diseases from entering from one country to another. However, it was not evident how the project is addressing the issue. It requires harmonized sanitary and phytosanitary measures for the Caribbean.

159. Another aspect of trade facilitation and reform mentioned earlier is trade finance. A recent study by IFC/WTO indicated that trade finance supports only 40% of the goods trade in Africa (global average 60-80%). Also, trade finance in Africa is more expensive than in emerging markets and advanced economies.<sup>103</sup>

160. There is a lot of potential for ITC to help countries, especially in Africa, with AfCFTA focusing on intra-African trade. Discussions highlighted that in the past four to five years, there has been some focused work on informal cross-border trade at the corporate level regarding Simplified Trade Regime, looking at Africa through RECs and AfCFTA and work cross-border trade associations.

161. Again, work done is at the corporate level and not currently a priority to be incorporated in agricultural value chain projects. MARKUP facilitated regional trade; nevertheless, there is much to be done on cross-border trade. Financial regulations are reported to be an issue in Africa with reference to payments between two African countries – as summarized well by an external stakeholder comment, *“It is easier to go to the*

<sup>102</sup> It was brought to the attention that many MSMEs (chocolatiers) currently use one laboratory (Chocomark in Tema, Ghana) for testing, although it is not accredited.

<sup>103</sup> WTO/IFC (2022). Trade Finance in Africa. ([https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/booksp\\_e/tfinwestafrica\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/tfinwestafrica_e.pdf))

*border and get or pay the money across the border to the person than to transfer money between two countries in Africa – say DRC and Tanzania.”*

**Finding 19: A few agricultural value chain projects contributed to the development of quality strategies/standards in countries.**

162. MARKUP supported EAC and GIZ to organize the first EAC Quality Awards initiative in October 2022. The initiative was designed to stimulate interest in quality management and to consolidate and coordinate various quality success efforts in the region by bringing together small and medium businesses for recognition at the EAC level. MARKUP also created and/or strengthened National Quality Associations. The National Quality Association of Tanzania now uses quality compliance for SMEs. As it contributed to the National Agenda, the Government of Tanzania has set up a fund for quality certification (to pay certification fees for SMEs). It was reported that the fund will pay certification fees for three years. MARKUP supported and coached the SMEs to move towards certification.

163. SAAVI (Iraq) has created a national label for the origin of tomatoes. This is to create and boost and image of local production. Lao PDR ARISE+ is upgrading the National Standards for Coffee for the country.

164. The Quality Team in ITC is sector-neutral and could be involved in managing projects or components of agriculture value chains or other sectors. The evaluation noted that the team works on all certifications, sometimes on equipment, connecting clients to laboratories. One example of certification is coaching and supporting a Shea MSME in Ghana during COVID to go through ISO audit successfully and get certified on ISO 9001.

165. The Quality Team has been successful in developing quality strategies/policies in several countries and also trained several Master Trainers in the countries. Examples of countries in which National Quality Policy<sup>104</sup> has been developed include Afghanistan, Burundi, Comoros, and Malaysia. In Burundi, the National Quality Policy developed along with national stakeholders has been approved by the government.<sup>105</sup> A review of the National Quality Initiative in Philippines is also being done.

166. The [Standards Map](#) has more than 350 standards. It is an ITC public tool and has 1,600 criteria. Training has been done in Kenya on tea, Nicaragua on coffee and also in ARISE+ and MARKUP. Currently, most of the work done is with non-agribusiness, and the potential to apply to more agribusiness projects should be explored.

**Finding 20: In the past, ITC had dedicated South-South cooperation/trade projects. However South-South trade and regional integration are currently only a component or activity of primarily regional/multi-country agricultural value chain projects.**

167. According to UNCTAD, South-South trade has grown faster than the world trade.<sup>106</sup> In 2018, according to Institute of Development Studies, South-South trade represented 52% of developing country exports. South-South cooperation is critical for tropical cropping systems and value chains. It was noted that although there are discussions about regional integration in ITC there is no more explicit and/or systematic focus on south-south cooperation or trade. During discussions, two past projects that focused on South-South and Triangular cooperation were brought to the attention of the evaluation. Both projects were funded by the United Kingdom.

168. Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa (SITA)<sup>107</sup> facilitated investments between SMEs in India and five East African countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. It was the South-South

<sup>104</sup> The Policy sits with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce/Ministry of Trade.

<sup>105</sup> CCITF Report – January – December 2022, p.18.

<sup>106</sup> UNCTAD (2023). South-South trade agreement holds a key to more sustainable and inclusive growth (<https://unctad.org/news/south-south-trade-agreement-holds-key-more-sustainable-and-inclusive-growth>).

<sup>107</sup> The project was implemented between 2014 and 2021. It was noted to be the United Kingdom's first Aid for Trade initiative in Triangular cooperation (as ITC website). SITA also covered cotton, and the results on south-south cooperation are not discussed in this evaluation as cotton does not come under agriculture in ITC.

Trade and Investment Cooperation Programme. It was noted the focus was on pulses and spices, in addition to edible oils.<sup>108</sup> The project was able to bring back the interest in pulses, which was neglected in some countries. For example, in Kenya, the production of pulses increased and is now reported to be exported. In Tanzania, pulses production increased, and there is demand from food companies. While farmers have taken up growing chilies, capsicum, turmeric, ginger, and marigold additives, the volumes are yet viable to set up processing for food additives. However, it was reported that a US food company is working in Rwanda on research and development of African flavours for export. In edible oils, the growth in production has led small enterprises to take up cold-pressing to produce virgin oils and sell in niche markets. Prior to the project, edible oils were sold in bulk. Partnership for Investment and Growth in Africa (PIGA)<sup>109</sup> It promoted investments and business partnerships in agro-processing sectors, among others in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Zambia. It improved TISI's investment promotion services in the project countries.

169. The Lao PDR ARISE+ project facilitated South-South cooperation through the Thailand International Cooperation between Lao PDR and Thailand. It was not noted although there was a Regional Market Integration project for ARISE+ funded separately by the EU and implemented by a consulting firm (not linked to ITC), it did not adequately facilitate connection with the ARISE+ project countries (of ITC) at the regional level.<sup>110</sup>

170. In the ACP and Eswatini I, South-South linkages were reported in the coffee sector. Stakeholders from Ghana, Liberia, and Eswatini were taken to Uganda (the largest Robusta coffee producer in Africa with a mature value chain) to learn and develop linkages. In the Caribbean, Coconut II facilitated cooperation between Jamaica's Coconut Industry Board and Indonesia's Coconut Research Institute. Also, the Indonesian institute offered virtual information on coconut cream, water, and milk processing. Furthermore, the Coconut II project was able to facilitate a trip to India to learn about coconut farming systems and also meet with the Coconut Development Board in India.

171. A tech startup in agriculture from Ghana (NTF V country) has been linked to establish its tractor services in Zambia (NTF IV country). Discussions highlighted that many tech startups in the agriculture sector are likely to expand into Nigeria. It was noted that the ITC Tech team supports startups with data-driven decision-making. ITC's Quality team conducts regular South-South webinars for quality experts.

### Improved business, trade, and market intelligence in agricultural value chains

**Findings 21: Not many agricultural value chain projects have leveraged ITC's corporate-level work, tools, public goods and resources on business trade development and market intelligence.**

172. Trade intelligence and public goods are expertise of ITC.<sup>111</sup> However, only 31% of the agricultural VC projects indicate to contribute to "improved business trade and market intelligence" outcome.<sup>112</sup> Most of the contribution to the achievement of this outcome is seen to come from corporate level, which is sector neutral. Literature highlights that a lack of information and adequate resources makes it harder for SMEs to overcome obstacles to trade.

173. At the corporate level, the TMI unit in ITC collected and analyzed trade data and statistics and updated ITC's trade database. It was viewed as a core strength of ITC. It was noted that the use of data could help in value chain mapping, identifying bottlenecks in value chains and market engagements. However, this is not always evident in many of ITC's agriculture interventions. Discussions at the country level indicated that ITC's [Trade Map](#) and [Market Analysis Tools](#) were good tools and there was need in the countries for training

<sup>108</sup> It was noted that initially, coffee was a focus and was dropped after the mid-term evaluations.

<sup>109</sup> Implemented between 2015 and 2019 with funding from the United Kingdom.

<sup>110</sup> Although there was discussion among the ARISE + projects in ITC.

<sup>111</sup> ITC Strategic Plan 2022-2025, p25.

<sup>112</sup> Portfolio analysis based on information in ITC's Project Portal.

government officials and private sector on how to use these tools and make decisions, yet this was not seen as an activity of agricultural value chain projects.

174. MARKUP developed trade facilitation portal in Burundi and upgraded it in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania. The UNCTAD portals existed in these countries, ITC upgraded their functionality. The portal provides steps required to export. The portal covered various products and steps required for exports for each product. It helped to benchmark and decrease time in Rwanda due to streamlined process.

175. Several public goods have been at the core of ITC's work (sector neutral) at the corporate level (e.g., Sustainability Map, Standards Map, Rules of Origin Facilitator and SheTrades Outlook). ITC has a Trade Map and trade data on agri-businesses. Export potential map is sector neutral. T4SD could be useful for agri-businesses. There are more than 400 standards in the portal on voluntary standards. It helps decide what is useful for SMEs.

176. SheTrades.com and Econnect.com are both sector-neutral. Although not ideal for fresh products but seen as good for processed foods. Coffee guide (4<sup>th</sup> addition), an ITC flagship has been translated to Amharic.

177. Digitalized real-time information is not only required for accessing markets, but trade data is also needed for trade negotiations. It was noted that ITC, at the corporate level, updates trade data monthly. The service and tariff data are updated yearly. The exports potential data is also compiled yearly.

### 3.3 Cross-cutting themes

178. The portfolio analysis for this evaluation, indicated that 50% or more of the projects have limited or no contribution to ITC's mainstreaming dimensions (e.g., gender, youth, green growth and social responsibility); of particular attention is youth – 81% of the projects indicated limited contribution.<sup>113</sup> Overall, the review of evaluations conducted by development partners of their respective support to agricultural value chains, highlighted that participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups alone would not ensure equitable distribution. They further highlighted that without deliberate efforts, interventions are unlikely to be inclusive and have equitably distributed benefits.

**Finding 22: Inclusiveness addressed varies among projects across dimensions in agricultural value chain interventions.**

#### Gender

179. The evaluation noted that ITC developed a [Gender Mainstreaming Strategy](#) in 2011 and, subsequently, the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Framework in 2019. Also, the SheTrades Initiative has developed various tools, including gender tool kits. However, there is little evidence of these resources/tools being used in most agricultural value projects. The portfolio analysis of the agricultural value chain projects indicated that only about half the number of interventions had gender as the sole purpose of the project (5%) and/or contributed significantly to gender (44%). The rest of the projects (51%) had limited or no contribution. Overall, there is a need to mainstream gender into agricultural value chain projects to contribute to a more gender-responsive and wider gender transformative agenda.

180. The following are examples that provide different scenarios of how gender has been addressed in agricultural value chain projects (Box 4).

*Box 4. Gender – examples of different scenarios of how it has been addressed in projects.*

- Few projects developed gender actions or a gender strategy (e.g., UKTP and GRASP). However, it might not have been implemented holistically due to various reasons, including cuts (e.g., UKTP Ghana). It was noted that many of the MSMEs (artisanal chocolatiers) were women in Ghana – UKTP and NTF V). Also, it was reported that 50% of farmers who benefitted through UKTP Fijis were women.

<sup>113</sup> Based on information from the ITC Project Portal.



- In Columbia PUEDE, the project document recognizes the role of women in the agricultural value chain. However, according to the ROM, neither gender equality nor women's economic empowerment was integrated in project design or implementation.
- In SAAVI (Iraq), even though it does not have a gender analysis or gender strategy, its design is seen as gender-sensitive – two of its four components have a strong focus on women. As women are identified as key targets. However, according to ROM, it was noted that project faces challenges and the absence of gender expertise within the team appears to be gap. To overcome cultural challenges, the project organized trainings in local areas where women are permitted to come (e.g., at Muktar's house/offices or at the mosque). Women were also involved in the leadership of alliances created by the project.
- MARKUP reported that it did not have gender expert, as such. However, gender aspects were incorporated in the project design and the project had a gender mainstreaming strategy and gender experts were included in the implementation stage. Further it was highlighted that with many MSMEs in East Africa led by women, the project did not have issues in including women beneficiaries and women-led enterprises.
- In Thailand ARISE+ gender analysis was not part of the intervention design, but gender is partially mainstreamed in the implementation. Although not part of the design, ARISE+ projects in Thailand, Malaysia and Lao PDR were able to reach more than 33% of women beneficiaries.
- Coconut II does not have a gender equality strategy; however, it was reported that country teams are reaching out to women. The Jobs Creation and Trade Development project in Sudan focuses on capacity building for women's business associations and women entrepreneurs in the fruit and vegetable sector.

Source: Compiled by the evaluation.

181. In many examples, it could be noted that the primary focus is the participation count of women and women-led enterprises, and this should not be seen as gender mainstreaming. Gender dimensions highlighted in the projects are limited to the involvement of women in project and training activities. SheTrades West Africa reported that it has focused on inclusivity and the improvement of women's livelihoods. It worked with both men and women to improve gender dynamics within households and value chains. The SheTrades Initiative Evaluation (2020) reported that gender analysis and taking into account intersectional dimensions were not explicitly evident when it came to targeting and selecting beneficiaries. The report found that ITC as an organization has to improve gender mainstreaming at a programmatic level. Further, it highlighted complexities for indigenous women and youth (young women) who faced additional barriers to entry or expansion of the trade practices and more targeted approaches are required. The AESR (2019 and 2020) reported that even if projects developed guidelines to address and integrate gender, these were neither sustained nor maintained in practice. A clear picture of the impact on gender was not evident in many ITC evaluations.

### Youth

182. Eighty-one percent of agricultural value chain projects indicated limited or no contribution to the youth dimension.<sup>114</sup> Many projects did not prioritize youth, and hence, they did not have targets; for example, youth was not a priority and therefore no targets in projects (e.g., ARISE+ in Lao PDR, Thailand, and Malaysia or WACOMP). In Coconut II, there was no youth strategy in design, however, an effort is being made to include them during the implementation despite the lack of interest from youth in agriculture.

183. However, positive examples were noted in a few projects. In SAAVI (Iraq), youth entrepreneurship is one of the project's four components. The project has initiated a call for proposals to provide grants to existing and start-up enterprises. It was reported that the demand has been six times the number of grants to be

<sup>114</sup> As indicated in the Project Portal.

provided. During the UKTP Fiji project, it was reported that youth involvement increased due to the COVID-19 lockdown and the lack of other jobs. The increase in area and production of ginger (due to the project) also made jobs available in the ginger value chain in Fiji. MARKUP had a youth mainstreaming strategy and youth were included during implementation.

184. In NTF V in Ghana, the Tech team works specifically with youth startups and digitalization in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors. Examples of youth-owned tech startups in the agriculture sector were noted in Ghana. The Program for the Socio-Economic Integration of Youth (INTEGRA), in Guinea was focused on youth employment and not on enterprises. Youth were involved in Gambia projects to develop as young entrepreneurs. In Eswatini I, it was noted that youth were included in the training provided by a coffee roaster supported by project grants.

#### Social Responsibility

185. There is limited evidence in projects addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. ROMs reported that principles of the rights-based approach have been applied in a few projects (e.g., Thailand ARISE+, SAAVI). The project in Uganda specifically focused on child labour.

#### Environmental sustainability

**Finding 23. ITC's work on environmental sustainability in agricultural value chain interventions is fragmented and is usually one of the project activities and not mainstreamed. A key limitation is the absence of guidelines for environmental assessment or mainstreaming of environmental sustainability/climate action aspects in agricultural value chain projects.**

186. As noted in the portfolio analysis, although only 2% of the agricultural value chain projects considered environmental sustainability/green growth as the sole purpose of the project, 42% considered it as a significant area of contribution. The evaluation noted that not all agricultural value chain interventions may conduct an environment assessment, even if it is applicable. When conducted, it was found to vary from project to project as there are no standard guidelines in ITC.

187. While it was noted that there was no formal environmental assessment carried out by the intervention, consideration of climate change is reflected in the climate-smart agriculture in Coconuts II, specifically in farming practices in Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Guyana due to drip irrigation, integrated pest management and inter-cropping. At the same time, the issue of coconut waste was not addressed by the project at the time of the evaluation.

188. In Jamaica, 40 farmers have increased capacities on the conservation of Land and Marine ecosystems; and adaption on climate risks, including rising sea levels, cyclones, and unseasonal rains, due to an expanded collaboration with Alligator Foundation and Coconut Industry Board to diversify farmer livelihoods, restore communities and increase food production through sustainable environmental management from Ridge to Reef.<sup>115</sup>

189. Some projects developed an environmental sustainability strategy or a climate action plan for the projects (e.g., GRASP, UKTP). However, it may not have been fully implemented. The evaluation noted that environmental sustainability and climate-related action are not usually mainstreamed but a project activity. Examples are provided in Box 5.

#### *Box 5. Examples of environmentally sustainable activity*

- Coffee washing stations and waste recycling were part of the activities in MARKUP.
- Legal forest and environmental aspects in coffee in Lao PDR ARISE+.
- In Thailand ARISE+, new Thai Standards on organic agriculture and pesticides were introduced.

<sup>115</sup> CCITC Report – January – December 2022, p.18.

- Post-harvest losses were addressed as part of ACP Ghana and SAAVI Iraq.
- Agro-forestry and mulching and cocoa plots in Ghana (Sankofa) and in Uganda (MARKUP).

190. In Ghana, in the Sankofa project, the agro-forestry plots have ensured climate-smart multi-tier intercropping. In addition to increased income, agroforestry has ensured low/no chemical use and better soil moisture retention. It prevents/mitigates soil erosion. It was stated that not using chemicals and/or fertilizers over a long period could lead to organic farming. However, not being able to meet the 400-hectare target<sup>116</sup> of dynamic agroforestry will delay the Gold Standard for Global Goals certification for carbon offsetting will get delayed beyond project end date.<sup>117 118</sup>

191. It was brought to attention that ITC has, in the past, done some isolated work on climate change. For example, Training guide to help tea farmers and factors to lower their emissions and reduce energy costs – “Mitigating climate change in Tea sector” (2014),<sup>119</sup> recommendation on Climate Change and the Agri-food Trade (2015),<sup>120</sup> a 20-point Green Recovery Plan to foster competitive, resilient and environmentally sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises.<sup>121</sup>

192. ITC recently launched the Green Moonshot. However, there are several mechanisms and tools at the corporate level e.g., T4SD, Sustainability map, Standards map, Green to Compete Hubs and ESG by the textile team. It is not evident if these will be integrated or will operate in parallel. While ESG training has been reported to be conducted in a few projects in agricultural value chains, there are no assessment/monitoring tools or guidance yet in ITC for agricultural value chain projects on how to implement ESG. Some of the tech sector start-ups in NTF V in Ghana are working on carbon trading and regenerative soils.

**Finding 24. Agricultural value chain projects may, in the long term, contribute to the impact envisaged by ITC; however, establishing and measuring transformative change requires longer time commitment and evaluation approaches for which ITC is not currently resourced to undertake.**

193. Several agricultural VC projects have indicated increased jobs and income in MSMEs supported by the projects. While ITC may have contributed to these indicators, it was not evident if post-COVID economy recovery has been factored (discounted) in reporting increased income and jobs. In the survey of NPCs, 33% (6/18) of them indicated that ITC interventions in agricultural VCs contributed to increased jobs to large extent, However, 50% (9/18) indicated that the contribution was only to some extent.

194. Literature indicates that in VC development projects, it is often difficult to link outcomes and impact with activities and assess the scale of sustainability and impact. This was noted to be due to the inherent complexity of VCs and the fact that impact occurs and therefore, can only be measured after projects/programmes end.<sup>122</sup> AfDB (2018) and IFAD (2019), in their evaluation of their respective support

<sup>116</sup> The presentation was made by Alliance for Action (Ghana team) project staff on April 12, 2023, at a local stakeholder meeting – The Sankofa project achieved 215.5 hectares covering 380 farmers were established under dynamic agroforestry during 2018-2022. At the time of finalizing the report, it was further clarified by the Agribusiness team that at the end of 2021, the Project Steering Committee agreed with SECO (the main donor) to wrap up the project by the end of 2022 instead of 2023 as sufficient lessons have been learned to design a new project. ITC does not implement the new project – refer to footnote 101. It was reported that the new project (implemented by Fairtrade Africa) has been able to establish an additional 126.67 hectares during 2023 under dynamic agroforestry.

<sup>117</sup> With Sankofa coming to an end, it was noted that Fairtrade Africa (Ghana) continues to undertake the establishment of dynamic agroforestry under its Dignified Opportunities Nurtured through Trade and Sustainability (DONUTS) programme funded by the Government of Finland through Fairtrade Finland. Estimated project funding is USD 9 million.

<sup>118</sup> At the time of drafting, the evaluation was informed that “thanks to the success of the Sankofa project a new project named Sankofa 2.0 has started in 2023.” The project remains a multi-donor funded project including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, SECO, Max Havelaar Switzerland, Halba and implemented in alignment with ITC's NTF V project.

<sup>119</sup> <https://intracen.org/resources/publications/mitigating-climate-change-in-tea-sector>.

<sup>120</sup> <https://intracen.org/resources/publications/climate-change-and-the-agri-food-trade>.

<sup>121</sup> <https://intracen.org/resources/publications/sme-competitiveness-outlook-2021-empowering-the-green-recovery>.

<sup>122</sup> FAO (2014). Developing sustainable food value chains, Rome.

to agricultural VC, found uneven evidence as to whether projects had been transformative. The absence of well-established was noted as part of the problem.

195. Impact takes a longer time and with many projects ongoing, it is too early to assess the contribution to impact. ITC in its AESR 2020 indicated that causality becomes more difficult to identify over a longer period, where post-project information is lacking. It also highlighted that at time, evaluations indirectly refer to higher-level outcomes or hint transformations that could materialize. Many claims were reported as anticipatory or at the forecast level.

*“ITC has small money but does useful work. Its work is like a pilot/test. ITC creates a niche area to work in – this is important. However, operating in a niche area also means they are boxing into a small space/corner. There is limited coverage. Can ITC, instead of doing only cocoa and coffee, replicate its work in other VCs? Generally, development projects are for five years, but ITC’s projects are for a shorter time. Results cannot be achieved quickly, especially in agricultural VCs. (External stakeholder – Ghana)*

196. Discussions also concurred that impact comes much later than the project and the training. It was emphasized that changing mindset and practices takes time and could be difficult to fit into current ITC short project cycle funding. Seasonality of crops and time taken to yield as in perennial crops (such as coffee and cocoa) could also affect reporting impact. Stakeholders also highlighted that when undertaking production-level projects addressing good agricultural practices, integrated pest management and climate-smart agriculture to achieve practical and meaningful results, it may take five or more years, a lot of investment/resources even for a small number of farmers. However, follow-up and monitoring are required to measure impact, and this was seen as a challenge due to the project-oriented approach. Measuring impact would require dedicated resources (including funding), and currently, ITC is not set up for that.

197. In addition, during discussions, when project managers mention an impact survey, it was noted that they referred to a survey conducted towards or at the end of the project. It was also highlighted that there is need for guidance in ITC to design and conduct impact surveys whenever there is one conducted. It was noted that currently, the survey varies with each project and what they measure when conducted. The lack of comparison groups is a challenge in reporting impact results. Also, the baselines are reported as zero for most indicators in the ITC project portal.

*“For transformative results, we need to address the ecosystem and need multiple projects and a wider vision” (ITC)*

198. Nature of ITC's support to agricultural VCs could also affect impact. Many projects work only on certain nodes in a value chain, and this does not mean overall development of a value chain. An earlier assessment highlighted that ad hoc nature of ITC projects could distort markets or have unintended consequences on local economies, especially in small countries.<sup>123</sup> The impact is more likely at the MSME/institutional level in the long term and may vary depending on various factors, including resources and externalities. Concerns such as scaling-up and spreading too thin (or fragmented) were noted to affect the impact of ITCs agricultural value chain projects on value chains. For example, in Ghana, the dynamic agroforestry part of the Sankofa project covers less than 0.4% of KKFU farmer members and less than 0.05% of cocoa farmers in Ghana.<sup>124</sup> While the project may benefit the project farmers, scaling up was seen as a concern. Similarly, the approach of spreading thin vs. being focused on having a better impact was highlighted. For example, in the Caribbean, which produces 1.1% of the world coconut production, 91% of the coconuts are produced in three countries<sup>125</sup>

199. Some unexpected positive effects were also noted in a few projects. For example, in Tanzania, the positive effects on the Sokoine University Graduate Entrepreneurs Cooperative led to the cooperative working with

<sup>123</sup> OIOS/IED 2018. Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of the ITC. E/AC. 51/2018/8.

<sup>124</sup> At the time of drafting, the evaluation was informed that “now Dynamic Agroforestry has been established by 503 farmers the main objective of the project being to demonstrate that Dynamic Agroforestry is a viable approach to ensure environmental and economic sustainability for cocoa based cropping systems.”

<sup>125</sup> The Caribbean countries produce 1.1% of the global coconut production (<670,000 MT of coconuts) – of which Dominican Republic accounts for 59%, Guyana 20% and Jamaica 12% (FAO 2020).

the government and greenhouses have been installed in all councils in six other regions.<sup>126</sup> The success noted in the UKTP Fiji project ginger farmers (which is more than 50% of the total ginger farmers in Fiji) is attracting interest in other crops such as vanilla, turmeric, and wild cinnamon. IFAD is interested in implementing the model in other crop value chains. In Fiji, UKTP's work and linkages particularly with the Fiji Development Bank, has led to IFAD being interested to implement model in other crops value chains. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australia has reached out to look at implementing access to finance model of (UKTP Fiji) in sugarcane in Fiji. The Solomon Islands Development Bank has connected with Fiji Development Bank so it can adapt and replicate financing other crops in Solomon Islands. Also, UNCTAD has connected with Fiji Development Bank in relation with organic ginger.

### 3.4 Efficiency and Coherence

#### *To what extent does ITC have the necessary organizations, strategic and operational set-up, approaches, and capacities in place to support the agricultural value chain efficiently and coherently?*

200. Many aspects discussed in this section are based on insights from ITC support to agricultural value chains.

Nonetheless, it was noted that they are all part of the larger organizational construct and thereby hinder and/or enable the efficiency of ITC's entire portfolio of projects. Many of these aspects have been acknowledged in various ITC documents. As mentioned earlier, the agricultural value chain portfolio comprises more than 54% of the ITC's portfolio of projects.

201. Furthermore, recent evaluations conducted by development partners on their work in agricultural value chains at a corporate level assessed to what extent the organizational structure, specific strategies, specialized staff, and technical guidelines and how they changed to accompany the increase in focus on value chain development. The evaluations further stressed that future evaluations of this type with a thematic or corporate scope should review institutional capacity to support value chain development. Therefore, this evaluation has also explored corporate aspects.

202. Discussions highlighted that, overall, the funding was sufficient for implementing agricultural value chain projects. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related constraints, most projects reviewed had to get extensions. Nevertheless, discussions with external stakeholders indicated the timeliness of projects. No cost-efficiency analysis was done due to the limited availability of financial data.

**Finding 25. Technical capacity at HQ is inadequate and not appropriate (even within specialized units) to support agricultural value chain and the agri-food sector interventions to carve a niche and be competitive to achieve transformative results. The increase of Agriculture Value Chain projects portfolio has been partly compensated by recurring to external expertise and the increase of in-country project teams. However, in the overall ITC has increasingly and primarily focused on project management HQ-based expertise.**

203. The evaluation is cognizant of the fact that agricultural value chains and the agri-food sector are diverse, vast, and complex, and ITC cannot have all technical expertise in-house. The evaluation noted that in the past, ITC had several technical experts and focused on selected commodities. However, when experts retired, the expertise was not replaced.

204. In the past, ITC had experts in herbs and spices, and nuts, but anymore. Also, currently, there is no cocoa expert. Discussions highlighted that ITC has only six staff with expertise in specific commodity sectors and/or agri-food sectors. Limited private sector experience in the agri-food sector or experience in value chains in the country (even within the Agri-Business Systems unit) was noted, although sector or value chain specific knowledge and expertise is often recruited to support locally or acquired through partnerships with private sector within projects.

<sup>126</sup> Sustainability Review 2021.

205. In recent years, ITC has been undertaking more and more projects addressing crop production; however, there is no in-house expert to advise projects on agronomical aspects (even at a broader level). ITC works with external experts (consultants) and external technical organizations and their technical expertise to implement project activities.
206. It was reported that the focus in ITC has been to build expertise on functional aspects (e.g., marketing, packaging) and project management. However, although access to finance is an output/activity in many agricultural value chain projects, ITC does not have an expert from the banking or finance sector. Similarly, in terms of functional expertise, processing (food) is a key aspect of agricultural value chain development, and ITC lacks in-house expertise. Not all project managers have technical expertise in the agri-food sector/agricultural value chains. Again, if project management is the focus, it would be more cost-effective to be closer to the ground where the project is implemented (instead of being based in Geneva). The Strategic Plan 2022-2025 indicates its expertise is in trade-related technical assistance, project management and trade intelligence and public goods.<sup>127</sup>
207. At the same time, it was noted that textile and fibres, which is a non-agriculture sector in ITC, have in-house capacities and good expertise. There was a leather expert in the past; the departure of the expert has also led to no more leather projects.
208. Discussions highlighted the preference to use external expertise in agricultural value chain projects for various reasons (see subsequent discussions in project management and internal coherence). Furthermore, the funding model to pay staff was also reported to be a hindering factor to hiring/retaining in-house technical expertise. While working with external expertise could be justified in some ways, it does not build organizational expertise and/or niche.

**Finding 26. Project monitoring systems, tools and approaches and result-based management vary among agricultural value chain projects. There is a need corporate guidance.**

209. As mentioned earlier in project design discussions (Section 3.1), all projects have a results framework and log frame. However, there is inconsistency in understanding and the depiction of causal linkages from outputs to outcome(s). AESR 2020 indicated that ITC's monitoring system cannot fully measure attributable results. Limited or absence of agricultural value chain indicators hinders monitoring and results-based management specific to those aspects in value chain development. For example, profitability in added value in the value chain is not clearly defined or measured. In addition, log frames are primarily focused on disaggregated data on gender and/or youth.
210. Each project has its own monitoring system and tool(s). It was reported that project managers have their own spreadsheets for monitoring, which could include participant lists and number training, among others. Many projects have a dedicated monitoring person, and this depends on the project budget. Some projects also have third-party monitoring – for example, in GRASP (Pakistan), monitoring is done by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, a government agency, and in MARKUP (East Africa), GIZ did the monitoring at the apex level. Also, in ACP Ghana, crop-level (coffee) monitoring data was gathered from extension officers of COCOBOD. In some projects, monitoring strategies were adapted to the requirements of the projects – for example, in UKTP Fiji, monitoring was linked to a cropping plan, and in SAAVI (Iraq), any proposed activity has to explain how it is linked to contribute to a project indicator for approval.
211. In SAAVI (Iraq), a monitoring spreadsheet (created for the project) captured the profile of participants by workshops/training and feedback information of workshops/training. It also provided information on unique beneficiaries. The spreadsheet also had a built-in dashboard. In WACOMP, an online monitoring tool was developed, which created a database based on the call for training. The application creates an online file for training participation. In addition, the project also got reports on training from experts and pre- and post-training evaluations, as in many projects.

<sup>127</sup> ITC Strategic Plan 2022-2025, p25.

212. Issues noted with monitoring in some projects, as noted from ROMs, include a weak monitoring system with no M&E strategy in PAPEUR (Central African Republic) and not sufficiently robust logical framework with no clear outcomes and indicators to serve. In Coconuts II (the Caribbean), the monitoring system is understood internally; however, it is not supported by a documented monitoring plan to guide appropriate reporting by multiple implementing partners. This leads to reporting that is not adequately reflective of the overall progress in the country. Furthermore, no coherent mechanism is in place to capture progress against respective country Road Maps. In GRASP (Pakistan), the log frame relied on only one outcome for a diverse range of outputs, and therefore, the outcome was not seen to be fully representative of all the intervention's activities. ROMs also highlighted issues about zero baselines, ambitious targets, and underestimation of targets in some instances.

213. Some issues highlighted during discussions at the headquarters include that monitoring was viewed at times as administrative work and not part of project management. Also, it was reported that the monitoring data is not always used to analyze, learn, and adapt programming due to the workload of project staff. It was also noted that projects have become more complex and bigger (in terms of project budget),<sup>128</sup> and this requires better guidance for project managers and country teams. The issue of no comparison group in ITC's agricultural value intervention was also noted. Also, changes in corporate indicators when projects cross over between two Strategic Plans pose challenges in monitoring and reporting.

214. In terms of reporting, all projects report in the project portal on corporate indicators monthly, quarterly, and yearly. In addition, the projects report to donors half-yearly and yearly. Additionally, projects reported to respective Project Steering Committees.

215. The evaluation noted that Project Portal was viewed more as a data collection tool. In terms of monitoring, only some details of a project are in the Project Portal. This was also highlighted as a challenge in an assessment conducted by IEU in 2020 – *“Corporate monitoring and reporting distracts from a bottom-up approach based on what projects are actually doing and measuring.”*<sup>129</sup>

**Finding 27: Project management processes and styles vary in agricultural value chain projects and depend on the project manager. There is potential to improve through better corporate tools, onboarding and internal coherence.**

216. Either country teams or technical units could manage projects. Some highlighted that in the past, there was a “rule” that if it were a multidisciplinary project, it would be managed by the country teams in the Division of Country Programmes. And, if it were a single disciplinary project, it would be managed by the relevant technical unit. However, it was noted that this is not always the case currently, as it could vary depending on the Senior Management's decision. Furthermore, increasingly, technical teams are also accessing funds (initiating projects) and managing projects (see discussions in internal coherence and governance and organizational structure).

217. The evaluation noted agricultural value chain projects were managed differently depending on the need and the project manager. Some projects were single-unit projects. In others, the units/project managers could partner internally with other units and/or use external consultants. When partnering with other units, different scenarios were seen – a) the activity or output is “sub-contracted” to another unit. The “subcontracted unit undertakes the implementation and reports to the principal unit/project manager. This was seen as a more siloed approach to implementations; b) on the other end, there are projects with more discussions and involvement during implementation among units – a more cohesive implementation of various components/outputs; c) thirdly, there are various versions which lie between the two ends of the continuum with different level of fragmented implementation by different teams (also see discussion in internal coherence and governance and organizational structure).

<sup>128</sup> While 58% of projects have a project budget of less than USD 2.5 million, 30% of the projects have budgets above USD 5 million (including 13% with more than USD 10 million project budget),

<sup>129</sup> IEU (2020). ITC M&E Capacity Assessment and Recommendations. December 2020 (internal draft).



218. In ARISE+ projects, each country had a different project manager; however, all of them were from OAP. UKTP had an overall project manager. However, the UKTP projects in each country were managed by different project managers from four units spread across three Divisions. Discussions highlighted that the UKTP model of managing projects in different countries under a larger programme may not be a good model for the future. In regional projects such as MARKUP and ACP (in Africa for coffee) involving multiple countries, while there was an overall project manager, the projects had a national coordinator in each project country in addition to a regional coordinator.

219. Project managers and teams highlighted the need for a project management guide, especially for onboarding new project managers. Among other things, agricultural value chain projects have become more complex with larger budgets compared to 4 to 5 years ago. The average budget of a project is USD 4.6 million (USD 3.5 million without including the two biggest projects) despite 58% of the projects having less than USD 2.5 million budget.<sup>130</sup>

220. The evaluation noted that Project Portal is not built to be a project management tool; however, it was viewed as the best tool currently available. It was seen more as a data collection tool. The Project Portal is also not used for budget management.

**Finding 28: Internal communication and knowledge management/sharing are not institutionalized.**

221. The evaluation noted that there is no incentive and institutional structure in ITC to share knowledge and information among different teams/units, as noted in agricultural value chain interventions. It was also emphasized during discussions that the extent of sharing of information is person-dependent. Interviewees mentioned that at ITC, staff are afraid to share information because they feel it is their “proprietary” material, and also, their demand and ability to earn work months will be reduced. The information in ITC is reported to be in silos. It was noted that tools/products developed/used in projects are not accessible to everyone. Personal relations were noted as a key factor in accessing information and materials. Also, many project-level staff highlighted the lack of knowledge of who does what in ITC or what is available in ITC, and there was no platform to find this.

222. The Alliance for Action team has a community of practice, which was reported to meet quarterly. The participants were primarily from Alliance for Action project countries. The evaluation noted that this pilot was made feasible because of Window 1 funding. ITC has identified the need to develop a knowledge management strategy,<sup>131</sup> however, it was noted to be a work in progress.

**Finding 29: The project-oriented business model, despite growing the agricultural value chain portfolio, undermines integrated programming and coordination and retention of technical capacity over time. ITC operates in silos, with reference to agricultural value chain interventions.**

223. As noted in the portfolio analysis for this evaluation, 11 Sections led agricultural value chain projects in ITC. The top four Sections in terms of the number of agricultural value chain projects led by them are the Office of Africa (DCP/OA), Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness (DECI/SEC), Green and Inclusive Value Chains (DIST/GIVC) and Office of Asia and the Pacific (DCP/OAP). Overall, DCP/OA, DECI/SEC, and DCP/OAP lead 54% of the projects and 63% of the total value (project budgets) of the agricultural value chain portfolio (Annex I). Additionally, projects led by the Office of Latin America and the Caribbean (DCP/OLAC), Research and Strategies for Exports (DMD/RSE), and DIST/GIVC accounted for 27% of the agricultural value chain portfolio (Annex K).

224. Differentiation among Sections in terms of coverage of the ITC core areas in their respective agricultural value chain projects was not very apparent. However, a few variations were noted in terms of coverage of some impact areas when various Sections led the project. Yet, no integrated programming existed for any sub-sector or crop sector/value chain. Several discussions highlighted that while the current business model

<sup>130</sup> 34% of the projects have a budget of less than USD 1 million, and another 24% have a budget between USD 1-2.5 million.

<sup>131</sup> ITC M&E Capacity Assessment, 2020.

and structure<sup>132</sup> were noted to help ITC grow,<sup>133</sup> many also mentioned the issue – “*ITC is a collection of projects and not a sum of the whole.*” This is seen by the fact despite the agricultural value chains portfolio accounting for more than half of ITC’s portfolio, there is no overarching framework for the sector to have cohesive programming.

225. It was pointed out that the ITC is focused on projects, mandates, and the Strategic Plan and not on sectors. The Strategic Plan was noted to not have a sector lens. Lack of country/regional programming framework or strategy also limits ITC to bring/integrate projects at some level.

226. The tendency of ITC to work in silos was reported to be because of the project-driven/oriented approach, structure, and how it is funded. Most of the staff are paid through extra-budgetary project funding, and this was noted to affect especially the technical experts. Project managers (even though many of them are paid from extra-budgetary funding) have access to and manage the project budgets. Project managers decide the team members (who are paid from the project budget). The business model in ITC is not favourable to sector/functional experts as they have to constantly look for work months, which many occasions are dependent on personal connections with project managers.

227. The evaluation noted that no one in ITC holds the functional title of “Country Manager,”<sup>134</sup> although it was referenced in several discussions.<sup>135</sup> Country Managers could cover, on average, 6 to 9 countries, depending on the region.<sup>136</sup> The same review indicated that Country Managers spend 50% of their time in project management. The evaluation also noted that in some cases, Country Managers also delegate projects to project managers. At times, project managers in the Division of Country Programmes also represent the Country Manager in meetings at the country level as they are familiar with the country (due to managing projects) and/or the Country Manager being busy with other countries. In the current structure, if a project manager manages projects in multiple countries funded by different donors, the project manager has to connect with different focal points for each country and for different donors.

228. At the country level, many projects have a national project coordinator, and depending on the project budget, a bigger project team could be present in the country (as in the case of SAAVI and GRASP). Refer to discussions in internal coherence when units from different Sections implement multiple projects.

**Finding 30. Country engagement and UNCT to the agriculture sector support to have a sustainable impact. However, engagement with UNCTs has only gained momentum in recent years and is still a learning process in ITC.**

229. ITC’s engagement has improved significantly over the last couple of years within the UN system at the country level. As of April 2023, ITC contributed to 28 Common Country Analysis (CCA), a signatory to 37 UN Sustainable Development Country Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and a member of 66 UN Country Teams (UNCTs) – refer to Annex L. Most of the countries where ITC has agriculture value chain projects but not present in the UNCTs incidentally are all French-speaking countries.<sup>137</sup>

230. The engagement with UNCTs is through the Country Managers<sup>138</sup> in the Division of Country Programmes, who are based in Geneva. Increased engagement became feasible primarily due to the general acceptance of virtual participation with the advent of COVID-19. Each ITC Country Manager is responsible for multiple countries, and therefore, the level of attention and relationship for each country may vary considerably.

<sup>132</sup> It was noted that ITC had a restructuring in 2022 to align with Strategic Plan 2022-2025. This included creating a new Division and moving some units from one Division to another.

<sup>133</sup> It was reported that ITC grew from USD 40 million in 2014 to USD 100 million agency.

<sup>134</sup> A 2011 ITC document “Role of and Support for the ITC Country Manager” (draft) indicated that the Country Manager’s role is to contribute to a) effective partnerships and coordination, b) project development, and, in some cases, c) project management.

<sup>135</sup> Persons referred to as “Country Managers” generally have either the title of Senior Trade Promotion Officer or Chief.

<sup>136</sup> IEU (2020). Review of the coordination of ITC activities at the country level. January 2020 (internal document).

<sup>137</sup> Cameroon, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, and Togo – per information provided by DCP/OD in June 2023.

<sup>138</sup> Please see discussions under the governance and organizational structure. Although the term “Country Manager” is commonly used in ITC discussions and documents, there is no official job title as such in ITC.

Given the ITC business model, the attention could depend on the number of projects/amounts of funding and donor interest.

231. The evaluation noted that representational work is not the mandate of national coordinators or in-country project personnel and not necessarily their skill set. Furthermore, they do not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of ITC, as decisions are primarily made in Geneva. This is also a challenge, as UNCTs also prefer representatives to be at a certain level of seniority with the ability to make decisions.

232. In exceptional situations where international ITC staff have been present in the countries in the past (e.g., Gambia, Lao PDR), the presence has been appreciated by respective UNCT and has benefitted ITC in building stronger collaborations, visibility, and better footprint. In Gambia, ITC was able to access multiple UN funds. In Lao PDR, the UNCT and the government view the importance of ITC's support and the potential to play a key role in the country's graduation from LDC in 2026. In Thailand (ARISE+), interactions with UNDP/UNEP through UNCT led to sharing each other's work on organic agriculture. ITC's collaboration with Thailand International Cooperation attracted interest in the UNCT.

233. In Iraq, although SAAVI is implemented by a technical unit (Research and Strategies for Exports), there is a good level of engagement in the country, in addition to the participation in UNCT meetings from Geneva. The SAAVI project also has an international staff in the country. In Pakistan, GRASP, which is the biggest project in ITC's history, the local team reported engagement with UNCTs and UN Provincial Teams. However, ITC is not a member of UNCT yet.<sup>139</sup> In Iraq, the recognition of ITC's expertise at the country level/UNCT has led to three joint concept notes/proposals with WFP and one jointly with FAO, WFP, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and UNDP for funding new projects.

234. In terms of engagement at the country level, while some in ITC view it as additional work (e.g., participation in UNCT meetings and reporting on UNSDCF), there is a general consensus that it will bring benefit ITC in the long run and build sustainable collaborations and better visibility at the country level. Another concern highlighted during discussions was the threat of competition among UN agencies and overlapping mandates. However, some positive results have been seen in Gambia and Iraq of collaborating to access funds. Also, country engagement could open opportunities to tap into funds of bilateral agencies at the country level, including EU Delegation, in addition to climate funds with several government agencies which are already accredited agencies. Another area noted by the evaluation was a lack of engagement in countries (in Africa) where active agriculture sector working groups are present (with representatives from UN agencies, bilateral agencies, Ministry of Agriculture in some cases key international NGOs) – for example, in Ghana and Ethiopia. Although in Ghana, there was an active agriculture sector working group, neither participation nor awareness was evident with ITC's in-country team.

**Finding 31. ITC's agricultural value projects use different models and approaches. A few are well-packaged and promoted for visibility.**

235. Participatory approach, bottom-up approach and partnerships have been inherent to and incorporated in development interventions by development partners (including ITC) in the last two decades. The extent of incorporation in design and actual implementation may vary.

236. In addition to Alliance for Action, which is well promoted, the evaluation noted several approaches (although not branded) worked well for the respective projects such as the Colombia PUEDE, MARKUP, SAAVI, UKTP (Fiji and Zimbabwe) and GRASP, among others. Participatory and bottom approaches and partnerships (alliances) were fundamental (common) to various approaches used by projects. Approaches were adapted as required for the country and project.

237. The evaluation noted there is duality in ITC when it comes to using or not using the Alliances for Action model or approach. There is a general consensus one model or approach cannot fit all contexts and needs,

<sup>139</sup> As per information from DCP/OD provided in June 2023.

and it varies even within a country. Also, discussions echoed that ITC should remain flexible and should not push one model or approach, especially when projects are donor-driven.

238. Literature indicates that models or approaches to value chain development are more results-oriented than process-oriented. They include aspects of support to policy/regulatory framework, public-private partnerships/private sector engagement, access to credit/finance (not just training), reduction of post-harvest losses/transport costs, reduced transaction costs, improving bargaining power, inclusiveness (women, poor, youth, marginal groups) in value chains and benefits, service solutions, governance solutions, and profitability.

**Finding 32: Internal coherence is person-/project manager manager-dependent and is not institutionalized. The lack of institutionalized platforms/mechanisms and framework and the project-oriented business model of ITC are key factors affecting internal coherence in agricultural value chain projects.**

239. The fact that ITC's Senior Management of ITC is talking about ONE ITC highlights issues in internal coherence in the organization. The internal coherence spectrum could range from no collaboration to good collaboration. The portfolio analysis indicated that, on average, 4.4 Sections were involved in each project, including the lead Section. The lead Sections partnered with 1 to 12 Sections in a project. Ten percent of the projects did not collaborate with any other Section. However, internal coherence was viewed by some, among others, as "forced marriage." It was noted that currently there is no glue that brings the projects together such as umbrella framework overall for the agriculture sector or even for one crop sector.

*"Projects do not bring us together. It is all isolated good things. However, they do not tell how we are positioned. We are like mini-ITCs" – ITC.*

240. The Sections leading the most agricultural value chain projects tend to collaborate with a greater number of Sections. However, when other Sections were leading projects, DECI/SEC was included as part of the team 70% of the time, followed by DSIT/GIVC (49%) and DCP/OA 45% of the time.<sup>140</sup>

241. Internal coherence/collaboration is person-dependent and not institutionalized. There is a lack of interconnectedness and was noted to be partly due to a lack of institutional platforms or mechanisms in ITC. As mentioned earlier, there is an overall echo of – "we don't know who is working on what"; who can do what: who can provide guidance and who can we go and talk to and/or what is available in ITC."

242. The root cause of limited internal coherence was seen as ITC's business model, which is project-oriented/driven. With many staff dependent on extra-budgetary projects to get a salary, it is important that they get themselves included in projects. The extent of collaboration and involvement of other Sections/units in a project team depends on the project manager and the available project budget.<sup>141</sup> This also was noted to be the cause of technical people looking for work months. This has also led to technical units increasingly mobilizing funding and managing projects. This again leads to project teams looking for external expertise.

243. Many have not seen/heard about the "Rules of Engagement" document, an internal document. Several grievances about each other (country teams and technical units) emphasized in various discussions during this evaluation are already highlighted in the "Review of the Coordination of ITC activities at Country Level" by IEU in 2020. The evaluation noted that internal coherence issues need not necessarily be always between country teams and technical units. It could also be between two technical units (if one of them is a project manager). At the same time, some view limited internal coherence as facilitating competitiveness, innovation, and diversification.

244. Some positive examples of country teams and technical units working together include Coconut II in the Caribbean, managed by DCP/OLAC, is collaborating with the Agribusiness Systems Team in DSIT/GIVC. DCP/OAP, which manages the ARISE+ projects, collaborated with several technical units, including the

<sup>140</sup> This is based on information on Project Portal and does not indicate the extent of collaboration.

<sup>141</sup> Resources are limited for project managers and the constraint for one on how many projects can be designed and implemented.

Quality team (DECI/SEC). Similarly, MARKUP, managed by DCP/OA, collaborated, among others, with the Quality team (DECI/SEC). Key lessons noted for successful internal collaboration were to get people at the project design stage, get their input, and subsequently have regular coordination meetings. In addition, it was noted that sorting out the budget issues by the inception stage was critical.

245. The issues of internal coherence at headquarters have also trickled to the country level. The “Ghana team” is primarily the “cocoa team or the A4A team.” At the same time, ITC has projects implemented in Ghana, such as the SheTrades, T4SD, Quality Team (with Shea MSME), not NTF V Tech Sector projects and WACOMP. Some of these projects are implemented directly from Geneva and may not connect with the “Ghana Team.” Therefore, there is limited interaction or awareness of all other projects by the “Ghana Team.” This leads to each project presenting a different face of ITC to external stakeholders/government officials. Similarly, Kenya has six projects; however, it was noted that there is no interface among them.

246. Some discussions highlighted that the UNCT does not see ITC as one and sees ITC as different pieces. This issue was also highlighted in a meeting of ITC field personnel in June 2019 in Geneva – “in countries with several ITC projects, activities and communication with the government were often uncoordinated.”

### 3.5 Sustainability

#### *To what extent are the effects/results of ITC's interventions supporting agricultural value chains sustainable?*

247. This sub-section primarily addresses the sustainability of results, potential for continuation activities/benefits, replication and scaling up of the intervention and facilitation of an enabling environment. Aspects of environmental sustainability were discussed earlier in sub-section 3.3.

#### Capacity building at individual/MSME level

**Finding 33. Due to capacity building through agricultural value chain projects, MSMEs have adopted new practices/business processes, committed to investing in the enterprise and trained peers. The extent of use of knowledge and skills may vary among MSMEs.**

248. In many projects, capacity building is provided to existing MSMEs (e.g., UKTP, NTF V, Coconuts II, ACP, Eswatini I, GRASP, SAAVI), so they are likely to continue operations; however, the extent of utilization of new knowledge and skill may vary due to various reasons.

249. Investments by some MSMEs to matching grants provided by ITC projects (e.g., Coconuts II, SAAVI) indicate the commitment of MSMEs and the sustainability of benefits to continue. In Guyana, some Coconut I farmers have established nursery operations and supplied seedlings to other farmers. The producers trained by the project in Tanzania (integrating horticulture supply/value chain to tourism) are better able to sustain themselves and use/maintain greenhouses. Some have trained other producers.

250. Furthermore, improved processes/procedures at some MSMEs indicate the utilization of knowledge and skills. This could be an improvement in packaging, product quality, efforts to get certification, and the adoption of climate-smart-agriculture practices. Training for certifications, which is part of the activities in several ITC agricultural value chain projects, creates awareness. But may not always lead to certification due to one training unless there is constant handholding and coaching. Certification, which costs a lot of money (USD 2000 – 3000) from an MSME perspective, even if covered by some projects, renewal could be an issue. It was noted that the farmers and KKFU in the Sankofa project in Ghana were already Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance certified even before ITC started working with them.

251. ITC's use of Train the Trainers, Quality champions, lead farmers, and training extension workers also facilitates sustainability in terms of continuing practices. The use of local consultants was also seen as a good practice to ensure continuity of training. The same MSMEs being supported through a second phase of the project (e.g., Coconut I and Coconut II in the Caribbean) or another project (e.g., MSMEs of UKTP

Ghana benefit from NTF V Ghana) ensure follow-up and handholding required to ensure potential sustainability.

252. Access to finance was considered a constraint for MSMEs in terms of continuing activities of the project or scaling up. The other constraints are interlinked with subsequent findings and discussions on sustainability.

### Local institutions and organization capacity building

**Finding 34. BSOs and local institutions/organizations have positively benefitted through ITC's support through agricultural VC projects. However, lack of/limited resources (human and financial) may limit the continuation or scale of activities/services post-project.**

253. Having regional coordinators of projects housed in the regional organizations has helped strengthen the capacities and processes of respective organizations. For example, the ACP project works with ACRAM,<sup>142</sup> a regional institution on Robusta coffee in Africa. The ACP Regional Coordinator is housed in ACRAM in Gabon. It has helped to strengthen the institution. ACP has also worked with ACRAM to have a blueprint so that they can carry on even without support. ITC is also developing a course on Robusta coffee along with Zurich University and ACRAM. Part of the course funds will go to ACRAM. Similarly, in MARKUP, the Regional Coordinator was housed in the East Africa Community (EAC). It was reported to have helped ease and manage expectations in addition to strengthening capacities. Also, the informal conversations helped "*make things happen.*" Working through regional institutions also helped in working through or improving existing procedures and mechanisms and not creating parallel/separate processes. However, work through ECOWAS by WACOMP was reported to be not as successful – "*they cannot even replicate West Africa Connect.*"

254. Several ITC's agricultural value chain projects work to strengthen BSOs, TISIs and local /organizations. This is critical for replication and scalability. Examples include the strengthening of commodity associations, as in the increased capacities of the Lao Coffee Association in the Lao PDR ARISE+ project, even though they reported the need for further handholding. MARKUP worked with horticultural associations in various countries, strengthening their capacities and processes. SAAVI in Iraq created farmer groups and facilitated formal registration of each group. ITC worked to strengthen beekeeper/honey cooperatives. ACP Ghana is working at various levels with COCOBOD to develop the coffee sector in the country.

255. WACOMP trained local BSOs jointly with UNIDO. In Guinea, WACOMP partnered with local partners, including AGIPEX. It was reported that they may not be able to replicate everything; however, they have a good understanding. Similarly, in Ghana and Eswatini, an introductory session was conducted on ESG; however, external stakeholders noted that there are no tools provided to move forward, and the training was more about information.<sup>143</sup>

256. Multistakeholder platforms were established or revitalized by some projects to ensure sustainability. In the Caribbean, the Coconuts II project established national stakeholder platforms in the project countries. In Lao PDR, ARISE+ brought coffee value chain actors together to work on the Coffee sector Road Map. The ACP in Ghana brought the coffee VC actors together for the first time to validate the coffee development manual. WACOMP established Trade Promotion Councils in 15 states and is expected to continue. Eswatini II established a public-private sector platform 100% funded by the government and the private sector. The Coffee Network and its input to developing the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Coffee Guide is another example. The 2023 Sustainability Review conducted by ITC found that the public-private mechanism remains in place in the three case study countries – Burkina Faso, Sri Lanka, and St. Lucia.

<sup>142</sup> Robusta Coffee Agency of Madagascar is an African and Malagasy network of coffee farmers from 11 member countries (<https://www.acram-robusta.org/en/organization/>).

<sup>143</sup> Other activities followed this first sensitization event which focused more on building capacities of different segments of the cocoa value chain including international buyers.

257. Despite these activities to ensure sustainability, it was noted that, ultimately, continuity and scaling up depended on the capacities of BSOs and local institutions. The lack of human and financial resources is likely to limit activities undertaken by local organizations. For example, the first-ever coffee auction organized in Rwanda as part of MARKUP along with local institutions, despite being a success, has not been continued after that due to lack of human and financial resources. CARDI, although an established and sustainable institution, reported that activities will scale down from the current level after the Coconut II funding ends due to limited funding. Not much evidence was seen in strengthening training/academic institutions in developing training courses that could be availed locally by MSMEs and exporters.

*“Absorbing capacities in local institutions are low due to human and financial resources constraint” (Ukraine).*

## Enabling environment

### **Finding 35. Limited contribution to policy and enabling environment affects the sustainability of agricultural value chain results.**

258. In terms of work on enabling environment, a key contribution by ITC is the sector export strategies, mostly done at corporate level non-agricultural projects.<sup>144</sup> GRASP in Pakistan and SAAVI in Iraq are examples that invested in developing sector export strategies with project budget. The 2023 Sustainability Review on trade development strategies (in Burkina Faso, Sri Lanka, and St. Lucia) highlighted that the National Export Strategy design process contributes to the sustainability of the country's export trade-related policies by strengthening capacities to trade, knowledge transfer, policy influence and public-private network and mechanisms. However, it noted that implementation of the strategy remains a challenge for the countries. A coordinated and systematic ITC follow-up post-design was minimal. Not much evidence was seen in agricultural value chain projects directly contributing to the implementation of the export strategies.

259. Another activity with reference to the enabling environment is the quality strategies developed for several countries. These are sector-neutral and, in most cases, not done under agricultural value chain projects.

260. Nevertheless, there are some examples of agricultural value chain projects that contributed to an enabling environment. The national stakeholder platforms in the Caribbean (created as part of Coconuts II) were reported to augur well for the coconut industry. Some of the project countries are exploring the possibility of formalizing the structure for continued and structured management of the coconut sector in respective countries where a structure or mechanism does not exist. The strong involvement of the private sector and the positive outlook for the industry bodes well for long-term growth and viability.<sup>145</sup>

261. In Uzbekistan, it was noted that there exists a good prospect for sustainability, with WTO accession being a top priority for the government and essential capacity building done by the project. However, training of a large number of specialists was required. In Pakistan, GRASP is supporting the development of several policies and strategies. However, these are yet to be finalized and adopted/approved by sector ministries or at respective levels of government. The process of approval/adoption is expected to go beyond the project's life, and the concern is aggravated due to forthcoming elections and potential changes in government. Similarly, several strategies are being developed, including at the sub-sector level (e.g., tomato, potato, and poultry) in SAAVI in Iraq.

262. In Fiji, post-UKTP, the Fiji Development Bank retained the farmers because of de-risked financial instruments and successful transactions despite the project/ITC not having an MOU or exit strategy. After the end of the project (UKTP Fiji), the Fiji Development Bank created a facility – Agro Value Chain Finance Facility for Ginger – which the farmers can access online. It was reported that the Bank is also developing similar facilities for other crops. This could be seen as an unintended positive outcome for the project.

<sup>144</sup> Many of these National Export Strategies are funded by countries.

<sup>145</sup> Coconuts II ROM.



263. Another aspect highlighted during discussions was that trade facilitation has been mostly addressed through the corporate level (non-agriculture sector projects). One project example noted was MARKUP. Discussions also highlighted the potential for enabling the financial environment and regulations to do more on cross-border trade (e.g., enabling policies and reducing costs), specifically in agricultural VC and trade. Several bottlenecks in the financial environment include harmonizing countries' regulatory frameworks to facilitate pan-African payments and settlements.

**Finding 36. Overall, prospects of sustainability vary and are mixed. Exit strategies (sustainability plans) are not always envisaged and/or incorporated at the design/inception stage of the agricultural value chain projects. There is no post-project monitoring of project outcomes achieved and of their sustainability over time.**

264. As noted in AESRs (2018, 2019 and 2020), ITC evaluations suggest strength in ITC's performance-related effectiveness, yet this apparent strength does not wholly translate into sustainability. In 2019, the Board of Auditors highlighted that ITC has no systematic mechanism to assess whether project results achieved at the end of a project are sustained.<sup>146</sup> Part of the problem is that in value chain development, it is often difficult to link outcomes and impact to activities and assess the scale and sustainability of outcomes.<sup>147</sup>

265. The difference between integrating sustainability considerations in the project design or lack of it has been highlighted in the 2021 Sustainability Reviews conducted in Senegal and Tanzania by IEU. The success of the project in Tanzania over time was noted largely due to its focus on sustainability from the design stage and throughout its implementation. The review of the "Improving the Competitiveness of Senegalese mangoes" project concluded that while the project had some positive effects on the capabilities of individuals involved in the mango value chain through training sessions and technical advice on some aspects of trade capacity such as quality of production and identification of potential export markets, limited project monitoring data, relative to results and their sustainability made it difficult to assess sustainability over time; and b) the review of "integration of horticulture supply/value chains into tourism in Tanzania" concluded that the project made a positive difference in the horticulture sector in Tanzania and contributed to capacity for trade to by enhancing production quantity and quality and access to market. The review considers that the project results and impact have been reasonably sustained in terms of increased production/revenues and use of greenhouses and new markets accessed compared to pre-project levels in project areas. However, the review noted that post-project monitoring was not systematically carried out.

266. Sustainability is an issue as not all projects integrate from the beginning. Many projects look at it towards the end, six months before the completion of the project. It was noted that there is a need for projects to work with the end in mind, even at the start of the project. It was also noted that sustainability is dependent on how it is implemented and on partners.

267. The presence of exit strategies (sustainability plans) in agricultural value projects could be anywhere on a continuum of no exit strategy to be integrated from the design phase and implemented. Examples of exit strategy scenarios in different projects include:

- a) Sustainability is seen to be embedded in the work of Thai partners in the Thailand ARISE+ project. The government engagement can support the continuation of benefits when the project ends. Direct involvement of Thai partners in the design, implementation and coordination of the interventions has ensured continued ownership and provides an opportunity to increase their expertise and capacities. However, no exit plan has been developed.
- b) A sustainability strategy defining the next steps after the projects and assigning adequate responsibilities to project stakeholders is yet to be developed according to the project's ROM.
- c) GRASP (Pakistan) is starting to develop a sustainability plan/exit strategy.

<sup>146</sup> IEU 2020-2021 Evaluation Work Programme.

<sup>147</sup> FAO (2014). Developing sustainable food value chains. Guiding principles. Rome.

- d) Coconuts II reported to be in “exit strategy mode,” compiling lessons learned.
- e) As reported in ROMs, there is no exit strategy in INTEGRA, especially in activities where the completion of activities is uncertain. In Myanmar ARISE+, the original strategy, oriented towards the public sector partners, became no longer relevant due to the country’s political situation. Although good prospects for sustainability exist with the WTO accession project in Uzbekistan, the development of an exit strategy has not been considered yet. in (ROM).

268. With no dedicated resources for post-project monitoring, it is difficult to measure project outcomes that are achieved and their sustainability after the end of the project. Sustainability Reviews are a newly introduced approach by the IEU to assess the sustainability of results of ITC projects that have ended three to four years earlier. The ability to carry out these reviews by IEU depends on availability of non-project funding.

## 4. Lessons and good practices

269. Lessons and good practices are based on projects selected as part of the sample for this evaluation and also as identified in literature on agricultural value chain development. They are not listed in any prioritized order and are focused on agricultural value chain development and creating sustainable impact.
270. **Strengthening BSOs, TISIs and local organizations** is critical for replication and scalability. Examples, include working with commodity associations as in Lao PDR ARISE+ (Lao Coffee association), ACP Ghana working with COCOBOD on coffee at various levels/aspects, and MARKUP working with horticultural associations in various countries. In Iraq SAAVI created farmers groups and facilitated formal registration of each group. ITC working with beekeeper/honey cooperatives in Tanzania is another example. WACOMP trained local BSOs and established Trade Promotion in Councils.
271. **Creating/strengthening governance structures** and/or multistakeholder platforms is a good practice for sustainable agricultural value chain development. Examples, include, National Stakeholder Platforms established in the project countries (Coconut II), stakeholders along the coffee value chain brought together at the national level in Ghana (ACP Ghana) and Laos PDR (ARISE+), linking suppliers directly with buyers/exporters and ensuring buyer agreements (e.g., UKTP Fiji, and SAAVI).
272. **Partnering with local financial institutions** to conduct training/boot camps (e.g., MARKUP, GRASP and UKTP Zimbabwe) and de-risking (UKTP Fiji) facilitated access to finance.
273. **Facilitating MSMEs and organizations to get certifications** although costly (e.g., MARKUP, Quality Team projects) and upgrading national standards (e.g., ARISE+ Lao PDR and Thailand) were seen as good practices in the growing requirements in agricultural value chains.
274. The **endogenous approach** anchored in local socio-economic and cultural realities in meeting market-driven approach worked well in Colombia – PUEDE. In Pakistan (GRASP), ethnic division has been taken into account while targeting beneficiaries.
275. A lesson learned while undertaking production-level projects **addressing good agricultural practices**, integrated pest management and/or climate-smart agriculture, it may take a longer time (5-10 years) and more resources/investment even for a smaller number of farmers to achieve practical and meaningful results. However, monitoring to measure impact could be a challenge if they stand-alone projects implemented with duration of less than 5 years.
276. Emerging markets and developing economies now account for close to 80% of the global economic growth, almost double their share two decades ago. Their relevance for the global economy is not only simply as centres of production or trading, hubs of packaging and shipping to advanced economies but also because they have become increasingly important as final destinations for consumer goods and services. **Trade among emerging markets** and developing cannot be an area that can be neglected in agricultural value chain interventions.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1: Relevance of the portfolio is high in terms of ITC strategic objectives but hampered by short-termism and a lack of a corporate strategic approach focused on better engagement at the country and regional levels.**

277. The agricultural value chain project portfolio is critical to ITC achieving its mandate and strategic objectives. In general, the projects align to national development and/or sector level strategies and plans in addition to regional/global development priorities. The project-to-project approach and lack of country/regional level programming strategy limits ITC to address needs and priorities and report impact holistically.

278. Connecting MSMEs to value chains and supporting value chains are central to ITC. More than half of ITC's portfolio of projects is comprised of projects supporting agricultural value chains. Most of the agricultural value chain projects are also implemented in ITC-prioritized specific countries. The portfolio is dependent on the EU for funding. Project products and services are tailored to the priorities of donors (particularly the EU) and assist Governments and some beneficiaries rather than being prioritized in a strategic manner.

279. Broadly, projects aligned to national and regional plans/strategies and the global sustainable development framework. There is potential for projects in Africa to indicate alignment to AfCFTA and the African Union 2063 Agenda. The project-oriented approach does not present a programmatic approach to a country and/or region. Without country strategies and integration of ITC's activities, it will be a challenge to report on ITC's overall impact at the country/regional level. Establishing and measuring transformative change requires a programmatic approach and longer time commitment and evaluation approaches for which ITC is not currently resourced. Short-duration and stand-alone projects hinder transformative impact.

**Conclusion 2: The lack of a programmatic approach leads to fragmented work and limitations in terms of planning for relevant internal technical expertise. This could prevent the organization from fully benefiting from emerging opportunities.**

280. The project design process has evolved; however, they may not ensure ONE ITC. Project design (in agricultural value chain projects) focuses on ITC's competitive advantage of connecting MSMEs to international markets; nevertheless, they do not adequately leverage ITC's expertise and strengths of research, trade intelligence and public goods. While fragmented work, limited internal technical expertise and single donor dependence may threaten ITC's support of agricultural value chains, the opportunities indicate the possibilities for ITC to tap into supporting agricultural value chains.

281. The Project Design Taskforce works with project developers to ensure that the projects meet the criteria and are bankable. The project design guidelines are, in general, aligned with the EU model. Project designs incorporate lessons/recommendations from previous phases or earlier projects, as applicable. Project designs are also flexible to adapt and make changes during the inception phase. Most projects support strengthening MSMEs and connecting them to international markets.

282. The lack of a programmatic approach leads to fragmented work through stand-alone projects. The work in agricultural value chains is not cohesive. Being primarily dependent on a single donor for agricultural value chain support is a risk. Several international NGOs with country presence attract diverse donor funding for agricultural value chain development and trade and are competitors to access funding and external expertise.

283. There is a vast potential to develop and strengthen various value chains at various levels, grow into niche markets, and also to develop local and regional markets/trade. The AfCFTA has identified value chains and countries. ITC is also increasingly looking at value chains other than coffee and cocoa. There is potential to

explore funding from other traditional donors besides the EU. There is also potential to have projects to green the agricultural value chains and also to tap into climate funds.

**Conclusion 3: Capacities of MSMEs have been strengthened to access markets (particularly for exports) but facilitating access to finance largely remains a pending issue.**

284. ITC's support through agricultural value chain projects has led to improved quality, processes, and practices. Most projects support strengthening MSME capacities to trade. MSMEs have been supported in marketing, packaging, product quality, certifications, and EU requirements/regulations. and market requirements. Although MSME is the entry point for ITC in agricultural projects, there has been an increasing tendency in recent years to work with farmers to improve their practices (organic agriculture, climate-smart agriculture, integrated pest management) and/or increase production to supply MSMEs. Support through agricultural value chain projects has improved processes and practices in MSMEs and farmers. The adoption levels may vary.

285. Access to finance is a requirement for value chain and MSME development. The key activity of ITC in access to finance is awareness creation. While access to finance is critical for MSMEs, primarily, training is the core product of ITC through agricultural value chain projects. Some projects provide grants from the project budget. Financial institutions may have financial products; however, there are not many instances where projects are facilitating (brokering) the connections with MSMEs and/or de-risking products. Value chain financing is a potential area to be explored by ITC. Digital trade/e-commerce is an emerging area and is critical for MSMEs to increase competitiveness moving forward.

**Conclusion 4. In terms of a more supportive business ecosystem for MSMEs, efforts were on strengthening the capacity of institutions and networks. However, less emphasis was put on value chain governance and on enhancing relationships among the buyers, sellers, service providers and regulatory institutions.**

286. Many projects focus on strengthening capacities of BSOs, local institutions, business/commodity associations and networks at the country level. This has led to improved operational and managerial performance including improved services and increased membership. Housing regional coordinator of projects in regional institutions has not only strengthened capacities and institutional processes. The primary focus of many projects is ensuring the vertical linkage of connecting MSMEs to the market. However, a few projects have ensured vertical and horizontal linkages at various levels of the value chain.

287. Value chain governance issues are of increasing importance in the agrifood system, given the greater emphasis on product differentiation, food safety and product standards required in a competitive market environment. There is potential for more projects to focus on this area, as currently, only a few projects have focused on value chain governance, and this ranged from establishing national stakeholder platforms to facilitating purchasing agreements/buyer contracts. Strengthening value chain governance is important for inclusiveness.

**Conclusion 5: ITC agricultural value chain projects cannot operate in silos in the country. Stronger synergies, partnerships, and country engagement are critical for the sustainability of ITC's results.**

288. Few projects have leveraged synergies at the country level and reaped benefits in terms of building on existing strengths and capacities of actors/institutions. A few others have established multistakeholder platforms to foster stronger synergies among stakeholders of specific value chains. Public-private sector alliances have been facilitated in a few projects and appreciated in respective countries. It requires clarity on the roles of government and the private sector. Building synergies through public-private sector alliances requires the identification of opportunities and the development of commercial models for the effective participation of both sectors.

289. There is a strong focus and institutionalized guidelines in terms of partnership with reference to resource mobilization. Agricultural value chain projects work with diverse partners to implement activities in the countries, and these partnerships are critical for ITC. There is a need for corporate guidance to define

different types of partnerships (e.g., implementing partner, strategic partner, etc.) at the country level to ensure common interpretation and better clarity.

290. Engagement at the country level through UNCTs has gained momentum in recent years. Country engagement could help build stronger synergies for better policy dialogue/advocacy and sustainable impact. It could also possibly open opportunities for funding at the country level. As it is in the early stages,<sup>148</sup> while there is optimism and pessimism about country engagement. Positive examples of country engagement have been seen in a couple of countries.

**Conclusion 6: Work on enabling a conducive policy and regulatory environment for MSMEs and enhancing business, trade and market intelligence is primarily carried out on a sector-neutral basis and at the corporate level. However, it is largely inadequate and not leveraged by most projects at the country level.**

291. Policy influence is important for sustainable changes and systemic changes take several years. Besides the corporate level work (e.g., national export strategies, trade facilitation portals, quality strategies, non-tariff measures and reforms on cross-border trade), limited work is done in agricultural value chain projects with a few exceptions. Some agricultural value chain projects have included activities related to certifications (e.g., Fairtrade), TBT and SPS, and laboratory testing. In general, projects do not take advantage of the corporate work and leverage it at the country level. There is the opportunity for agricultural value chain projects the work to National Export Strategies<sup>149</sup> in countries where ITC supported its development, currently this is not the case.

292. Business, trade and market intelligence and public goods are the expertise of ITC due to research and analysis work conducted at the corporate level. Digitalized real-time information is required not only for accessing markets but also for trade negotiations. At the corporate level, data is updated periodically. There is potential for agricultural value chain projects to leverage these data and public goods better and also to help officials in respective countries use them for informed decision-making.

**Conclusion 7: South-South trade, regional integration and cross-border trade are growing in importance for agricultural value chain development and yet are not the focus of most agricultural value chain projects.**

293. There is more to be done in cross-border trade through agricultural value chain projects, especially in Africa with AfCFTA. Regional projects leverage corporate work on reforms of cross-border trade. Digital transformation of cross-border production and trade requires supportive infrastructure and regulation.

294. South-South trade is growing faster than world trade. South-South cooperation and trade are also critical for tropical cropping systems, and yet this is not a focus currently in most projects, and there is huge potential to show impact.

**Conclusion 8: Overall, there are intentions toward inclusiveness in projects, but they do not systematically ensure that the benefits in the value chain are proportionately distributed.**

295. Project Portal requires disaggregated reporting. Internal resources on gender mainstreaming, gender equality, and women's empowerment are not utilized adequately in project design or implementation. Gender dimensions highlighted in many projects are limited to the participation of women in project/training activities. Even if projects develop guidelines to address and integrate gender, these were neither sustained nor maintained in practice. The impact on gender is not clear in many projects. Gender analysis taking into account intersectional dimensions is not evident in projects. Projects do not adequately address structural causes of gender inequalities, including social norms and the distribution of economic resources at levels of the value chains.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>148</sup> ITC released the Country Engagement Strategy 2023-2025 in June 2023. It is the first time such a document has been produced in ITC.

<sup>149</sup> Many of them have sub-sector strategies (covering different agriculture crop sectors).

<sup>150</sup> At the time of finalizing the report, it was informed that ITC is currently rolling out gender mainstreaming strategies in more selected projects.

296. Many projects do not prioritize youth, and hence, they do not have targets. Most projects indicated limited contribution to the youth dimension. Projects that have had focus and results on youth primarily had a component focused on youth or the entire project focused on youth. This could be a strategic long-term opportunity in many countries. Projects addressing the needs of people with disabilities and/or human rights is an area for improvement in agricultural value chain projects.

**Conclusion 9: At the country level, whilst some projects have promoted discussions on environmental policies and industry standards most do not appear to have played a pivotal role in this field. Environmental sustainability work is fragmented and not systematically mainstreamed in agricultural value chain projects.**

297. Although environmental sustainability is not mainstreamed, some projects have activities including climate-smart agriculture, agroforestry and mulching in cocoa replanting plots, certifications (e.g., organic, Fairtrade, Rain Forest Alliance, etc.), coffee washing stations and waste recycling and post-harvest losses. There is uneven or limited attention to produce handling (including transportation) and processing and/or engagement in the discussion of environmental policies and industry standards.

298. Not all agricultural value chain projects conduct an environmental impact assessment, and even when conducted, it may vary as there is no corporate guidance. A few agricultural value chain projects have conducted training on ESG; however, there are no tools for assessment or monitoring yet for the sector in ITC. With the exception of projects that include farming activities, projects do not explicitly reference climate adaptation or mitigation.

**Conclusion 10: Project monitoring, project management, technical capacity, project-oriented business model, internal coherence, internal communication, and knowledge management/sharing remain areas of concern.**

299. All projects have a results framework and log frame; however, there is inconsistency in understanding and the depiction of causal linkages. Systems and tools for project monitoring vary from project to project. Similarly, project management processes and styles vary in agricultural projects and depend on the project manager. With projects becoming more complex and bigger in budgets, there is a need for corporate guidance and tools on project monitoring and project management for better common understanding and to help onboarding new project managers and team members. There is no institutional structure and/or incentive to share knowledge and information. Working in silos could also mean reinventing tools/products, which may not be cost-efficient. Internal coherence depends on the project manager dependent.

300. A project-oriented approach and business model also encourage siloed working, and there is no incentive to collaborate with other internal units, especially technical units if the expertise can be hired externally. The staff not managing projects depend on project managers to be included in project teams (and get paid). With a primary focus of expertise in project management, technical expertise in the agricultural value chain is dwindling. The project managers also have the flexibility to develop or use their own or other model/approach to manage their projects as deemed fit to donor requirements to achieve results.

301. The issue of internal coherence has also trickled down to the country level. In countries with multiple projects, there is limited interaction or awareness of all projects if different units implementing projects. Activities and communication with government and external stakeholders is often uncoordinated.

**Conclusion 11: The absence of a programmatic approach has led to stand-alone projects and potentially affected internal coherence. Without a shared conceptual framework, the complexity and results of agricultural value chain support cannot be holistically appreciated.**

302. The absence of integrated programming for agricultural value chain support, siloed operations, project-oriented approach, stand-alone projects, and limited technical capacity, among other threats, highlights the need for an overall framework for agricultural value chain support. The lack of an overarching framework makes it difficult to aggregate results to highlight what has been achieved in a cohesive manner – for example, contribution/value addition in a sub-sector globally or in a region. Internally, the framework could provide guidance to be cohesive while designing projects. Focus on project management expertise and



limited internal technical expertise in agricultural value chains and the agribusiness sector also means that any unit could implement projects supporting agricultural value chain development as long as they are able to attract funding.

**Conclusion 12: The potential for sustainability is mixed and, at times, uncertain. The capacity building efforts of MSMEs, BSOs and local organizations/institutions are great foundations for sustainability while work on policy and enabling environment through projects is an area to improve. Projects are not designed with sustainability of results/impact in mind and exit strategies are not common.**

303. MSMEs are likely to continue operations with improved processes and practices. However, the extent of utilization of new knowledge and skills may vary due to various reasons. Access to finance is a constraint for MSMEs in terms of the extent of continuation of activities of the projects and/or scaling up. Strengthening capacities of BSOs and local institutions positively contributes to improved services and replication/scaling up. However, the extent of continuity and scaling up depends on the human and financial resources of respective organizations. Agricultural value chain project activities such as using local consultants/trainers, Train the Trainers, Quality Champions, and lead farmers are also seen as good elements for sustainability.

304. There is potential to improve policy dialogue and enable a conducive environment for value chain development in projects. At present, work done at the corporate level, or the global level is not always leveraged by projects at the country/regional level.

305. Part of the problem of ITC's apparent strengths not wholly translating into sustainability is also partly because value chain development is often complex, and it is difficult to link outcomes and impact to activities and assess the scale and sustainability of outcomes. Potential sustainability is likely achieved after the end of the project; however, limited or no resources to have post-project monitoring of project outcomes and their sustainability over time is a constraint.

## 5.2 Recommendations

306. Overall, recommendations have been made at an organizational level to ensure that support to agricultural value chain is holistic with stronger stakeholder engagement, more synergistic, taking into account local contextual realities and aligned to national priorities.

**Recommendation 1: Develop a synergistic and programmatic to approach to support wider range to agricultural value chains to meet priorities and needs at country, regional and international levels.**

307. Value chain development in agriculture requires long-term engagement and multiple-phase support. Project designs should systematically assess the degree of preparedness for value chain support, taking into account local needs/priorities and previous experience of ITC, the government, and other partners. Based on this, project designs should focus on priorities and approaches for value chain strengthening.

308. Under the UN Reform, the UNSCDF guides the country programming framework (for each agency involved), and ITC should strengthen its use as guidance to identify and address country priorities to support agricultural value chains. ITC should look at/build on the potential to develop and strengthen different value chains (as applicable to the country/region) to develop local and regional markets and trade.

**Recommendation 2: In addition to continuing to strengthen MSMEs to access international markets, expand strengthening efforts to MSMEs along the value chain. Be a facilitator and broker to facilitate access to finance for MSMEs.**

309. Attention to value chains should be accompanied by organizational processes and structure, staff capacity/training (for project management and relevant skills and competencies), and technical guidelines. A more systematic approach should be applied to identifying and working across various nodes of the VC considering MSMEs as processors, aggregators, distributors, packers, packaging suppliers, transporters, storage handlers, and service providers (technical and inputs). It is crucial to strengthen MSMEs at various

levels (nodes) of the value chain to avoid distortion in the market. Also, many MSMEs could operate in multiple value chains.

310. Access to finance/credit is critical for MSMEs to grow and scale and have multiplier effects across the value chain. While training is important to create awareness or enhance knowledge, getting credit/finance is important for MSMEs in the end. ITC should play a bigger role in acting as a facilitator/broker between financial institutions and MSMEs. It is important for ITC to better articulate its role in de-risking to ensure access to finance. ITC could also explore opportunities to facilitate approaches to value-chain financing.

**Recommendation 3: Identify and build stronger synergies and partnerships for a sustainable value chain development, particularly at the country level.**

311. ITC works extensively with partners, however, it should develop a coherent approach to value chain development to facilitate more coordinated and effective partner engagement. Develop guidance on partnerships and build stronger synergies to guide project developers and project managers. Ensure engagement at different levels of the government for better buy-in in synergies depending on the scope of the project. Building robust strategic partnerships is required for policy work. In addition to working with diverse implementing partners, including research institutions, create synergies with training/academic institutions to ensure continued localized training support even after the project ends. Engage better at the country level for a robust synergy. Building stronger synergies will help leverage technical capacities and resources in the country and build on work already done in the country.

**Recommendation 4: Make a deliberate effort to (design/implement) inclusive agricultural value chain interventions.**

312. Building on the experience of some projects, inclusivity elements should be more systematically incorporated in project design but also effectively mainstreamed during implementation and monitored: Gender analysis in projects should consider intersectional dimensions. Indigenous people, youth, and marginalized and vulnerable people (including refugees) face additional barriers to entering or expanding their trade practices. Projects should address structural causes for inequalities, including social norms and the distribution of economic resources at all levels of a value chain.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen the attention paid to climate-friendly agricultural value chain development.**

313. Environmental sustainability has to be mainstreamed in projects, and this requires further development of corporate-level guidelines tailored to agricultural value chain projects. Climate-friendly value chain development should not only be restricted to climate-smart agriculture or deforestation but also encompass processing, post-harvest losses, storage and handling, transportation, and packaging, among others. Greening agricultural value chains not only requires ITC to mobilize climate funds but also to engage in discussions on environmental policies and/or industry standards.

**Recommendation 6: Promote value chain governance and a conducive policy and regulatory environment promoting cross-border trade, South-South trade, and regional integration.**

314. Strengthening policy dialogue is important to enhance the agricultural value chain ecosystem. This means not only having policy dialogue with government officials at the national level but also working together in an integrated manner with other value chain stakeholders in agricultural value chain development.

315. Multistakeholder platforms are an important feature of value chain governance and development. Value chain governance helps to advocate for appropriate policy and regulatory environments (market, trade, legal and financial) to promote and grow cross-border and South-South trade. Cross-border trade and South-South trade are fast-growing areas. The AfCFTA is a good opportunity for ITC to strengthen regional integration and intra-Africa trade.

**Recommendation 7: Develop an overarching corporate framework for agricultural value chains support to serve as basis for common understanding and to strengthen agricultural value chain programming.**

316. The framework should be developed in a non-biased, consultative, and inclusive manner (involving all divisions, sections and units). The framework should be harmonized with other relevant operational policies and overall objectives of ITC. It should provide a broad framework and not be one carved in stone.
317. The framework could cover the following areas, among others: a) value chains to focus on and which regions; b) work/value addition in the value chains - define in what areas of the value chain ITC will focus on - enabling policy and regulatory environment, markets (local, regional, international), value chain governance, synergies/relationships, distribution, processing, aggregation, production, services (technical, financial, inputs); c) potential categories of partners – strategic/implementing/others; d) potential private sector partners (global/regional companies); e) climate aspects and inclusiveness (to what extent – mainstreamed or an activity); f) potential funding partners; and g) identification of ITC contribution to value chain development.

### 5.3. Evidence trail of findings, conclusions and recommendations

Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
<p><b>RELEVANCE</b></p> <p><b>Finding 1.</b> ITC's agricultural value chain interventions are relevant and coherent with the organizational mandate and strategic objectives. At the same time, donor priorities, especially the EU, play a key role in ITC's work supporting agricultural value chains.</p> <p><b>Finding 2.</b> ITC's project-oriented support to agricultural value chains broadly aligns with the development needs and priorities at the country, regional and global levels. However, the absence of a country/regional programming framework or strategy is a limitation to better-addressing needs and priorities (at the country/regional level).</p> <p><b>Finding 24.</b> Agricultural value chain projects may, in the long term, contribute to the impact envisaged by ITC; however, establishing and measuring transformative change requires longer time commitment and evaluation approaches for which ITC is not currently resourced to undertake.</p> <p><b>Finding 3.</b> ITC has a corporate project design mechanism. Project designs incorporate lessons learned and recommendations from previous phases/projects, where viable. Nevertheless, there is a need to re-engineer the design process to ensure ONE ITC within and among agricultural VC interventions. There is also potential to improve local consultations and contextualization in agricultural intervention project designs.</p> <p><b>Finding 4.</b> Connecting MSMEs to international markets, credibility and experience with the private sector, flexibility, customized offering, market-oriented approach, strong research on trade and the public goods and tools are perceived as the core <u>competitive advantage</u> for ITC.</p> <p><b>Finding 5.</b> Fragmented work, inadequate appropriate technical expertise at HQ level, dependency on the EU (single donor), project-oriented approach and competition are <u>threats</u> to ITC's work on agricultural value chains.</p> <p><b>Finding 6:</b> Key <u>opportunities</u> for ITC include value chains beyond the current agricultural commodities/crops, tapping into other key donors in agriculture, leveraging climate funds, supporting local/regional trade, building on success in post-conflict countries, better synergies in the countries and a more holistic approach to agricultural value chain development.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 1.</b> The relevance of the portfolio is high in terms of ITC strategic objectives but hampered by short-termism and a lack of a corporate strategic approach focused on better engagement at the country and regional levels.</p> <p><b>Conclusion 2.</b> The lack of a programmatic approach leads to fragmented work and limitations in terms of planning for relevant internal technical expertise. This could prevent the organization from fully benefiting from emerging opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b> Develop a synergistic and programmatic approach to support wider range to agricultural value chains to meet priorities and needs at country, regional and international levels.</p> <p>(Conclusions 1 &amp; 2)</p>
<p><b>EFFECTIVENESS</b></p> <p><b>Finding 7.</b> ITC's support to agricultural value chains has positively contributed to strengthening MSMEs and increasing their competitiveness through training, coaching, technical assistance, and introduction to buyers/markets. Strengthening MSMEs is at the core of ITC's work on agricultural value chains.</p> <p><b>Finding 8.</b> ITC's support contributed to varying degrees of improved processes and practices in MSMEs in agricultural value chains.</p> <p><b>Findings 9.</b> ITC's access to finance work is not cohesive and varies with each project due to a lack of a strategy on what has to be done and what role to play. Awareness creation has been the focus/key activity of ITC in access to finance.</p> <p><b>Finding 10:</b> Digital trade/e-commerce is an emerging area for ITC and MSMEs in agricultural value chains. ITC is currently focused on providing training to facilitate the supply and demand for digital services and piloting selected digital applications for agricultural value chains.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 3.</b> Capacities of MSMEs have been strengthened to access markets (particularly for exports) but facilitating access to finance largely remains a pending issue.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b> In addition to continuing to strengthen MSMEs to access international markets, expand strengthening efforts to MSMEs along the value chain. Be a facilitator and broker to facilitate access to finance for MSMEs.</p> <p>(Conclusions 3 &amp; 12)</p>

Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
<p><b>Finding 11.</b> ITC support has strengthened organizations, associations, and networks in the agricultural value chain, leading to improved operational and managerial performance.</p> <p><b>Finding 12.</b> Many agricultural value chain projects focused primarily on vertical linkages; however, a few of ITC's agricultural value chain interventions strengthened both horizontal and vertical linkages.</p> <p><b>Finding 13.</b> A few ITC agricultural VC projects have strengthened value chain governance in respective countries.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 4.</b> In terms of a more supportive business ecosystem for MSMEs, efforts were on strengthening the capacity of institutions and networks. However, less emphasis was put on value chain governance and on enhancing relationships among the buyers, sellers, service providers and regulatory institutions.</p>	<p>(See Recommendation 6)</p>
<p><b>Finding 14.</b> There is potential to create stronger synergies through agricultural value chain projects. Currently, many projects tend to operate in silos at the country level.</p> <p><b>Finding 15.</b> ITC engages with diverse partners to mobilize resources and implement agricultural value chain interventions. Partnerships are critical for ITC's success. Corporate guidance is required to define types of partnership at the country level to ensure common understanding.</p> <p><b>Finding 30.</b> Country engagement and UNCT to the agriculture sector support to have a sustainable impact. However, engagement with UNCTs has only gained momentum in recent years and is still a learning process in ITC.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 5.</b> ITC agricultural value chain projects cannot operate in silos in the country. Stronger synergies, partnerships, and country engagement are critical for the sustainability of ITC's results.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b> Identify and build stronger synergies and partnerships for a sustainable value chain development, particularly at the country level.</p> <p>(Conclusion 5 &amp; 12)</p>
<p><b>Finding 16.</b> Interventions in the policy and regulatory environment are limited and an area of improvement.</p> <p><b>Finding 17.</b> Despite the positive contributions of some agricultural value chain projects, understanding about the importance of non-tariff measures in trade within ITC varies, and this was viewed as a bottleneck for better integration of non-tariff measures in agricultural value chain projects. Most agricultural value chain interventions do not leverage ITC's corporate-level work/strengths on non-tariff measures.</p> <p><b>Finding 19.</b> A few agricultural value chain projects contributed to the development of quality strategies/standards in countries.</p> <p><b>Findings 21.</b> Not many agricultural value chain projects have leveraged ITC's corporate-level work, tools, public goods and resources on business trade development and market intelligence.</p> <p><b>Finding 18.</b> Work on trade facilitation and reforms on cross-border trade is limited in agricultural value chain projects. It is primarily done at the corporate level and is only leveraged by some regional projects.</p> <p><b>Finding 20.</b> In the past, ITC had dedicated South-South cooperation/trade projects. However South-South trade and regional integration are currently only a component or activity of primarily regional/multi-country agricultural value chain projects.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 6.</b> Work on enabling a conducive policy and regulatory environment for MSMEs and enhancing business, trade and market intelligence is primarily carried out on a sector-neutral basis and at the corporate level. However, it is largely inadequate and not leveraged by most projects at the country level.</p> <p><b>Conclusion 7.</b> South-South trade, regional integration and cross-border trade are growing in importance for agricultural value chain development and yet are not the focus of most agricultural value chain projects.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b> Promote value chain governance and a conducive policy and regulatory environment promoting cross-border trade, South-South trade, and regional integration.</p> <p>(Conclusions 4, 6, 7 &amp; 12)</p>
<p><b>Cross-cutting Themes</b></p> <p><b>Finding 22:</b> Inclusiveness addressed varies among projects across dimensions in agricultural value chain interventions.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 8.</b> Overall, there are intentions toward inclusiveness in projects, but they do not systematically ensure that the benefits in the value chain are proportionately distributed.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 4.</b> Make a deliberate effort to design/implement inclusive agricultural value chain interventions.</p> <p>(Conclusion 8)</p>
<p><b>Finding 23.</b> ITC's work on environmental sustainability in agricultural value chain interventions is fragmented and is usually one of the project activities and not mainstreamed. A key limitation is the absence of guidelines for environmental assessment or mainstreaming of environmental sustainability/climate action aspects in agricultural value chain projects.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 9.</b> At the country level, whilst some projects have promoted discussions on environmental policies and industry standards most do not appear to have played a pivotal role in this field. Environmental sustainability work is fragmented and not systematically mainstreamed in agricultural value chain projects.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Strengthen the attention paid to climate-friendly agricultural value chain development.</p> <p>(Conclusion 9)</p>

Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
<p><b>EFFICIENCY</b></p> <p><b>Finding 25.</b> Technical capacity at HQ is inadequate and not appropriate (even within specialized units) to support agricultural value chain and the agri-food sector interventions to carve a niche and be competitive to achieve transformative results. The increase of Agriculture Value Chain projects portfolio has been partly compensated by recurring to external expertise and the increase of in-country project teams. However, in the overall ITC has increasingly and primarily focused on project management HQ-based expertise.</p> <p><b>Finding 26.</b> Project monitoring systems, tools and approaches and result-based management vary among agricultural value chain projects. There is a need corporate guidance.</p> <p><b>Finding 27.</b> Project management processes and styles vary in agricultural value chain projects and depend on the project manager. There is potential to improve through better corporate tools, onboarding and internal coherence.</p> <p><b>Finding 28.</b> Internal communication and knowledge management/sharing are not institutionalized.</p> <p><b>Finding 29.</b> The project-oriented business model, despite growing the agricultural value chain portfolio, undermines integrated programming and coordination and retention of technical capacity over time. ITC operates in silos, with reference to agricultural value chain interventions.</p> <p><b>Finding 31.</b> ITC's agricultural value projects use different models and approaches. A few are well-packaged and promoted for visibility.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 10.</b> Project monitoring, project management, technical capacity, project-oriented business model, internal coherence, internal communication, and knowledge management/sharing remain areas of concern.</p>	
<p><b>Finding 32.</b> Internal coherence is person-/project manager-dependent and is not institutionalized. The lack of institutionalized platforms/mechanisms and framework and the project-oriented business model of ITC are key factors affecting internal coherence in agricultural value chain projects.</p> <p><b>(also, Findings 2, 5 and 33).</b></p>	<p><b>Conclusion 11.</b> The absence of a programmatic approach has led to stand-alone projects and potentially affected internal coherence. Without a shared conceptual framework, the complexity and results of agricultural value chain support cannot be holistically appreciated.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b> Develop an overarching corporate framework for agricultural value chains support to serve as basis for common understanding and to strengthen agricultural value chain programming.</p> <p><i>(Conclusions 11, 10 &amp; 1)</i></p>
<p><b>SUSTAINABILITY</b></p> <p><b>Finding 33.</b> Due to capacity building through agricultural value chain projects, MSMEs have adopted new practices/business processes, committed to investing in the enterprise and trained peers. The extent of use of knowledge and skills may vary among MSMEs.</p> <p><b>Finding 34.</b> BSOs and local institutions/organizations have positively benefitted through ITC's support through AgVC projects. However, lack of/limited resources (human and financial) may limit the continuation or scale of activities/services post-project.</p> <p><b>Finding 35.</b> Limited contribution to policy and enabling environment affects the sustainability of agricultural value chain results.</p> <p><b>Finding 36.</b> Overall, prospects of sustainability vary and are mixed. Exit strategies (sustainability plans) are not always envisaged and/or incorporated at the design/inception stage of the agricultural value chain projects. There is no post-project monitoring of project outcomes achieved and of their sustainability over time.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion 12.</b> The potential for sustainability is mixed and, at times, uncertain. The capacity building efforts of MSMEs, BSOs and local organizations/institutions are great foundations for sustainability while work on policy and enabling environment through projects is an area to improve. Projects are not designed with sustainability of results/impact in mind and exit strategies are not common.</p>	<p><i>(embedded in other Recommendations)</i></p>

## Annex A: List of projects

No.	ID	Title	Section	Total Budget (USD)	Start Month	End Month
1	B463	Guinée: Programme d'appui à l'intégration socio-économique des jeunes (INTEGRA)	DCP/OA	17,000,000	Aug 2018	Aug 2023
2	C152	Senegal: Alliances for Value Addition in Cashew Nut (NTF V)	DSIT/GIVC	1,500,000	Jan 2022	Jun 2025
3	C093	Alliances for Action: Coffee Network	DSIT/GIVC	226,000	Mar 2022	Dec 2022
4	B537	ECOWAS: West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP)	DCP/OA	11,003,149	Oct 2018	Nov 2024
5	B466	Pakistan: Growth for rural advancement and sustainable progress (GRASP)	DECI/SEC	54,077,059	Jun 2019	Dec 2024
6	B610	SheTrades West Africa	DSIT/WYVC	5,540,000	Sep 2019	Sep 2023
7	B930	Alliances for Action: Coffee Guide	DSIT/GIVC	175,000	Jan 2020	Feb 2022
8	C166	Non-ODA: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DECI/SEC	204,000	Jan 2022	Aug 2022
9	B383	EU-EAC Market Access Upgrade Programme - MARKUP	DCP/OA	16,606,392	Jul 2018	Jan 2023
10	B452	Ecuador: Promoting new non-traditional exports (NEXT Ecuador)	DCP/OLAC	4,078,900	Jan 2022	Dec 2025
11	C017	Uganda: Strengthening Agribusiness Resilience and Competitiveness (STAR)	DSIT/WYVC	5,019,802	Jun 2022	Dec 2025
12	B566	Myanmar: Upgrading horticulture supply and sustainable tourism to develop business linkages	DCP/OAP	1,369,720	Jun 2018	Feb 2023
13	B986	Sri Lanka: Trade Facilitation for SMEs	DMD/TFPB	1,023,648	Sep 2020	Jun 2023
14	B461	Sénégal: Programme d'appui à la Compétitivité de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (PACAO)	DCP/OA	3,455,098	Aug 2020	Apr 2023
15	B978	Eswatini: Promoting growth through competitive alliances I	DSIT/GIVC	5,633,803	Jan 2021	Dec 2025
16	B901	Comoros: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DCP/OA	721,070	Jun 2019	Mar 2023
17	B695	Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade (SYMST)	DECI/SEC	2,277,400	Dec 2018	Oct 2022
18	B807	ACP: Strengthening Productive Capabilities and Value Chain Alliances	DCP/OLAC	17,232,867	Oct 2018	Dec 2023
19	B718	Burundi: Market Access Upgrade Programme - MARKUP	DECI/SEC	4,280,576	Jul 2018	Jan 2024
20	B599	Colombia PUEDE: Peace and unity through productive development and commercialization	DCP/OLAC	3,138,224	Dec 2018	Sep 2022
21	C087	AfCFTA: Identifying sustainable regional value chains at continental scale	DMD/TMI	707,143	Aug 2021	Aug 2022
22	C040	Partnership for enhancing export capacity of Africa to China (PEECAC)	DCP/OAP	1,083,927	Aug 2021	Aug 2024



No.	ID	Title	Section	Total Budget (USD)	Start Month	End Month
23	B910	South Sudan: Jobs Creation and Trade Development	DCP/OA	5,489,192	Jul 2020	Jun 2024
24	C058	Micronesia: Coconut Export Strategy	DMD/RSE	180,000	Mar 2021	Feb 2023
25	B731	Nepal Trade-Related Assistance	DCP/OAP	5,589,659	Jan 2020	Dec 2023
26	B905	Fiji: UK Trade Partnership Programme	DECI/SEC	1,144,700	Jun 2019	Mar 2023
27	B803	Guinea: Relance de la filière ananas (REFILA)	DCP/OA	542,888	Jun 2020	Jan 2023
28	B867	République Centrafricaine: Programme d'appui à la promotion de l'entreprenariat en milieu urbain et rural (PAPEUR)	DCP/OA	13,130,000	Jun 2020	Jun 2024
29	B407	Caribbean: Development of value-added products and intra-regional trade to enhance livelihoods from coconuts II	DCP/OLAC	6,706,200	Jul 2019	Jun 2023
30	B946	Afghanistan: Advancing trade (Phase II)	DCP/OAP	13,034,000	Jan 2021	Dec 2024
31	C026	Uganda: Youth Startup Academy in Africa	DECI/SEC	4,000,000	Mar 2022	Dec 2024
32	B967	PNG: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DECI/SEC	582,600	Jan 2020	Mar 2023
33	B960	Iraq: Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI)	DMD/RSE	26,800,000	Sep 2020	Apr 2025
34	B766	Ghana: Developing cocoa and associated crops through the Sankofa Project empowered by Alliances for Action	DSIT/GIVC	1,422,980	Jul 2018	Dec 2023
35	B873	Thailand: Trade-Related Assistance (Arise + Thailand)	DCP/OAP	3,395,775	Nov 2020	Oct 2023
36	B457	Sierra Leone: West Africa Competitiveness Programme	DCP/OA	1,724,167	Jul 2019	Dec 2023
37	B382	Bhutan Trade Support	DCP/OAP	5,014,700	May 2018	Sep 2022
38	B904	Madagascar: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DECI/SEC	1,336,302	Jun 2019	Mar 2023
39	B872	Malaysia: Trade-Related Assistance (Arise + Malaysia)	DCP/OAP	3,576,600	Feb 2021	Jan 2024
40	C150	Ghana: Building Alliances for Action in Cocoa from bean to bar (NTF V)	DSIT/GIVC	2,500,000	Jan 2022	Jun 2025
41	B312	Tajikistan: Enabling market access for agricultural products through improved food safety system (STDF)	DECI/SEC	890,676	Mar 2018	Feb 2022
42	B992	Eswatini: Promoting growth through competitive alliances II	DSIT/GIVC	6,759,907	Jan 2022	Jan 2026
43	B961	Sustainable Investments into Africa (SIA)	DSIT/GIVC	795,604	Dec 2019	Dec 2021
44	B542	Culture project: Identity Building and Sharing Business Initiative	DSIT/WYVC	11,245,717	Oct 2018	Sep 2022
45	B907	Zimbabwe: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DSIT/GIVC	1,065,000	Jun 2019	Mar 2023

No.	ID	Title	Section	Total Budget (USD)	Start Month	End Month
46	B903	Ghana: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DSIT/GIVC	977,255	Jun 2019	Mar 2023
47	C122	Business, trade and market intelligence: Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD) database	DSIT/GIVC	1,400,000	Jan 2022	Dec 2022
48	C022	The Gambia: COVID-19 recovery through digitalization and market access for women horticulture producers	DCP/OA	250,000	Apr 2021	Apr 2023
49	C148	Ethiopia: Building Alliances for Action in Coffee from seed to cup (NTF V)	DSIT/GIVC	2,500,000	Jan 2022	Jun 2025
50	C044	Ukraine: Linking SMEs in the fruits and vegetable sector to global and domestic markets and value chains (Phase II)	DCP/OEECA	2,300,000	Apr 2021	Mar 2024
51	C029	South Sudan: National Export and Investment Strategy (AfCFTA)	DMD/RSE	650,000	May 2020	May 2024
52	B900	CARIFORUM: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DECI/SEC	1,531,031	Jun 2019	Mar 2023
53	B505	Lao PDR: ASEAN Regional Integration Support (Laos-ARISE Plus)	DCP/OAP	5,447,146	Nov 2018	Dec 2023
54	B899	Cameroon: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DECI/SEC	972,500	Jun 2019	Mar 2023
55	B924	Tanzania: Developing the Beekeeping Value Chain	DCP/OA	3,541,218	Sep 2021	Jul 2024
56	B902	Côte D'Ivoire: UK Trade Partnerships Programme	DCP/OA	1,105,000	Jun 2019	Mar 2023
57	C095	The Gambia - Building resilience of vulnerable communities	DCP/OA	235,000	Oct 2021	May 2022
58	C035	Guinea: Improving sustainable livelihoods for border communities	DCP/OA	398,040	Jan 2021	Jun 2023
59	B580	State of Palestine: Reform and Development of Markets, Value Chains and Producers' Organizations	DCP/OMENA	505,235	Sep 2018	Jun 2021
60	B635	Value Added to Trade	DECI/SEC	2,581,722	Jan 2018	Jun 2021
61	B782	Iran: Trade-Related Technical Assistance	DCP/OAP	9,097,629	Dec 2018	Dec 2023
62	C110	T4SD: Advisory Services	DSIT/GIVC	950,000	Dec 2021	Dec 2025
63	B928	Alliance for Product Quality in Africa	DECI/SEC	552,000	Dec 2019	Sep 2022
64	B915	Uzbekistan: Facilitating the Process of Accession to the WTO	DMD/TFPB	5,200,000	Feb 2020	Oct 2024
65	C036	The Gambia: Localizing SDGs - Improving the livelihoods of vulnerable women and youth around the Senegambia Bridge	DCP/OA	499,797	Jul 2021	Jun 2023
66	C127	Conducive policy and regulatory environment: Trade facilitation	DMD/TFPB	340,000	Jan 2022	Dec 2022
67	C128	Conducive policy and regulatory environment: Trade negotiations and policy reform	DMD/TFPB	250,000	Jan 2022	Dec 2022
68	B950	SheTrades Rwanda	DSIT/WYVC	595,600	Sep 2020	Feb 2022

## Annex B: Evaluation matrix

Evaluation Criteria and Questions <sup>151</sup>	Indicators/Data Required	Source of Data	Data Collection Methods
<b>Relevance: To what extent is ITC's agricultural value chain (AVC) support relevant to organizational mandate and national/regional/global needs and priorities?</b>			
1. How relevant is AVC support to ITC's strategic objectives and/or funder priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of coherence of AVC support interventions to ITC's strategic objectives.</li> <li>- Key funders' priorities driving ITC's AVC support.</li> <li>- Significance of AVC support portfolio to ITC's overall work.</li> <li>- List of AVC support activities/approaches or areas to be strengthened/reduced</li> </ul>	Project documents ITC corporate documents ITC management/staff at HQ Funders Funders' websites/documents	Document review Key informant interviews Survey
2. To what extent is AVC support suited to the development needs and priorities at the country, regional and global levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence (and examples of) alignment and synergies of ITC's AVC support interventions to country/regional/global development (economic and social) needs/priorities and context.</li> <li>- Evidence (and examples) of project design supported by market intelligence appropriate to the economic, social, and political context in a country (to meet the needs of the target group and the value chain).</li> <li>- Evidence of the use of knowledge and insights from existing studies, evaluations, and experiences of similar interventions or approaches in project design</li> <li>- Presence of strategies/guidelines (in ITC) to reach marginalized/vulnerable groups (including women and youth) to ensure inclusiveness and leave no one behind in the AVC support interventions.</li> </ul>	Project documents/reports Evaluation reports/AESRs ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in countries Government officials Representatives of target groups/clients Implementing partners UN agencies (country/global)	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies
3. To what extent are mainstreaming dimensions (gender equality, youth, environment sustainability, social responsibility, and human rights) considered in the design and implementation of AVC support interventions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of integration of mainstreaming dimensions in the design and implementation of AVC support interventions.</li> <li>- Extent of the relevance of mainstreaming dimensions in ITC's portfolio of AVC support.</li> <li>- Enabling and hindering factors in integrating mainstreaming dimensions in AVC support interventions (at design and at implementation stages).</li> </ul>	Project documents/reports ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in the field Government officials Representatives of clients/target groups	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies

<sup>151</sup> Coherence (internal and external) is addressed across relevance, effectiveness/impact, and efficiency.

Evaluation Criteria and Questions <sup>151</sup>	Indicators/Data Required	Source of Data	Data Collection Methods
4. How well is ITC suited or not to engage in agricultural value chain support? What comparative advantages/disadvantages do ITC have vis-à-vis other development actors/partners (in AVC support)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of comparative advantages/limitations of ITC in AVC support in comparison with other development partners.</li> <li>- SWOT of ITC in AVC support.</li> <li>- Value addition of ITC in AVC support – overall/globally (niche vis-à-vis other actors).</li> </ul>	Corporate documents/reports ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in the field UN agencies Funders/Development Partners Funder reviews. Private sector Research/knowledge institutions and academia Implementing partners Government officials	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies
<b>Effectiveness/Impact: To what extent are ITC's interventions supporting agricultural value chains effective and contributing to development impact?</b>			
5. To what extent has ITC been successful in achieving the intended outcomes (immediate, intermediate, and long-term) in its work to support AVCs? What have been the enabling and hindering factors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of achievement of intended outcomes</li> <li>- Key highlights of achievements (and examples in various areas, including policy and regulation, standards, and quality, strengthened institutions and networks, improved processes and practices, governance, strengthened market and business/VC linkages etc.)</li> <li>- List of enabling and hindering factors</li> </ul>	Project documents/reports ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in the field Government officials Representatives of clients/target groups Funders	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies
6. What approaches or models have been more effective for ITC in supporting AVCs? What value addition do they bring to AVCs vis-à-vis, other development partners/actors? Is there anything that ITC could do differently to be more effective in the area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence and examples of approaches and models that are effective and bring added value to AVCs</li> <li>- Examples of approaches that are not effective and reasons</li> <li>- List differentiation of ITC (vs. Others)</li> </ul>	ITC management/staff at HQ Country-level project staff Government officials Target beneficiaries Funders Implementing partners	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies
7. How successful has ITC been in partnering with development partners and the private sector in terms of its work to support AVCs? To what extent have external synergies (at global/regional and country levels) been leveraged, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No. of projects and type of partnerships – IFIs, UN agencies, private sector (implementing partners vs. other types of partnerships).</li> <li>- Examples of synergies leveraged at global, regional, and country levels.</li> <li>- Areas untapped (synergies, leveraging)</li> <li>- Factors enabling/impeding factors ITC to partner with IFIs, UN agencies and private sector corporations.</li> </ul>	Project documents/reports Evaluation reports ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in the field UN agencies (global and country levels)	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies

Evaluation Criteria and Questions <sup>151</sup>	Indicators/Data Required	Source of Data	Data Collection Methods
where do they remain untapped? What are the lessons, and what are the enabling/impeding factors?	- Level of ITC involvement and role in UN Coordination at the country level (examples and enabling/hindering factors) - differences among countries/regions, if any.	Private sector/foundations Funders Bilateral agencies at the country level (as feasible)	
8. How effective and inclusive has ITC been in achieving results in the mainstreaming dimensions (gender, youth, environmental sustainability and social responsibility and human rights)? What worked, and what could be improved?	- Evidence of achievement and examples in each of the mainstreaming dimensions - Examples of what worked and what did not (lessons)	Project documents/reports Evaluation reports ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in the field Government officials Representatives of target groups and clients Research/knowledge institutions and academia	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies
9. What are the unintended direct/indirect and/or positive/negative effects due to ITC's work to support AVCs?	- Evidence and examples of unintended direct, indirect, and positive/negative effects?	Government officials Representatives of target groups/clients Implementing partners Funders ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in the field	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies
<b>Efficiency: To what extent does ITC have the necessary organizational, strategic, and operational set-up, approaches and capacities in place to support agricultural value chains efficiently and coherently??</b>			
10. Are resources managed and activities delivered efficiently? How? Why or why not? What do stakeholders perceive about the quality and timeliness of implementation?	- Data on timely completions/delays and extensions - Reasons for delays/extensions - Adequacy of resources for projects - Evidence of cost/resource efficiency - Stakeholder perception of quality and timeliness of implementation	Government officials Representatives of target groups/clients Implementing partners Funders ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in the field	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies
11. What is the quality of results-based management, monitoring, and reporting, including the use of	- Evidence of the presence of results-based management, monitoring and reporting system. - Presence of baseline and measurable targets and how they are measured/monitored	ITC management/staff at HQ Corporate reports/audits Evaluation reports Funders/Funder reviews	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys

Evaluation Criteria and Questions <sup>151</sup>	Indicators/Data Required	Source of Data	Data Collection Methods
various M&E tools? What works well, and what could be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of M&amp;E tools used</li> <li>- Presence of a risk management/mitigation system for AVC support</li> <li>- Perceived quality of RBM and monitoring</li> <li>- Area of improvement (including challenges in RBM and monitoring)</li> </ul>	Project reports	Case studies
12. Does ITC's governance and organizational structure facilitate its work on support to AVCS? Why or why not? What could be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governance and organizational structures in ITC (with respect to AVC support)</li> <li>- Level of efficiency and effectiveness of these structures</li> <li>- Presence of policy/guidelines for AVC support</li> <li>- Structures/processes that facilitate AVC support</li> <li>- Evidence or lack of capacities to carry out AVC support</li> <li>- Areas of improvement</li> </ul>	ITC management/staff at HQ Corporate reports/audits Evaluation reports	Document review Key informant interviews
13. How adequate, coherent, and efficient is the internal collaboration within ITC (among Sections/Divisions at various levels) in managing and implementing interventions supporting AVCS? What works well, and what needs to be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Description of internal collaboration and coordination (formal and informal)</li> <li>- Areas that work well and not well</li> <li>- Areas of improvement</li> </ul>	ITC management/staff at HQ Corporate reports/audits Evaluation reports ITC project staff in the field	Document review Key informant interviews
<b>Sustainability: To what extent are the effects/results of ITC's interventions supporting agricultural value chains sustainable?</b>			
14. What is the likelihood of activities and long-term benefits continuing once the project/interventions are completed? What are the challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of exit strategies</li> <li>- Evidence/examples of continuity of activities and/or benefits after project completion</li> <li>- Enabling/hindering factors</li> </ul>	Project reports Evaluation reports ITC management/staff at HQ ITC project staff in the field Government officials	Document review Key informant interviews Surveys Case studies
15. How and to what extent has ITC's work in AVCS ensured local ownership and strengthened institutional and local capacities to facilitate sustainability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence/examples of local ownership</li> <li>- Extent of sustainable strengthened capacities in institutions, VC actors and at the local level</li> </ul>	Funders/Funder reviews Private sector Regional institutions Research/knowledge institutions and academia	
16. To what extent and how has ITC strengthened enabling environment for AVCS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence and examples of enabling environment for AVC (including increased trade, improved policies, access to finance, etc.)</li> <li>- Enabling/hindering factors</li> </ul>	UN agencies/development partners	

## Annex C: Bibliography

- ADB. 2012. Support to Agricultural Value Chain Development. Independent Evaluation Department, ADB.
- AfCFTA/UNDP (2021) "Which value chains for a made in Africa revolution", The Futures Report 2021, African Continental Free Trade Agreement Secretariat, Kigali/United Nations Development Programme, New York, [https://imanidevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AFCFTA-Futures-Report-2021\\_Which-Value-Chains-for-a-Made-in-Africa-Revolution\\_2021.pdf](https://imanidevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AFCFTA-Futures-Report-2021_Which-Value-Chains-for-a-Made-in-Africa-Revolution_2021.pdf).
- AfDB IDEV (African Development Bank Independent Development Evaluation). 2018. *The African Development Bank's support for agricultural value chains development: Lessons for the Feed Africa Strategy*. Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire: AfDB. [https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/idev-3-\\_agricultural\\_value\\_chains.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/idev-3-_agricultural_value_chains.pdf)
- ASEA (Stantec Consortium). 2022. Mid-term Evaluation of the ARISE Plus Lao PDR Programme. Final Report.
- Braun, C.L., Bitsch, V., and Haring A.M. 2022. Developing agri-food value chains: learning networks between exploration and exploitation. *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension* <https://doi.org/10.1080/1389224X.2022.2082499>
- CFS. Committee of World Food Security (2014): Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems. Rome.
- CGAP. 2018. Super Platforms: Connecting Farmers to Markets in Africa by Shrader, L., Morawczynski, O., and Karlyn, A. (<https://www.cgap.org/blog/super-platforms-connecting-farmers-markets-africa>)
- Dolan, C., J. Humphrey. 2004. Changing Governance Patterns in the Trade in Fresh Vegetables between Africa and the United Kingdom. *Environment and Planning* 36: 491-509.
- Endeva and Fundes. 2022. The use of IT Solutions in Inclusive Value Chains ([https://www.aliceschmidt.at/uploads/5/4/8/0/54800737/it\\_solutions\\_in\\_inclusive\\_value\\_chains\\_-\\_endevafundes\\_-\\_2019.pdf](https://www.aliceschmidt.at/uploads/5/4/8/0/54800737/it_solutions_in_inclusive_value_chains_-_endevafundes_-_2019.pdf)).
- FAO. 2016. Developing gender-sensitive value chains - A guiding framework (<https://www.fao.org/3/i6462e/i6462e.pdf>).
- FAO. 2014. Developing sustainable value food value chains – guiding principles. Rome: FAO.
- FAO and AFRACA. 2021. Agricultural Value Chain Finance Innovations and Lessons: Case studies Africa. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (<https://doi.org/10.4060/ca6345en>).
- FAO and ITC. 2022. Alliances for Action: Guide for Export Promotion
- German Cooperation for International Cooperation (GIZ). 2018. Manual on Sustainable Value Chain Development (<https://www.valuelinks.org/material/manual/ValueLinks-Manual-2.0-Vol-1-January-2018.pdf>)
- GIZ. German Corporation for International Cooperation (2017): The Potential of Agricultural Value Chains to Improve Nutrition. Working Paper. [https://www.snr-d-africa.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Working-paper\\_Value-chains-and-nutrition\\_Nov-17.pdf](https://www.snr-d-africa.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Working-paper_Value-chains-and-nutrition_Nov-17.pdf)
- Gruss, B, Nabar, M, Poplawski-Ribeiro, M (2017). Emerging Markets and Developing Economies: Sustaining Growth in a Less Supportive External Environment. IMF Blog. April 2017. (<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2017/04/12/emergingmarketsanddevelopingeconomiesustaininggrowthinalessupportiveexternalenvironment>).
- IFAD IOE (International Fund for Agricultural Development Independent Office of Evaluation). 2019. *Corporate level evaluation on IFAD's support to pro-poor value chain development*. Rome: IFAD. ([https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714182/41260694/cle\\_valuechain.pdf/7f0ae37d-5c57-10a2-b14d-0593f08a03d0](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714182/41260694/cle_valuechain.pdf/7f0ae37d-5c57-10a2-b14d-0593f08a03d0)).
- IFAD. 2013. Small scale producers in the development of cocoa value chain partnerships (<https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/-/publication/small-scale-producers-in-the-development-of-cocoa-value-chain-partnership>).
- ITC. 2023. ITC Country Engagement Strategy 2023-2025 (internal document).



- ITC. 2023. Operational Plan 2022.
- ITC. 2023. Sustainability Review of ITC programme “Trade Development Strategies.”
- ITC. 2023. West Africa Competitiveness Programme – Regional Component Annual Report (1.10.2021 – 31.1.2023).
- ITC. 2023. Report to the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund (January to December 2022).
- ITC. 2022. Report to the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund (January to December 2021).
- ITC. 2022. Strategic Plan 2022-2025
- ITC. 2022. Delivery of ITC’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021.
- ITC. 2022. Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report 2022.
- ITC. 2022. Partnerships4Purpose: Engagement Strategy.
- ITC. 2022. Operational Plan 2022.
- ITC. 2022. Evaluation of the ITC SheTrades Initiative. Final Report.
- ITC. 2022. Annual Report 2021.
- ITC. 2021. Report to the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund (January to December 2020).
- ITC. 2021. Sustainability Review of the project “Improving the competitiveness of Senegalese mangoes.”
- ITC. 2021. Sustainability Review of the project “Integration of horticulture supply/value chains into tourism, Tanzania.”
- ITC. 2022. Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report 2020.
- ITC. 2021. Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report 2021.
- ITC. 2021. SME Competitiveness Outlook 2021. Empowering the Green Recovery.
- ITC. 2019. Mainstreaming sustainable and inclusive trade: Guidelines for International Trade Centre projects.
- ITC. 2019. Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report 2019.
- ITC. 2018. Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report 2018.
- ITC (2013). Jamaica Company Perspectives. (<https://intracen.org/resources/publications/jamaica-company-perspectives-an-itc-series-on-non-tariff-measures>).
- ITC. N.d. Towards Gender Equality and an Enabling Work Environment
- ITC. (no date). Rules of engagement for ONE ITC (internal document).
- ITC/IEU. Piloting Enhanced M&E Practices for Results Based Management at ITC: A Process Synthesis Report (internal document).
- ITC/IEU 2022. Proposal for Large ITC Projects to Establish Good M&E Practices before Closure of Inception Phase (internal document).
- ITC/IEU. 2020-2021 Evaluation Work Programme.
- ITC/IEU. 2020. ITC M&E Capacity Assessment and Recommendations. December 2020 (internal draft).
- ITC/IEU. 2020. Review of the coordination of ITC activities at the country level. January 2020 (internal draft document not for circulation).
- Jana Herold. 2020. Agricultural value chains in development cooperation: Analyses and recommendations. Institute for Development and Peace/University of Duisburg-Essen.
- Kaplan, Marcus / Bettighofer, Simon / Brüntrup-Seidemann, Sabine / Noltze, Martin (2016): Agricultural Value Chains. German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval): Bonn.
- KPMG International. 2013. The agricultural and food value chain: Entering a new era of cooperation.
- Luvent Consulting GmbH. 2022. Mid-Term Evaluation of EU-EAC MARKUP – Draft Final Report

- Martí, I. and J. Mair. 2008. *Bringing change into the lives of the poor: Entrepreneurship outside traditional boundaries*, In Institutional Work. Edited by Lawrence, T., R. Suddaby and B. Leca, Spring. Cambridge University Press
- Muradian, R. and W. Pelupessy. 2005. Governing the coffee chain: The role of voluntary regulatory Systems. *World Development* 33(12): 2029-2044.
- M4P (Making Markets Work for the Poor) and DFID (UK Department for International Development). 2008. *Making Value Chains Work Better for the Poor. A Tool book for Practitioners of Value Chain Analysis*. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Agricultural Development International ([https://www.rfilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/making\\_value\\_chains\\_work\\_better\\_for\\_the\\_poor\\_a\\_to\\_14413.pdf](https://www.rfilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/making_value_chains_work_better_for_the_poor_a_to_14413.pdf)).
- Murphy, J. T. 2007. The Challenge of Upgrading in African Industries: Socio-Spatial Factors and the Urban Environment in Mwanza, Tanzania. *World Development* 35(10): 1754- 1778.
- Norell, D., Janoch, E., Kganzi, E., Tolat, M, Lynn, M.L., and Riley, E.C. 2017. Value chain development with the extremely poor: evidence and lessons from CARE, Save the Children and World Vision. *Enterprise Development and Microfinance* Vol. 28 Nos. 1-2.
- OECD. 2020. Global Value Chains in Agriculture and Food: A synthesis of OECD analysis. OECD Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Papers, No. 139. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/6e3993fa-en>).
- OECD/FAO. 2016. OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251052-en>).
- OIOS/IED. 2018. Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of the International Trade Centre. E/AC.51/2018/8. p6.
- OIOS/IED. 2015. Evaluation of International Trade Centre. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations. E/AC.51/2015/8.
- Perez-Aleman, P. and M. Sandilands. 2008. Building Value at the Top and the Bottom of the Global Supply Chain: MNC-NGO Partnerships. *California Management Review* 51(1): 24-48.
- Porter, M.E., 1990. *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*. Simon & Schuster.
- Riisgaard, L. 2009. Global Value Chains, Labor Organization and Private Social Standards: Lessons from East African Cut Flower Industries. *World Development* 37(2): 326-340.
- Trienekens, J.H. 2011 Agricultural Value Chains in Developing Countries – A Framework for Analysis. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review* Volume 14, Issue 2, 201 pp 51 -82
- United Nations (2018): United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas: resolution/adopted by the Human Rights Council on 28 September 2018. New York.
- UNCTAD (2023). South-South trade agreement holds a key to more sustainable and inclusive growth (<https://unctad.org/news/south-south-trade-agreement-holds-key-more-sustainable-and-inclusive-growth>).
- USAID (United States Agency for International Development). 2014. *A framework for inclusive market system development*. Washington, DC: USAID ([https://www.marketlinks.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/Market\\_Systems\\_Framework.pdf](https://www.marketlinks.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/Market_Systems_Framework.pdf))
- World Bank. 2018. Future of Food: Maximizing Finance for Development in Agricultural Value Chains.
- World Bank/UNIDO/ITC. 2023. Support to Business Friendly and Inclusive National and Regional Policies and Strengthening Productive Capabilities and Value Chains – Consolidated Annual Progress Report (January – December 2022).
- WTO (2023). Digital trade for MSMEs: momentum and acceleration. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/msmes\\_e/icc\\_digital\\_trade\\_for\\_msme.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/msmes_e/icc_digital_trade_for_msme.pdf)
- WTO/IFC (2022). Trade Finance in Africa. ([https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/booksp\\_e/tfinwestafrica\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/tfinwestafrica_e.pdf)).
- WTO/OECD. 2013. Aid for Trade and Value Chains in Agrifood ([https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/devel\\_e/a4t\\_e/global\\_review13prog\\_e/agrifood\\_47.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/a4t_e/global_review13prog_e/agrifood_47.pdf)).

## Annex D: List of interviews

No.	Country	Name	Title	Organization
1	Geneva	Dorothy Temba	Deputy Executive Director	ITC
2	Geneva	Ashish Shah	Director DCP	ITC
3	Geneva	Fiona Shera	Director DSIT	ITC
4	Geneva	Rajesh Aggarwal	Director (OIC) DMD	ITC
5	Geneva	Iris Hauswirth	Chief SPPG	ITC
6	Geneva	Robert Skidmore	Chief - DECI/SEC	ITC
7	Geneva	Anne Chappaz	Chief – DECI/IE	ITC
8	Geneva	Claudia Uribe Pineda	Chief – DCP/OLAC	ITC
9	Geneva	Elena Boutrimova	Chief – DCP/OEECA	ITC
10	Geneva	Lilia Naas HAchem	Chief – DCP/OMENA	ITC
11	Geneva	Aissatou Diallo	Chief – DCP/OA	ITC
12	Geneva	Barbara Oliveira Ramos	Chief – DMD/RSE	ITC
13	Geneva	Mondher Mimouni	Chief – DMD/TMI	ITC
14	Geneva	Vanessa Erogbogbo	Chief – DSIT/GIVC	ITC
15	Geneva	Raimund Moser	Chief – DSIT/WYVC	ITC
16	Geneva	Stephan Blanc	Head of Project Design Task Force	SPPG, ITC
17	Geneva	Stephania Casappa	Senior Trade Planning Officer - PDTF	SPPG, ITC
18	Geneva	Ben Beuchel	Junior Professional Officer	SPPG, ITC
19	Geneva	Bianca Cravenna	Programme Management Officer (GRASP)	DECI/SEC, ITC
20	Geneva	Federica Angelucci	Inclusive Agri-business and Food Expert	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
21	Geneva	Emilie Dairon	Programme Officer	DCP/OAC, ITC
22	Geneva	Charles Lor	Programme Officer (UKTP)	DECI/SEC, ITC
23	Geneva	Jarmila Sarda Souckova	Programme Officer	DECI/SEC, ITC
24	Geneva	Sadiq Kazi Syed	Programme Officer	DCP/OLAC, ITC
25	Geneva	Kevin Taurai Musa	Programme Manager	DCP/OA, ITC
26	Geneva	Yared Befecadu	Programme Management Officer (WACOMP)	DCP/OA, ITC
26	Geneva	William Castro Rodriguez	Associate Programme Officer	DCP/OLAC, ITC
28	Geneva	Simone Cipriani	Chief Technical Adviser, Ethical Fashion	DSIT/WYVC, ITC
29	Geneva	Ingrid Colonna	Project Adviser	DCP/OAP, ITC

No.	Country	Name	Title	Organization
30	Geneva	Simon Heisig	Programme Officer	DECI/SEC, ITC
31	Geneva	Jean-Sebastien Roure	Senior Officer, Business and Trade Policy	DMD/TFPB, ITC
32	Geneva	Kidest Teklu	Programme Officer	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
33	Geneva	Giulia Macola	Associate Programme Adviser	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
34	Geneva	Anna Summer	Programme Officer (Projects)	DSIT/WYVC, ITC
35	Geneva	Hernan Manson	Senior Sector Development Officer, Manufactured Products	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
36	Geneva	Audrey Gavard-Lonchey	Programme Adviser, Food and Agri-Business Sector Development	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
37	Geneva	Nicholas Watson	Programme Officer, Food and Agri-Business System Development	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
38	Geneva	Philippe Helluy	Adviser (Agri-food Sector Development)	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
39	Geneva	Nicholas Mudungwe	Programme Officer	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
40	Geneva	Alexander Kasterine	Senior Adviser	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
41	Geneva	Bilal Qureshi	Associate Sustainable Development Officer (GRASP)	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
42	Geneva	Benjamin Morrison	Associate Programme Officer (Alliances for Action)	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
43	Geneva	Martina Bozzola	Senior Sustainability Advisor	DCP/OLAC, ITC
44	Geneva	Karen Suassuna	Senior Programme Officer (Green to Compete)	DSIT/OLAC, ITC
45	Geneva	Judith Fessehaie	Senior Programme Officer	DSIT/QYVC, ITC
46	Geneva	Cristina Reni	Market Development and Networks Consultant	DECI/SEC, ITC
47	Geneva	Matias Urrutigoity	Senior Trade Promotion Officer	DCP/OLAC, ITC
48	Geneva	Uyanga Dorjgotov	Programme Assistant	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
49	Geneva	Gnilm Liora Gnassignbe-Essonam	Associate Programme Officer	DCP/OLAC, ITC
50	Geneva	Eric Buchot	Senior Programme Officer	DMD/RSE, ITC
51	Geneva	Ky Phong Nguyen	Programme Officer	DMD/RSE, ITC
52	Geneva	Martin Labbe	Tech Sector Development Coordinator and Programme Manager	DECI/SEC, ITC
53	Geneva	Milou Van Bruggen	Associate Programme Officer	DECI/SEC, ITC
54	Geneva	Khemraj Ramful	Senior Advisor, Export Quality Management	DECI/SEC, ITC
55	Geneva	Margareta Von Krichbach	Learning Systems Officer	DECI/SEC, ITC
56	Geneva	Joshua Olson	Associate Programme Officer	DECI/SEC, ITC

No.	Country	Name	Title	Organization
57	Geneva	Nicola Bonnefoy-Claudet	Programme Management Officer	DECI/SEC, ITC
58	Geneva	Ana Patricia Batalhone	Associate Market Analyst	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
59	Geneva	Govind Venuprasad	Coordinator (SITA)	DCP/OAP, ITC
60	Geneva	Ben Mohamed Imamo	Senior Programme Officer	DECI/IE, ITC
61	Geneva	Beatriz Rodriequez	Trade Promotion Officer	DCP/OLAC, ITC
62	Geneva	Daria Karman	Associate Programme Officer	DMD/TFPB, ITC
63	Geneva	Sebastien Turrel	Senior Trade Promotion Officer	DCP/OA, ITC
64	Geneva	Marie-Claude Frauenrath	Senior Trade Promotion Officer	DCP/OAP, ITC
65	Geneva	Nishkan Usavapant	International Consultant	DSIT/WYVC, ITC
66	Geneva	Nicholas Schlaepfer	Senior Expert – Business Development	DSIT/WYVC, ITC
67	Geneva	Yusupha Keita	Technical Adviser and Coordinator of Skills Development – Gambia	DCP/OA, ITC
68	Geneva	Anton Said	Chief Export Strategy	DMD/RSE, ITC
69	Geneva	Ian Sayers	Senior Advisor for Access to Finance and Investment	DECI/SEC, ITC
70	Geneva	Federine Derlot	Programme Officer	DECI/SEC, ITC
71	Geneva	Charles Roberge	Senior Officer	DMD/RSE, ITC
72	Geneva	Ursula Hemerlink	Senior Market Analyst	DMD/TMI, ITC
73	Geneva	Joesph Wozniak	Programme Manager	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
74	Geneva	Duc Dang	Associate Market Analyst	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
75	Ghana	Lawerence Attipoe	A4A National Programme Coordinator	DCP/OLAC, ITC
76	Ghana	Michael Boating	National M&E Coordinator	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
77	Ghana	Theresa Morkeh	Project Coordination Suupoty	DSIT/OLAC, ITC
78	Ghana	Abena Baafi	National Project Coordinator – NTF V - Agribusiness	DSIT/OLAC, ITC
79	Ghana	Issac Acquah	National Project Coordinator – NTF V – Tech Sector	DECI/SEC, ITC
80	Ghana	Christopher Tenga	National Coordinator - ACP	DCP/OLAC, ITC
81	Ghana	Kingsley K Amoaka	Deputy Director and Head of Environment and Climate Change	Directorate of Crop Services, Ministry of Food and Agriculture
82	Ghana	Dyllis Sowah	Senior Agriculture Officer	Directorate of Crop Services, Ministry of Food and Agriculture
83	Ghana	Sadat Abubakar Sadiq	Agriculture Officer	Directorate of Crop Services, Ministry of Food and Agriculture
84	Ghana	Derricj Owusu	Agriculture Officer	Directorate of Crop Services, Ministry of Food and Agriculture

No.	Country	Name	Title	Organization
85	Ghana	Susana Yohunu	Agricultural Scientist	Directorate of Crop Services, Ministry of Food and Agriculture
86	Ghana	Samuel Dentu	Deputy CEO (Operations & Finance)	Ghana Export Promotion Agency
87	Ghana	Alexander Dadzawa	Director - Projects	Ghana Export Promotion Agency
88	Ghana	Charles Marfo Boady	AEDO Export Development Officer	Ghana Export Promotion Agency
89	Ghana	Michael A. Opoku	Director - Policy Planning and M&E	Ministry of Trade and Industry
90	Ghana	Salma Suhuynai Fuseini	Senior Project Officer	Fair Trade Africa
91	Ghana	Glen Asomaning	Operational Director	Nature and Development Foundation
92	Ghana	Kingsley Twumasi	Assistant Project Officer	Nature and Development Foundation
93	Ghana	Seth Twun-Akwaboah	CEO	Association of Ghana Industries
94	Ghana	Mary Turkson	Policy Officer	Association of Ghana Industries
95	Ghana	Frimpong Ayirebi	Program Specialist	UNDP Ghana
96	Ghana	Benjamin m. Adjei	Assistant FAO Representative	FAO Ghana
97	Ghana	Arnold Ampiah	Programme Support Officer	FAO Ghana
98	Ghana	Jefferson Attipoe	Programme Support Officer – E-agriculture	FAO Ghana
99	Ghana	Mathias Edetor	Climate and Environment Officer	FAO Ghana
100	Ghana	Bram Otijnen	First Secretary	Netherlands Embassy in Ghana
101	Ghana	Richard Adu-Achampong	Deputy Executive Director (Cocoa and Kola)	Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG)
102	Ghana	Samuel Lowor	Deputy Executive Director (Coffee)	CRIG
103	Ghana	Michael Achempong	Scientist	CRIG
104	Ghana	Mawuli Ocloo	Chief Sales Officer	Salesmark Services Ltd.
105	Ghana	Richard Yehboah	Country Director	MDF West Africa
106	Ghana	Stephanie Agbettoh	Head of Quality Assurance	Chocoluv Ltd.
107	Ghana	Monica Senanu	Founder and CEO	Chocoluv Ltd.
108	Ghana	Comfort Jennings	CEO	Ele AgBe Co. Ltd.
109	Ghana	Michael Marmon Halm	Managing Director	Fairafic Ghana Ltd.
110	Ghana	Kweku Temeng	CEO	Chocolate Mall Ltd.
111	Ghana	Edward Baffoe	Accountant	Chocolate Mall Ltd.
112	Ghana	Winifred Oppongmafu	CEO	Adansi Sweet Co. Ltd.
113	Ghana	Michael Yinbil	Manager	Adansi Sweet Co. Ltd.
114	Ghana	Boeteng Solomon	Acting Executive Secretary	Kuapa Kokoo Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union (KKFU)
115	Ghana	Solomon Adde	Farmer - Dadiesoba village,	Goaso Society - KKFU

No.	Country	Name	Title	Organization
116	Ghana	Kojo Fordjour	Farmer - Dadiesoba village,	Goaso Society - KKFU
117	Ghana	Joseph Adjei	Supervisor	KKFU Goaso
118	Ghana	Sadiq Abemge	Farmer – Abofrem village	Bibiani Society - KKFU
119	Ghana	Kwame Barkodie	Farmer – Abofrem village	Bibiani Society - KKFU
120	Ghana	Samson Bosomtwe	Farmer – Abofrem village	Bibiani Society - KKFU
121	Ghana	Frema Felicia	Farmer – Abofrem village	Bibiani Society - KKFU
122	Ghana	Bashiru Akamah	Farmer – Abofrem village	Bibiani Society - KKFU
123	Ghana	Abubaker Appiah	Farmer – Akavanyo village	Sankara Society – KKFU
124	Ghana	Emilie Deborah	Farmer – Akavanyo village	Sankara Society – KKFU
125	Ghana	Koffi Attakorah	Farmer – Akavanyo village	Sankara Society – KKFU
126	Ghana	John K Narah	Farmer – Akavanyo village	Sankara Society – KKFU
127	Ghana	Bismark Kabetitui	Supervisor	KKFU Sankara
128	Ghana	Gaisse Isaac	Extension Officer	Fair Trade Africa, Goaso
129	Ghana	Gottfried Baidoo	Project Coordinator (Sankofa)	KKFU Goaso
130	Ghana	Abu Mahama	Pruning Coordinator	Cocoa Health and Extension Division, COCOBOD, Goaso
131	Ghana	James Osei Jyimah	Assistant District Manager (Bibiani)	Forest Commission
132	Netherlands	Kiran Humzai	Senior M&E Consultant - SAAVI	DMD/RSE, ITC
133	Iraq	Peter Moi	ER2 Lead Coordinator - SAAVI	DMD/RSE, ITC
134	Iraq	Zahraa Witwit	Agri VC Expert/Deputy Project Coordinator - SAAVI	DMD/RSE, ITC
135	Iraq	Abdifataf Issack	Cash and Livelihoods Officer	Norwegian Refugee Council
136	Iraq	Elisa Molena	Head of Mosul Field Office	World Food Programme
137	Tanzania	Safari Fungo	National Project Coordinators and Regional Coordinator - MARKUP	DCP/OA, ITC
138	Uganda	Gilbert Gatali	Executive Director (former Chairman of Coffee Exporters and Processors Association, Rwanda)	African Fine Coffee Association
139	Fiji	Lagi Fischer	SME Specialist Consultant (UKTP)	DECI/SEC, ITC
140	Laos PDR	Khankeo Moonvong	Project Coordinator (ARISE+)	DCP/OAC, ITC
141	Laos PDR	Sengchanh Khammountha	Vice President	Laos Coffee Association
142	Laos PDR	Mathew Johnson-Idan	Senior Economist	UN Resident Coordinator's Office
143	Laos PDR	Xaysomphet Norasingh	Director General	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
144	Gabon	Mory Diawara	Regional Coordinator ACRAM - ACP	DCP/OLAC, ITC
145	Dominica	Shanita John	National Coordinator – Coconuts II	DCP/OLAC, ITC



No.	Country	Name	Title	Organization
146	Jamaica	Cliff Riley	Value Addition Centre Coordinator	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
147	Jamaica	Wayne Myrie	Plant Pathologist	Coconut Industry Board
148	Trinidad and Tobago	Tristan Alvarez	Deputy Program Manager for Resource Mobilization and M&E	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
149	South Africa	Owen Skae	Intl. Consultant – Eswatini Project	Rhodes University, Eastern Cape
150	Eswatini	Thulie Phasha Zwane	MSME Sustainability Expert and Acting NPC	DSIT/GIVC, ITC
151	Eswatini	Luis Miguel Pascoal	Programme Officer – Private Sector Development, Business Climate, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	EU Delegation in Eswatini
152	Eswatini	Claudia Castellanos	CEO	Black Mamba Foods
153	Pakistan	Adnan Younus Lodhi	Policy Lead Output 1	DECI/SEC, ITC
154	Pakistan	Aliyya Noor	Communication Specialist	DECI/SEC, ITC
155	Pakistan	Jehanzeb Khan	Provincial Lead Baluchistan	DECI/SEC, ITC
156	Pakistan	Amir Mehmood	Provincial Grants Officer Baluchistan	DECI/SEC, ITC
157	Pakistan	Atta ur Rehman	SME Enterprise Development Specialist, Baluchistan	DECI/SEC, ITC
158	Pakistan	Habibullah Khan Nasar	Provincial Policy Officer, Baluchistan	DECI/SEC, ITC
159	Pakistan	Mohsin Azam	Agribusiness Value Chain Specialist/ SME Development Specialist	DECI/SEC, ITC
160	Pakistan	Muhammad Umar Arfi	SME Development Specialist	DECI/SEC, ITC
161	Pakistan	Rizwan Tariq	Provincial Lead Sindh	DECI/SEC, ITC
162	Pakistan	Tahir Bashir	Grant Officer	DECI/SEC, ITC
163	Pakistan	Saqib Khan	Provincial Policy Adviser	DECI/SEC, ITC
164	Pakistan	Faisal Idrees	National Consultant Meat Strategy	DECI/SEC, ITC
165	Pakistan	Dr Sahar Gul	Gender Advisor	DECI/SEC, ITC
166	Pakistan	Irshad Ali	GRASP – M&E Lead	DECI/SEC, ITC
167	Pakistan	Sohail Khan Bangash	PPAF GRASP Operation Lead	Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Islamabad
168	Pakistan	Johdah Bukhari	Senior General Manager, M&E	PPAF, Islamabad
169	Pakistan	Waqar Abbas	Business Development Specialist	PPAF, Islamabad
170	Pakistan	Kazim Achakzai	General Secretary	Baluchistan Horticultural Cooperative Society, Quetta
171	Pakistan	Alamgir Khan	Executive Member	Chamber of Agriculture, Quetta
172	Pakistan	Sohail Khan	Member	Chamber of Agriculture, Quetta
173	Pakistan	Haji Sher Ali	Market Committee Member	Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI)

No.	Country	Name	Title	Organization
174	Pakistan	Syed Shahabuddin	SME Corodinator	QCCI
175	Pakistan	Syed Ahad Agha	Vice President	QCCI
176	Pakistan	Ehtesham Mirza	Section Officer, Development	Agriculture & Cooperative Department, Quetta
177	Pakistan	Maria Hadiqa	Research Officer	Planning & Development Department, Quetta
178	Pakistan	Inayatullah Kakar	Additional Secretary	Agriculture Department, Quetta
179	Pakistan	Dr Amjad Ali	Focal Person, Livestock	Livestock & Dairy Development Department, Quetta
180	Pakistan	Dr Qasim Raza	Additional Principal/Associate Professor,	Adam Smith International
181	Pakistan	Jahan Ara Tabbusum	Deputy Secretary, Gender	Women Development Department, Quetta
182	Pakistan	Nasir Iqbal	Access to Finance Manager/ Provincial Lead	PPAF, Quetta
183	Pakistan	Muhammad Yahya Musakhel	Business Development Manager, Baluchistan	PPAF, Quetta
184	Pakistan	Dr Abdul Sattar Mengal	Livestock Associate	FAO, Quetta
185	Pakistan	Bakhtullah	Hub Team Leader, Quetta Pishin	FAO, Quetta
186	Pakistan	Shakoor Ahmad	Provincial Chief	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), Quetta
187	Pakistan	Sana Durrani	Chairperson	Baluchistan Women Business Association
188	Pakistan	Zaheer Zahra	Provincial Coordinator	Baluchistan Women Business Association
189	Pakistan	Durre Seemi	Director, Agri Extension	Agri Extension Department, Quetta
190	Pakistan	Naqeebullah Khan	Deputy Director	Baluchistan Food Authority
191	Pakistan	Mir Rab Nawaz Khetran	Head of Project	Baluchistan Livelihood & Entrepreneurship Project (BLEP), Quetta
192	Pakistan	Ali Bin Mehmood	Project Coordinator	BLEP, Quetta
193	Pakistan	Shaheen Ijaz	Owner & Director Floriculture	M&M Company & Agriculture Department
194	Pakistan	Muhammad Ramzan	Onion Grower – Quetta	Farmer
195	Pakistan	Munir Ahmed	Onion Grower – Quetta	Farmer
196	Pakistan	Saifullah	Onion Grower – Quetta	Farmer
197	Pakistan	Bilal Ahmed	Onion Grower - Quetta	Farmer
198	Pakistan	Dr Asia Tariq	Farmer	Burhani

No.	Country	Name	Title	Organization
199	Pakistan	Namatullah Jan	General Manager, Programme	Baluchistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP)
200	Pakistan	Mazhar Ali Khan	M&E Manager	BRSP
201	Pakistan	Arif Mengal	PO Contract Manager Officer	BRSP
202	Pakistan	Rajab Ali	Project Manager	BRSP
203	Pakistan	Zubair Ahmad	Programme Officer	BRSP
204	Pakistan	Rimsha Ishaq	MIS/Data Base Entry	BRSP
205	Pakistan	Amjad Rashid	Chief Executive Officer	Taraqee Foundation
206	Pakistan	Essa Kakar	Director, Programmes	Taraqee Foundation
207	Pakistan	Fahmida Durrani	Owner	Aliwena's Collection
208	Pakistan	Naila Bahatti	Assistant Chief Foreign Aid/ Focal Person of all Development Projects	Planning & Development, Karachi
209	Pakistan	Ashraf Ali	Project Coordinator	FAO, Karachi
210	Pakistan	Tufail Ahmad	M&E Specialist	FAO, Karachi
211	Pakistan	Ammar Iqbal	Marketing Director	Al-Madina Enterprise and Dairy Equipment
212	Pakistan	Shakil Momin	Dairy Farmer	Dairy Farmer, Karachi
213	Pakistan	Shakir Umer Gujjar	President	DCFA Pakistan
214	Pakistan	Asad Mansoor	Director/Proprietor	Al Razzak/DCFA
215	Pakistan	Anas Jamil	Director	Sindh Dairy Farm
216	Pakistan	Jamil Memon	Owner	Sindh Dairy Farm
217	Pakistan	Hussain Ali Kalwar	Head of Government Relations (Sindh)	Engro Pakistan Limited
218	Pakistan	Asif Muhammad Ali	Owner	Refined Food Industry
219	Pakistan	Muhammad Riaz	CEO	Refined Food Industry
220	Pakistan	Hafeez Ahmed Sial	Secretary	Livestock Department, Karachi
221	Pakistan	Dr Abdul Mannan	Director Research	Livestock Department, Karachi
222	Pakistan	Aijaz Ahmad Mahesar	Secretary	Agriculture Department, Karachi
223	Pakistan	Muhammad Idress Khoso	Deputy Secretary	Agriculture Department, Karachi
224	Pakistan	Shazia Aslam	Provincial Coordinator, Sindh	PPAF, Karachi
225	Pakistan	Mukesh Kumar	Provincial Chief, Sindh	SMEDA, Karachi
226	Pakistan	Zeeshan Ahmad	Deputy General Manager	SMEDA, Karachi
227	Pakistan	Muhammad Waseem Shaikh	Access to Finance Manager, Sindh	PPAF, Karachi

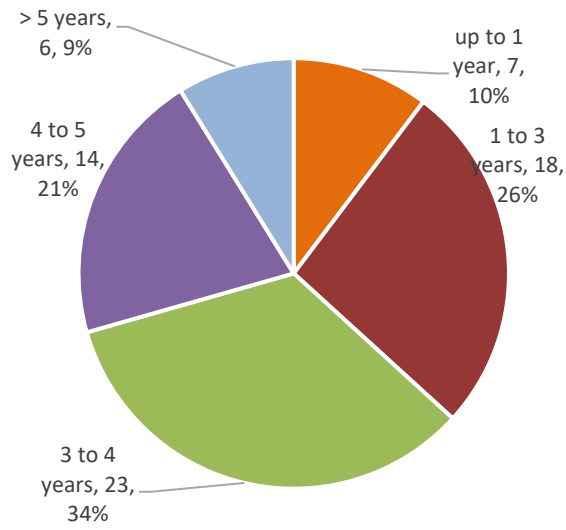
Note: The column 'Country' indicates where the interviewee is located, not the nationality of the person.

## Annex E: Site visits

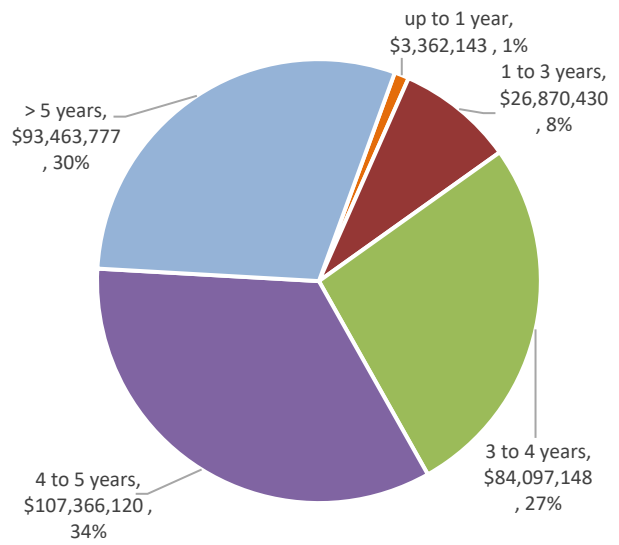
Date of Visit	Country	Location	Site Visits
April 11, 2023	Ghana	Kumasi	Adansi Sweet Co.Ltd. (chocolate manufacturer)
April 11, 2023	Ghana	Dadiesoaba village, Goaso	Cocoa farmers (agroforestry)
April 12, 2023	Ghana	Abofrem village, Bibiani	Cocoa farmers (agroforestry)
April 12, 2023	Ghana	Akavanyo village, Sankafore	Cocoa farmers (agroforestry)
April 14, 2023	Ghana	Accra	Cocoluv Ltd. (chocolate manufacturer)
April 18, 2023	Ghana	Tema	FAIRAFRIC Ghana Ltd. (chocolate manufacturer)
April 19, 2023	Ghana	Accra	ELE AGBE Co. Ltd. (shea products manufacturer)
April 20, 2023	Ghana	Accra	Chocolate Mall Ltd. (chocolate manufacturer)
April 20, 2023	Ghana	New Talo-Akim	CRIG agroforestry demonstration plots

## Annex F: Project duration and budget

*Project Distribution by Project Duration*

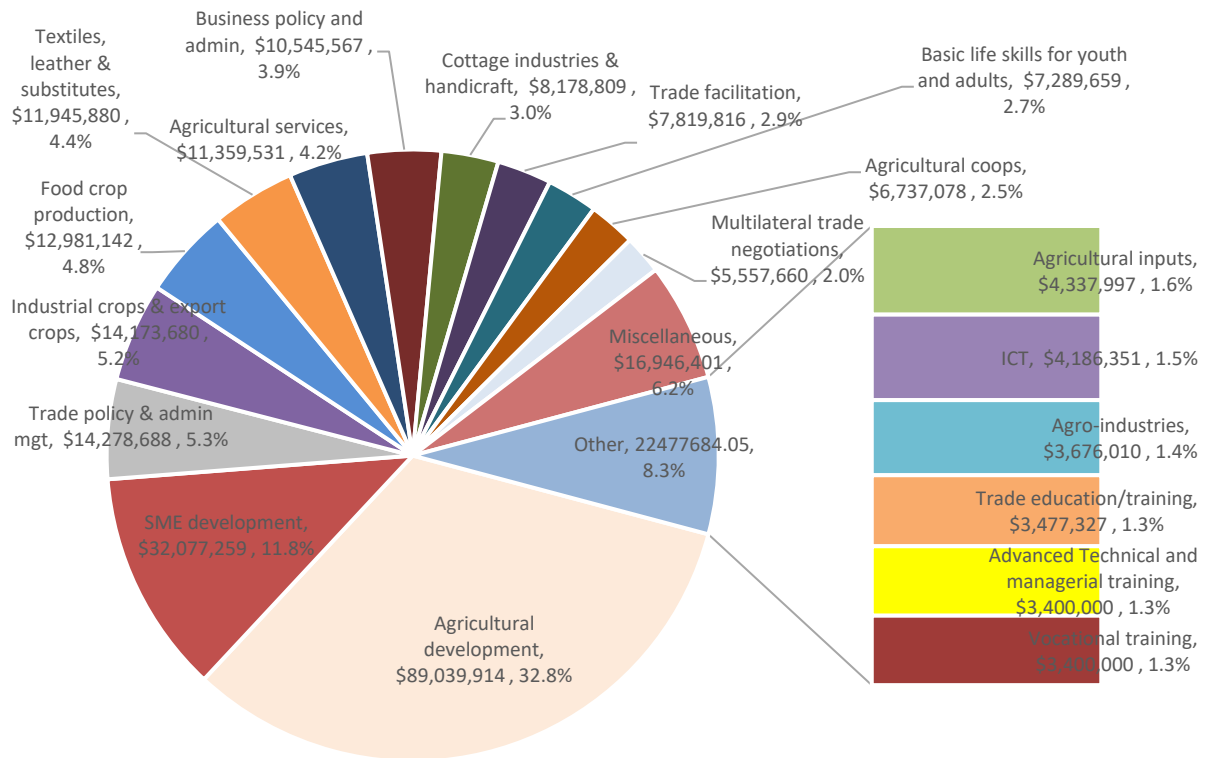


*Project Duration and Share of Budget*



## Annex G: OECD sector (ITC projects)

### ITC Portfolio - Project budget by OECD sectors



Source: Portfolio analysis completed for this evaluation (October 2022)<sup>152</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Analysis was done based on 43 projects (as information was not available for the rest). These 43 projects covered 88% of the portfolio budget that was analyzed overall.

## Annex H: Contribution to SDGs – Selected Projects

Project Title	Contributes to SDGs
B505: ASEAN Regional Integrations Support (ARISE+) – Lao PDR	1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 17
B900: UK Partnership Programme - Fiji	8
B903: UK Partnership Programme - Ghana	8, 11, 17
B807: ACP – Strengthening Productive Capabilities and Value Chain Alliances	2, 8, 13, 17
B383: EU-EAC Market Access Upgrade Programme (MARKUP)	2, 8, 12, 17
B537: ECOWAS – West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP)	2, 8, 9, 16, 17
B407: Caribbean – Development of value-added products and intra-regional trade to enhance livelihoods from Coconuts II	2, 16, 17
B466: Pakistan – Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP)	1, 5, 8
B766: Ghana – Developing cocoa and associated crops through the Sankofa Project empowered by Alliances for Action	2,5, 8, 10, 12, 17
C150: Ghana – Building Alliances for Action in Cocoa from bean to bar (NTF V)	5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17
C093: Alliances for Action: Coffee Network	17
B930: Alliances for Action: Coffee Guide	2
B610: SheTrades West Africa	5
B452: Uganda – Strengthening Agribusiness Resilience and Competitiveness (STAR)	13
B978: Eswatini – Promoting growth through competitive alliances I	8
B960: Iraq – Strengthening the Agriculture and Agri-Food Value Chain and Improving Trade Policy (SAAVI)	2, 5, 8
B872: Malaysia – Trade-related Assistance (ARISE+ Malaysia)	1, 10, 17
B873: Thailand – Trade-related Assistance (ARISE+ Thailand)	1,17
B312: Tajikistan – Enabling market access for agricultural products through improved food safety system (STDF)	2, 8, 9, 16, 17
C022: Gambia – COVID-19 recovery through digitalization and market access for women in horticulture producers	1, 2, 5
C095: Gambia: Building resilience of vulnerable communities	1
B928: Alliance for Product Quality in Africa	17
B915: Uzbekistan – Facilitating the Process of Accession to the WTO	8, 10, 16, 17
C128: Conducive policy and regulatory environment – Trade negotiations and policy reform	9, 13, 17

Source: Compiled from Project Portal and project documents



## Annex I: Examples of Export Strategies in the Agriculture Sector

Country	Strategy
Iraq	Sustainable Development Strategy Tomato Sector (2022-2026)
Iran	National Export Strategy - Medicinal Herbs Strategy (2021-2025)
Nepal	National Sector Export Strategy – Tea (2017-2021)
Tanzania	Leather Sector Development Strategy (2016-2020)
Tanzania	Sunflower Sector Development Strategy (2016-2020)
Cambodia	National Silk Strategy (2016-2020)
Myanmar	National Export Strategy - Rice Sector Strategy (2015-2019)
Liberia	National Export Strategy - Cocoa Export Strategy (2014-2018)
Mozambique	National Export Strategy – Cashew Sector Strategy (2011)
Cameroon	Coffee Sector Development Strategy (2010-2015)
Grenada	Nutmeg Sector Development Strategy (2010-2015)
Ethiopia	Spice Sub-sector Strategy (2010 – 2015)
Samoa	Fruits and Vegetable Sector Strategy (2009-2014)
Bangladesh	Strategy for Developing Horticulture Sector (2008-2013)

Source: Compiled from interviews and the ITC website.

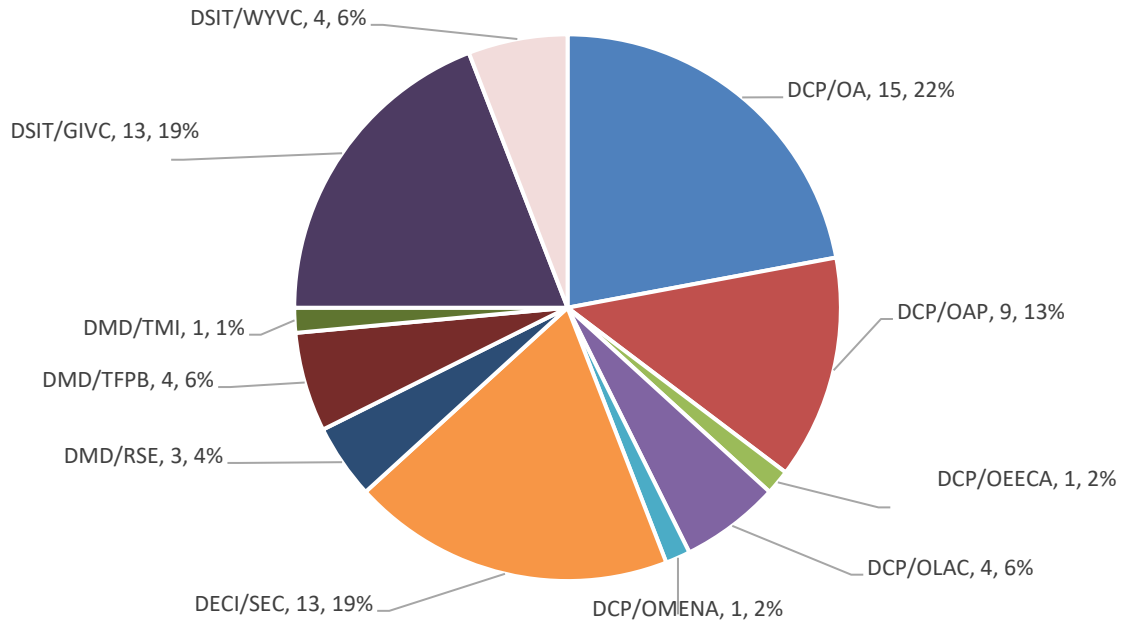
## Annex J: ODA to Agriculture in 2021 – Top 15

Funders	% of Total ODA to Agriculture	ODA to Agriculture (USD)	Agriculture ODA - % as Bilateral Funding	% of Agriculture ODA as Core funding to Multilaterals	% of Agriculture ODA as Ear-marked to Multilaterals
Germany	6%	2.1 billion	44%	21%	34%
EU institutions	6%	1.5 billion	78%	0%	22%
France	7%	1.3 billion	46%	43%	11%
USA	2%	1.2 billion	74%	14%	12%
Japan	5%	1.1 billion	51%	5%	44%
United Kingdom	5%	810 million	30%	65%	5%
Canada	7%	422 million	28%	16%	56%
Netherlands	7%	376 million	50%	22%	28%
Italy	5%	347 million	13%	76%	11%
Sweden	5%	313 million	36%	32%	32%
South Korea	8%	236 million	57%	24%	19%
Spain	6%	232 million	31%	65%	4%
Norway	5%	231 million	33%	37%	30%
Switzerland	n/a	229 million	n/a	n/a	n/a
Belgium	n/a	191 million	n/a	n/a	n/a

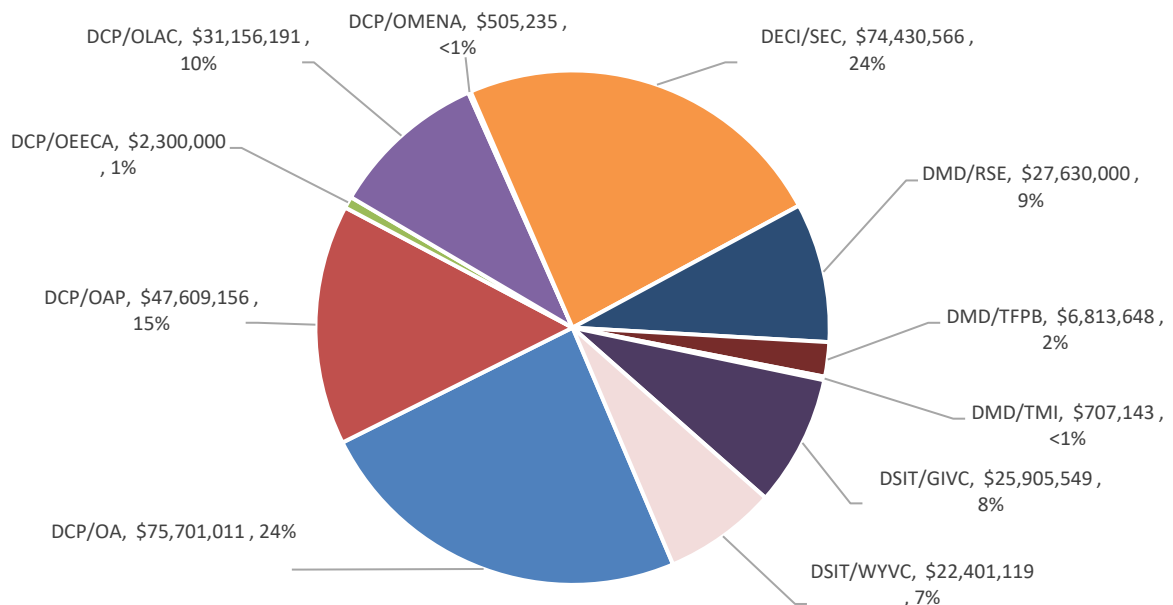
Source: OECD: April 2023

## Annex K: Number of projects and budget by Section

Share of projects by Lead sections



Share of the budget by Lead sections



## Annex L: ITC Country engagement

Region	Number of Countries			
	Contributed to CCA	UNSDCF signatory	UNCT member	Countries with Ag VC projects
Africa	10	14	29	32
Asia and the Pacific	10	12	18	15
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	-	6	8	3
Latin America and the Caribbean	2	3	3	15
Middle East and North Africa	6	2	9	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>72</b>

Source: ITC (as of April 2023)

## Evaluation of ITC's Work on Agricultural Value Chains

Report available at [www.intracen.org/evaluation](http://www.intracen.org/evaluation)

Independence Evaluation Unit (IEU)

International Trade Centre

**Street address:**

International Trade Centre  
54-56 Rue de Montbrillant  
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

P: +41 22 730 0111

F: +41 22 733 4439

E: [itcreg@intracen.org](mailto:itcreg@intracen.org)  
[www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org)

**Postal address:**

International Trade Centre  
Palais des Nations  
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

