



International
Trade
Centre

2018 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report

A presentation to: Joint Advisory Group

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Sixth edition of the AESR

Purpose:

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

Scope:

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

Variety of sources and contexts:

- different types of evaluation
- heterogeneous projects with varying budgets (\$347 K to \$5.5 MM), and diverse context and roles for ITC support
- majority of projects evaluated were launched before 2015

Key learning theme of sustainability

Work in progress:

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

What works well:

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

What needs improvement:

- need for better support and engagement strategy for longer-term results
- major challenge continues to be project implementation duration
- fostering ownership, is essential for ensuring sustainability

Challenges affecting sustainability

inception/launch:

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

implementation:

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

changes required of beneficiaries and partners:

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

Lessons learned

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

Incentivize innovation in projects in a more widespread and systematic way

Further strengthening the programmatic approach:

- integration of innovation in project design
- more effectively measuring/assessing local ownership

Flexibility in implementation:

- continuous attention and adaption to local conditions, beneficiaries and partners
- innovation criteria used for the allocation of resources

Skills and perspective:

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

Innovation-enabling framework:

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