



Productivity Eco-Systems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

ILO DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Type of Evaluation: External

Evaluation timing: Mid-term

Evaluation nature: Independent

Project countries: Ghana, South Africa, Vietnam

P&B Outcome(s): Outcome 4

SDG(s): 8 and 9

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 30 June 2024

Date when evaluation was approved by EVAL: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

ILO Administrative Office: SME Unit

ILO Technical Office(s): SME Unit

Joint evaluation agencies:

Project duration: January 2022 to December 2025

Donor and budget: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), 16,000,000 USD

Name of consultant(s): Jessica Rust-Smith (Evaluation Lead), Kabir Lawal, Cebisile Nyambe, Rodd MacGregor Dyer, Le Thi Hang Nga, Holly Krueger

Name of Evaluation Manager: Maria Borsos

Evaluation Office oversight: Amanda Mack, Evaluation Officer

Evaluation budget: 47,494.85 USD

Key Words: [Use the ILO Thesaurus](#)

This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office.

Table of Contents

Acronyms	<i>i</i>
Executive Summary	<i>iii</i>
Project background	<i>8</i>
Evaluation background	<i>9</i>
Evaluation Criteria and Questions	<i>10</i>
Evaluation Methodology	<i>16</i>
Main findings	<i>21</i>
1) Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention	<i>21</i>
2) Validity of intervention design	<i>24</i>
3) Intervention progress and effectiveness	<i>31</i>
4) Effectiveness of management arrangements	<i>36</i>
5) Efficiency of resource usage	<i>39</i>
6) Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention	<i>41</i>
Cross-cutting issues	<i>47</i>
Conclusions	<i>52</i>
Lessons learned and Emerging good practices	<i>55</i>
Recommendations	<i>56</i>
Appendix 1: Lessons learned templates	<i>59</i>
Appendix 2: Emerging good practices templates	<i>65</i>
Appendix 3: Country-specific recommendations	<i>69</i>
Appendix 4: List of persons interviewed	<i>71</i>
Appendix 5: Data collection instruments: Key Informant Interview (KII) guides	<i>77</i>
Appendix 6: Bibliography	<i>89</i>
Appendix 7: Terms of Reference	<i>92</i>

Figure 1: PE4DW Programme Theory of Change (Source: PE4DW MTE TORs) iii

Figure 2: PE4DW Programme Theory of Change (Source: PE4DW MTE TORs) 8

Acronyms

ACT/EMP	ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
AGAM	Association of Ghana Apparel Manufacturers
AIDC	Automotive Industry Development Centre
BSOs	Business Support Organizations
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
CIEM	Central Institute for Economic Management
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DEL	Department of Employment and Labour
DSBD	Department of Small Business Development
The DTIC	The Department of Trade and Industry and Competition
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EBMOs	Employer and business membership organizations
EQM	Evaluation Question Matrix
EQs	Evaluation Questions
EV	Electric Vehicles
FPA	Forestry Products Association
GAIDC	Gauteng Automotive Development Centre
GAWU	Ghana Agriculture Workers Union
GEA	Ghana Employers Association
GSAC	Global Strategic Advisory Committee
GSO	General Statistics Office
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
ITC	International Training Centre of the ILO
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
KAIZEN	Kaizen is a Japanese business philosophy that focuses on gradually improving productivity and making a work environment more efficient
KIIs	Key informant interviews
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MELR	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (Ghana)
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MOTI	Ministry of Trade and Investment (Ghana)
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MSMEs	Micro-, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
NAACAM	National Association of Automotive Components and Allied Manufacturers

NACTU	National Council of Trade Union
NDP	National Development Plan
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEP	National Employment Policy
NEV	New Energy Vehicles
NHO	Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises
NLPP	National Programme for Improving Labour Productivity
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NSOs	National Statistical Offices
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
OEMs	Original equipment manufacturers
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PE4DW	Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work
PMT	Project Management Team
PWD	People with Disabilities
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAFLEC	South African Footwear and Leather Export Council
SARS	South African Revenue Services
SCORE	ILO Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SEDP	Socio-economic Development Plan
SEDS	Socio-economic Development Strategy
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SMETAC	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Technical Assistance Center
STAMEQ	Standards, Metrology and Quality of Vietnam
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of References
ToT	Training of Trainers
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UNDAF	United National Development
VASI	Vietnam Association of Supporting Industries
VCCI	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
VGCL	Vietnam General Confederation of Labour
VNPI	Vietnam National Productivity Institute

Executive Summary

Background & Context

Summary of the programme purpose, logic and structure

To address recent declines in productivity growth in emerging and developing economies, ILO has designed the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Programme (PE4DW) with the twin aims of boosting productivity and decent work. The USD \$16 million programme began in January 2022. It is being piloted in three countries: Ghana, South Africa, and Vietnam and will run until December 2025. It is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

The programme's Theory of Change (ToC) is included below. Outcome 1 is focused on national policy, the 'macro' level, and Outcome 2 is focused on sectoral and enterprise constraints, the 'meso' and 'micro' levels. The two outcomes, and three levels are intended to complement each other.

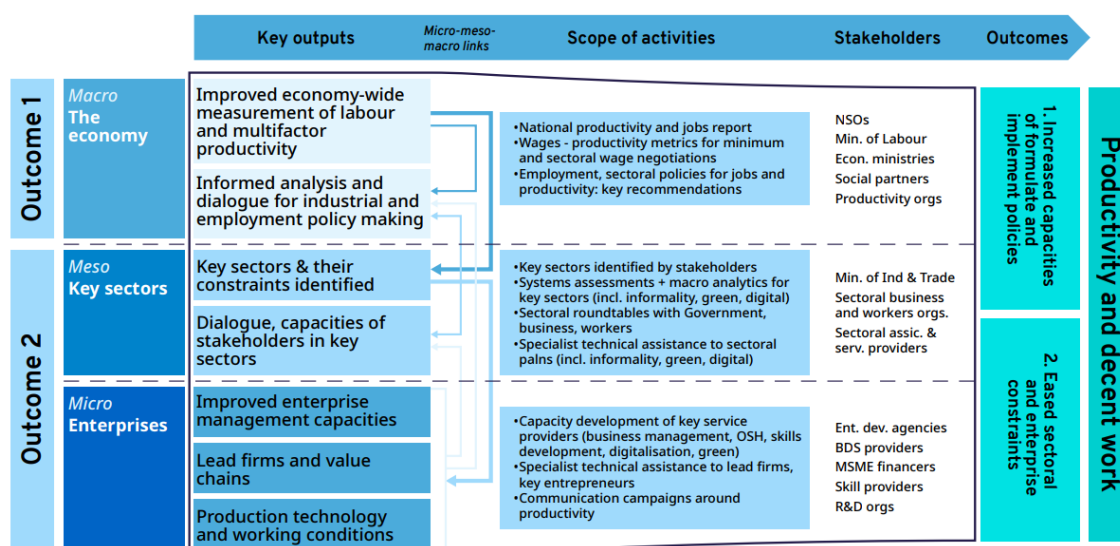


FIGURE 1: PE4DW PROGRAMME THEORY OF CHANGE (SOURCE: PE4DW MTE TORs)

Present situation of the programme

The programme's inception phase began in January 2022 and the length of this phase varied in each of the three country pilot projects. In Ghana, the project inception phase commenced in April 2022 and ended in February 2023. The Inception phase for the South Africa pilot ended in December 2022. In Vietnam, the inception phase ran from April to November 2022. All country projects are now in their implementation phase.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The ILO has commissioned The Canopy Lab to conduct a mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the pilot programme, to generate lessons for the three pilot countries and future iterations of the programme. The three objectives of the MTE are to:

1. Assess the programme's progress against its strategies and logframes,
2. Inform the ILO and programme stakeholders of what's working and provide recommendations to increase the likelihood of achieving its objectives, and
3. Identify lessons learned of use to the ILO and stakeholders.

Methodology of evaluation

The MTE is designed in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToRs) and uses ILO's (and the OECD's) evaluation criteria (Relevance and Validity, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Impact) and integrates an analysis of gender and inclusion throughout. Through a combination of document reviews (of qualitative and quantitative data), key informant interviews (KIIs) with ILO staff, donor (SECO and NORAD) representatives, and tripartite stakeholders (government, employers, and workers) in each of the three pilot countries, the evaluators gathered the evidence needed to address the Evaluation Questions (EQs) detailed in the Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM). The evaluation was comprised of five phases:

1. Desk review and inception report writing;
2. Primary data collection in each of the three pilot countries;
3. Data analysis, synthesis, and report writing;
4. Report revisions and finalization in response to client feedback;
5. Presentation of findings to the ILO, donors and other stakeholders.

Methodological limitations:

- The initial number of evaluation questions in the ToRs were rationalized in discussion with ILO staff and donors, to focus on a priority list of 17 questions.
- The Team Leader was initially to lead on South Africa data collection but was unable to due to a change in her circumstances, this necessitated finding a South Africa-based team member. The team member chosen came recommended by the ILO having worked for the ILO previously.

Main findings & Conclusions

Relevance

The programme as a whole, and three country pilot projects are seen as highly relevant to, and consistent with, national and tripartite actors and their priorities, and interviewed stakeholders were able to articulate this relevance. This relevance is attributed to the fact that the projects were designed in collaboration with these stakeholders.

Validity of Design

Overall, the programme's ecosystem approach appears valid, although in practice it is not always implemented--some activities appear fragmented, including being spread out across multiple geographies. The inception phase included challenges such as delays (due to recruitment challenges) but was used to adapt the programme and was an opportunity for valuable learning (including learning related to the process of sector selection).

Intervention progress and effectiveness

The country projects have made good progress on their planned activities, especially at the micro level (Outcome 2), here implementation has been made more effective through the programme's complementarity with the SCORE programme. At the macro level (Outcome 1), while policy change can be a very protracted process, important milestones have been met. The ILO acknowledged that the programme faces a challenge of its relatively short timeframe (4 years, including one year for inception) with respect to its objectives of implementing policy change and systemic change. In addition, some partners noted that ILO systems and procedures have contributed to delays in implementation, in what is already a short timeframe.

Effectiveness of management arrangements

The programme's management arrangements are effective but also have room for improvement. For the most part, time frames and workplans are adhered to across the three countries. The advisory committees at the Global level and in Ghana and South Africa are working effectively and are considered useful. Some members

have suggested improvements. However, in Vietnam there is no such functioning body because of administrative issues related to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) decrees affecting all UN agencies and development partners in the country. The M&E system is considered appropriate and straightforward to use, although it is a work in progress, and could be used to better communicate with donors and project partners.

Efficiency of resource usage

The programme does make efficient use of its financial and human resources, but staffing could be optimized. There are high workloads for a small number of staff, and a risk of burnout. It is however difficult to address some of these constraints within the ILO and donor's standard practices around recruitment and spending on staff.

Impact and sustainability

There are early signs of the programme's *potential* impact. At the macro-level (Outcome 1), there are encouraging signs of national ownership and changes in employment policy, even at the mid-term point--although the impact of these policies cannot yet be seen. At the meso-level (Outcome 2), the country projects have made various inroads, but the effectiveness of sector-level interventions remains unclear. At the micro level (Outcome 2), there have been tangible improvements in efficiency in supported enterprises. The impact of the systemic approach is still to be seen, and there are opportunities to strengthen its implementation.

Cross-cutting themes

Gender and non-discrimination

Gender inclusion is built into the global programme's objectives and systems, but its application on the ground and subsequent results varies significantly by pilot country and ecosystem level. Ghana appears to have made the most progress because the selected sectors are dominated by women. In South Africa and Vietnam, the ILO-supported policies address gender inclusion. On the whole, the programme is inconsistent when it comes to gender inclusion, this may in part be due to a lack of technical resources to mainstream gender. The inclusion of PWDs was not integrated into the programme from the outset, nor has it been integrated subsequently, with virtually no results to show. Although it is a cross-cutting issue for the ILO (and included the ToRs for this evaluation), the programme has been quite vocal in stating this issue is among too many cross-cutting themes being added to its objectives. To mainstream inclusion of PWDs, this would require changes in the programme design and likely, as with gender, additional resources.

Tripartism

Collaboration by government and its social partners at the macro level is influenced by the need for policies to drive the increase in productivity and the improvement of working conditions for employees across all sectors of the economy. These engagements are showing positive results in the progress made by the projects in the different countries, in particular South Africa and Ghana. The assessment conducted on the PE4DW projects in the three pilot countries learned that the tripartite alliances are proving useful in the aiding the implementation of the programme. For example, in Ghana tripartite actors are reviewing the country's labour law. There are challenges and issues that impact the effectiveness of tripartite and social dialogues in Vietnam due to its state-led model of organizing dialogue and the challenging ODA environment.

International labour standards

The project promotes several of the ILO's conventions and recommendations through its interventions at the three levels. At the policy-level its work on the revision of the Employment Law in Vietnam and the Employment Policy in South Africa promotes the Employment Policy convention (C122), the Employment Services Convention (C88) and the Labour Statistics Convention (160). In Ghana, the revisions of the Labour Act and the OSH Act are promoting the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as well as OSH related labour

standards. Sector and enterprise-level work further promoted the ‘Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises’ (R189) and, to some extent, R204, ‘Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy.’ The programme is implementing aspects of this recommendation through engagement with SMEs (including informal businesses), supporting the creation of national employment policies and piloting an approach to formalisation in Ghana.

Environmental sustainability

The PE4DW program integrates environmental sustainability in its strategic approach, albeit with varying emphasis across global and country-specific contexts. Country-specific projects demonstrate sensitivity towards local environmental issues, with a pronounced focus on sustainable development policies, and emission reduction strategies in different sectors. While the global-level design lacked a strong environmental focus, it was firmly incorporated in country-specific programs aligned to local environmental challenges. Project interventions currently being implemented included awareness raising, environmental training and coaching support with participating enterprises. Across Ghana, South Africa, and Vietnam interventions covered waste management, green growth, carbon accounting and emissions reduction strategies. The project also delivered knowledge and capacity strategies focusing on circularity models and energy-saving. It should be noted that current levels of enterprise engagement are quite modest (in terms of the number of enterprises). While the project demonstrates a commitment to integrating environmental sustainability, there's a need to strengthen systematic monitoring and documenting of environmental outcomes.

Capacity Development

Capacity development yields several positive effects and improvements in the short, medium, and long-term. In the short-term, the results of capacity building activities can already be seen in the form of improved efficiency at the enterprise (micro) level. At the sector (meso) level, capacity building activities have included support to sector associations to improve their functioning and improve the services they provide to their members. At the government (macro) level, there have been a myriad of capacity building activities under Outcome 1. The programme is building the internal capacity of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to improve productivity statistics through project TAGs. This has already had the effect of bringing siloed government departments together. While it is too early to assess long-term capacity development, the programme has the potential to yield significant benefits both in the medium and long term, contributing to productivity and decent work.

Lessons Learned, Good Practices and Recommendations

All lessons learned, emerging good practices and recommendations listed here are intended for the programme as a whole. Country-level recommendations are included in Appendix 3.

Lessons learned

1. **Mainstreaming gender inclusion and non-discrimination:** Choosing sectors for project interventions that already include women (and potentially other marginalized groups) is a way of mainstreaming gender inclusion and non-discrimination within the programme.
2. **Strengthening engagement and embracing social dialogue:** For effective capacity building and ownership, engage stakeholders using existing communication channels in an open and inclusive conversations to gain diverse perspectives, build consensus, and co-create solutions.
3. **Intervention design:** The intervention design should be carried out in a collaborative manner, feeding from partners' knowledge. Local partners are well placed to understand the outlook of the intervention sectors and can guide the development of interventions to align with industry targets and government goals.

4. **Ecosystem approaches:** Adopting a more targeted ecosystem approach for interventions is crucial. Future projects should leverage localized, sector-specific partnerships and resources which in turn ensure more structured and effective outcomes.
5. **Programme timeframe:** There is a disconnect between the programme's short timeframe (4 years including inception phase) and the ambitions of the project to achieve systemic change—which is a long-term goal.
6. **Under resourced with respect to staffing:** the team has experienced and is experiencing the effects of being understaffed: high workloads, high turnover, and a lack of in-house expertise to adequately address cross-cutting themes.

Emerging good practices

1. **Mainstreaming gender inclusion:** In Ghana, a major attribute of the sectors that works positively for the project is the predominance of women as workers and employers in both sectors. This has eased the attainment of gender targets on the project.
2. **Strengthening engagement and social dialogue:** In the case of South Africa, the project success in facilitating collaboration among social partners and government departments has led to reduced duplication of efforts and resources and enhanced the provision of demand-driven interventions.
3. **Intervention design:** The collaborative development of interventions with key partners aids buy-in and limits resistance.
4. **Solutions to address staffing resources constraints:** There have been instances where country teams have made use of technical resources in other ways. They have made use of consultants and of 'borrowed' staff from other ILO programmes to address cross-cutting themes.

Recommendations

1. **Mainstream gender inclusion and non-discrimination through sector selection:** During design stage, in future country projects, choose sectors for project interventions that already include women (and potentially other marginalised groups). The design can be flexible depending on the difficulty of enhancing/ achieving gender inclusion in a particular sector. In addition, the programme stakeholders should come to an agreement on the extent to which it is feasible to integrate activities specifically targeted at people with disabilities in the programme design, because of the programme resource constraints.
2. **Strengthen macro and meso level engagement and collaboration:** The ILO country offices should continue to facilitate these engagements and collaborations with Tripartite partners and sector-level players to help streamline efforts, avoid redundancy, and maximize impact in addressing the needs and priorities of the partners and stakeholders.
3. **Intervention design:** Improve communication with all relevant stakeholders during and after intervention design to improve understanding and reduce apprehension.
4. **Ecosystem approaches:** Consider focusing and integrating interventions, particularly for Outcome 2, by addressing key obstacles of targeted enterprises within one or two specific geographic areas and association clusters.
5. **Increase programme timeframe:** increase the programme's timeframe (and associated resourcing) beyond the 4-year pilot to at least 5 years, not including inception. This is necessary to accommodate the programme's objectives of achieving systemic change.
6. **Optimize staffing:** The ILO should review and submit a revised staffing structure, in particular to address administrative bottlenecks (in conjunction with improving ILO's internal procedures) and bring in house more sector-focused technical expertise.
7. **Peer Learning between Countries:** By facilitating knowledge exchange, experiences, and best practices, countries can learn from each other's successes and failures.
8. **Improve ILO internal procedures:** The programme would benefit from any and all efforts by the ILO to make their internal processes (e.g. for procurement and contracting) more efficient.

Project background

Established in 1919, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) brings together the ‘tripartite’ efforts of governments, employers, and workers of its 187 Member States. The ILO sets labour standards and develops policies and programmes to promote decent work for all women and men. The ILO’s ‘Decent Work Agenda’ has four pillars, i) employment creation, ii) social protection, iii) rights at work, and iv) social dialogue between governments, employers, and workers.

The ILO champions productivity as a means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8—decent work and economic growth; and SDG 9—sustainable industry, innovation and resilient infrastructure. In 2019 in the ILO Centenary Declaration, called upon the Organization to “harness [...] the fullest potential of technological progress and productivity growth, including through social dialogue, to achieve decent work and sustainable development, which ensure dignity, self-fulfilment and a just sharing of the benefits for all.”

To address recent declines in productivity growth and wage growth in emerging and developing economies—in the wake of the global financial crisis and Covid-19 pandemic, ILO has designed the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Programme (PE4DW) with the twin aims of boosting productivity and decent work. The USD \$16 million programme began in January 2022. It is being piloted in three countries: Ghana, South Africa, and Vietnam and will run until December 2025. It is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

The programme’s Theory of Change (ToC) is included below. Outcome 1 is focused on national policy, the ‘macro’ level, and Outcome 2 is focused on sectoral and enterprise constraints, the ‘meso’ and ‘micro’ levels. The two outcomes, and three levels are intended to complement each other.

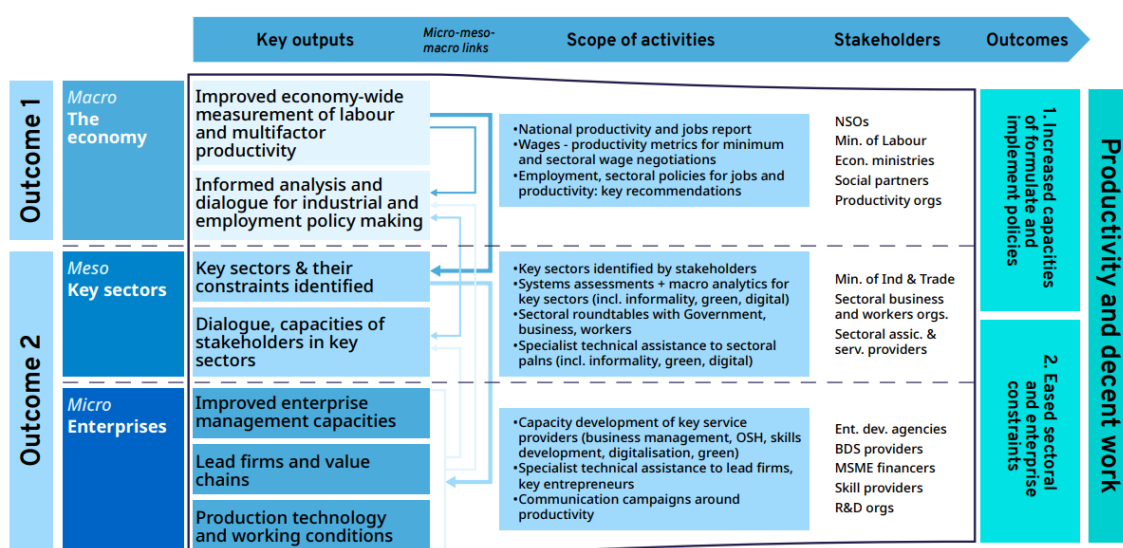


FIGURE 2: PE4DW PROGRAMME THEORY OF CHANGE (SOURCE: PE4DW MTE TORs)

The programme’s inception phase began in January 2022 and the length of this phase varied in each of the three country pilot projects. In Ghana, the project inception phase commenced in April 2022 and ended in February 2023. The Inception phase for the South Africa pilot ended in December 2022. In Vietnam, the inception phase ran from April to November 2022. All country projects are now in their implementation phase.

Evaluation background

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

As the total budget of Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work is over USD 5 million, the ILO evaluation policy requires that it goes through an independent mid-term evaluation. The ILO has commissioned The Canopy Lab to conduct a mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the pilot programme, to generate lessons for the three pilot countries and future iterations of the programme. The MTE is designed in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToRs, included in Appendix 7). As per the ToRs, the three objectives of the MTE are to:

1. Assess the programme's progress against its strategies and logframes,
2. Inform the ILO and programme stakeholders of what's working and provide recommendations to increase the likelihood of achieving its objectives, and
3. Identify lessons learned of use to the ILO and stakeholders.

The MTE's scope covers the period from January 2022 to December 2023 (and in some instances also looks at activities and results in early 2024). The MTE evaluates the progress of the PE4DW country projects in Ghana, South Africa and Vietnam, as well as the progress of the Global programme as a whole.

The clients of the evaluation are:

1. The donors SECO and NORAD;
2. The Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work project staff, ILO Country Offices and other field and headquarter staff;
3. Members of the global and national advisory committees and partner organizations in the evaluated countries.

The evaluation will be used in the following ways:

1. Findings and recommendations will inform future project strategy and operations design;
2. The evaluation report will be disseminated in the ILO for organisational learning through the EVAL's i-Track evaluation database. A summary of the evaluation will be made available in public through EVAL's and SCORE's websites.
3. The donors will use the report for their performance report.

The MTE uses ILO's (and the OECD's) evaluation criteria (Relevance and Validity, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Impact) and integrates an analysis of gender and inclusion throughout.

Evaluation Criteria and Questions

Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM)

The EQM contains all 35 questions from the Terms of reference, however, evaluation questions identified as priority questions by stakeholders are in **bold**, de-prioritised questions are in *italics*. There are 17 priority questions.

ILO Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Cross-cutting evaluation questions	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants	Analysis and assessment
1) Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the objectives of the Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work Programme consistent with Government and social partner priorities and does it meet beneficiaries' needs? (EQ 1.1) • <i>Are the objectives of the Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work intervention in line with NORAD's and SECO's priorities? (EQ 1.2)</i> • Is Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work project intervention linked to and coherent with national and ILO's development frameworks (Country's national development plan, UNDAF, DWCPs, P&B, SDGs)? (EQ 1.3) 	Relevance and validity of design Within the context of ILO goal of gender equality, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues as well as national level policies in this regard, to what extent did the projects' design take into account: i. Specific gender equality and non-discrimination concerns	The Programme Objectives, strategy, and Theory of Change (ToC) support i) priorities of tripartite actors, ii) ILO's own priorities	KIIs with government and social partners, ILO, NORAD and SECO staff Document review (PE4DW project document and Theory of Change, ILO's development frameworks, national policies on inclusion)	KIIs Document review	Tripartite stakeholders, ILO, NORAD and SECO staff	Triangulation of KII responses with contents of documents
2) Validity of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the inception phases been used effectively to design 		Inception phase concluded to enable ILO to	KIIs with ILO programme staff	KIIs	ILO programme staff	Triangulation of KII responses

ILO Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Cross-cutting evaluation questions	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants	Analysis and assessment
intervention design	<p>the respective country project strategies? (EQ 2.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the project strategy, objectives, and assumptions appropriate for achieving planned results? (EQ 2.2) • How well do the chosen intervention strategies align with the underlying causes of productivity and working condition challenges at each level (policy, sector, enterprise)? (EQ 2.3) • What lessons can be learned for the design of future projects that intend to apply a Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work or similar approaches? (EQ 2.4) • To what extent did the project design take into account specific gender equality and non-discrimination and environmental sustainability concerns relevant to the project context? (EQ 2.5) 	<p>relevant to the project context;</p> <p>ii. Concerns relating to inclusion of people with disabilities? (EQ 1.4)</p>	carry out project's objectives	Document review (country project strategies)	Document review		with contents of documents, Evaluators' subsequent conclusions re lessons learned
3) Intervention progress and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the project on track in delivering its outputs in all countries (mapped out in the performance plans)? (EQ 3.1) 	<p>Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the projects' thematic area, what were the facilitating and 	Targets for programme outputs and outcomes (as laid out in	KIIs with ILO programme staff, NORAD and SECO staff, government and social partners,	KIIs Document review	ILO programme staff, NORAD and SECO staff, government partners	Triangulation of KII responses with contents of documents

ILO Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Cross-cutting evaluation questions	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants	Analysis and assessment
effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What obstacles did the project encounter in project implementation? What corrective action does the project need to take to achieve its objectives? (EQ 3.2) • Within its overall objectives and strategies, what specific measures were taken by the project to address issues relating to Gender equality and non-discrimination and Environmental sustainability? (EQ 3.3) • <i>How well has the project complemented other ILO, SECO and NORAD projects in the countries? (EQ 3.4)</i> 	<p>limiting factors in project's contribution/potential contribution to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Gender equality and non-discrimination? ii. Inclusion of people with disabilities? <p>(EQ 3.5)</p>	logframe) have been/are being met.	Document review (performance plans, annual reports, quarterly progress reports, monitoring data (qualitative and quantitative))		(especially regarding Outcome 1 in the ToC) and stakeholders at the sector and enterprise levels (regarding Outcome 2 in the ToC)	
4) Effectiveness of management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are time frames and work plans respected? How are contingencies dealt with? To what extent corrective action is taken when required? (EQ 4.1) • Are the Global and National Advisory Committees functioning and what value do they add? (EQ 4.2) • Is the project systematically and appropriately monitoring, documenting, and communicating project results, 	(see question EQ 4.3 on '...including on gender and environmental sustainability')	<p>Global and National Advisory Committees are inputting into Programme decisions.</p> <p>Consensus that the M&E system is practical and useful, enables decision-making</p>	<p>KIIs with ILO programme staff, representatives of Global and National Advisory Committees</p> <p>Document review (programme operational guidance, programme monitoring data (qualitative and quantitative) e.g.</p>	KIIs Document review	ILO programme staff, representatives of Global and National Advisory Committees	<p>Triangulation of KII responses with contents of documents,</p> <p>Evaluators' independent assessment of strength of monitoring system</p>

ILO Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Cross-cutting evaluation questions	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants	Analysis and assessment
	<p>including on gender and environmental sustainability, at the country and global level? (EQ 4.3)</p> <p>• Is the monitoring and evaluation system practical, useful and cost effective for project management? (EQ 4.4)</p>			quarterly progress reports)			
5) Efficiency of resource usage	<p>• Does the project make efficient use of its financial and human resources? (EQ 5.1)</p> <p>• Is the implementation strategy cost-effective? (EQ 5.2)</p> <p>• Is the distribution of resources between staff and activities optimal? (EQ 5.3)</p> <p>• Were the intervention resources used in an efficient way to address gender equality and environmental sustainability in the implementation? (EQ 5.4)</p>	<p>Efficiency</p> <p>• To what extent did the project budget factor-in the cost of specific activities, outputs and outcomes to address:</p> <p>i. Gender equality and non-discrimination?</p> <p>ii. Inclusion of people with disabilities (EQ 5.5)</p>	Spend on human resources relative to activities is reflective of ratios in other programmes with a systemic approach	<p>KIIs with ILO programme staff</p> <p>Document review (programme budget documentation)</p>	KIIs Document review	ILO programme staff	Triangulation of KII responses with contents of documents
6) Impact orientation and sustainabil	• How effectively has the project built national ownership and capacity of people and institutions? (EQ 6.1)	<p>Sustainability and impact</p> <p>• To what extent did the</p>	National actors exhibit 'buy-in' to country projects, and early	KIIs with ILO programme staff, government and social partners,	KIIs Document review	ILO programme staff, government and social partners	Triangulation of KII responses with contents of documents,

ILO Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Cross-cutting evaluation questions	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants	Analysis and assessment
ity of the intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have the policy changes contributed to fostering a conducive environment for productivity enhancements and improved working conditions? (EQ 6.2) • Have the sector-level interventions led to the development of best practices that can be replicated across similar industries and/or countries? (EQ 6.3) • What measurable changes have been observed in the participating enterprises following the implementation of the interventions? (EQ 6.4) • What interconnected benefits and improvements have arisen from the combined effect of policy, sector, and enterprise interventions? (EQ 6.5) • Can specific success stories or case studies demonstrate how the systemic approach has positively transformed the productivity ecosystem? (EQ 6.6) • How feasible would it be to replicate the interventions in other regions or sectors, 	<p>intervention advance strategic gender-related needs that can have a long-term positive bearing on:</p> <p>i. Gender parity within the world of work?</p> <p>ii. Inclusion of women and men with disabilities within the world of work</p> <p>(EQ 6.7)</p>	<p>indications work will continue,</p> <p>Enterprises demonstrate early signs of increased productivity and improved working conditions, wages for employees</p>	<p>Document review (annual reports, quarterly progress reports, project publications, potential for a limited review of external evidence sources)</p>		<p>(including PAC members) and local partners including Business Support Organisations (BSOs)</p>	<p>Evaluators' subsequent recommendations for replication</p>

ILO Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Cross-cutting evaluation questions	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants	Analysis and assessment
	considering factors such as resource availability, contextual differences, and stakeholder buy-in? (EQ 6.6)						

Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation approach

The evaluation's technical approach is a straightforward mixed-methods approach, consistent with best practice. Through a combination of document reviews (of qualitative and quantitative data), and key informant interviews (KIIs) with ILO staff, donor (SECO and NORAD) representatives, and tripartite stakeholders (government, employers, and workers) in each of the three pilot countries, the evaluators have gathered the evidence needed to address the Evaluation Questions (EQs) detailed in the Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM) below.

Our team has been guided by the following principles and engaged with the ILO, SECO and NORAD in a highly consultative process.

- **Get stakeholders to agree on what matters.** Consensus on definitions of success is critical. The evaluators engaged ILO regularly to ensure that final deliverables align with client expectations.
- **Be intentional about amplifying grassroots voices.** Drawing diverse perspectives is a cornerstone of systems thinking and the evaluators' data collection focused on tripartite stakeholders to ensure that the assessment intentionally captures and elevates the diverse voices throughout the evaluation.
- **Maintaining independence.** The Canopy Lab prides itself in constructively speaking truth to power. In cases where the evaluators have identified a misalignment between the strategy and achievements, they have made sure the message is clearly communicated. The evaluators have provided a fair and thorough presentation of the findings that will be useful for the ILO, SECO and NORAD and its stakeholders.

From an analytical perspective, the evaluators have developed an appropriate assessment framework that allows for holistic evaluation of the programme's progress to date. The evaluation presents both global programme and individual country pilot findings. The evaluation framework, in the form of the EQM (see previous section), provides the backbone of the analytical effort, helping the MTE team to structure and make sense of the data collected.

The EQM was used to interrogate the ToC—including whether Outcomes 1 and Outcome 2 are complementing each other as intended. Evaluation questions about the systemic nature of the ToC and programme design and implementation are most prominent in questions about 'Validity of intervention design', 'Intervention progress and effectiveness', and 'Impact orientation and sustainability.' The evaluators used the EQM to guide the desk review of ILO documentation.

Evaluation methods and data collection

For this MTE, the evaluators conducted a review of the Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work programme's documentation and data and interviewed ILO staff and partners in the three country pilots to explore the evaluation questions. Both the documentation review and KIIs were conducted in order to capture relevant evidence against each evaluation criterion, and as many of the EQs as possible.

During the Inception phase, the evaluators drafted KII guides for the four different types of stakeholders (ILO/Donors and tripartite stakeholders) (please see Appendix 5). Questions were designed to collect relevant data against the evaluation criteria, but questions were tailored to each type of stakeholder, as not all questions were relevant to all stakeholders.

KIIs focused on ILO field staff, and tripartite stakeholders, donors and other project partners that have worked with (or benefitted from) project activities. The sampling of interviewees was purposeful, the sample was chosen in discussions between evaluators and project staff (who provided lists of key stakeholders), to ensure as many representatives of the different stakeholders were interviewed as was possible within the allocated time. In-country KIIs were conducted in person, while a small number of interviews with Global programme stakeholders were conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams. In total, 79 people were interviewed. A full list of interviewees is included in Appendix 4.

Analysis

The MTE used qualitative data analysis. In order to answer the EQs, the evaluators triangulated the data gathered from the KIs with existing documentation reviewed during the desk review, for each of the three pilot countries and at the global level. The evaluators then convened in an internal (virtual) 'sense-making' workshop to synthesise findings from each pilot country into overall findings, lessons learned, emerging good practice and recommendations for the programme's pilot to-date. The evaluators have provided (to the best of their ability) findings for the global programme as well as findings at the individual country pilot level.

Cross-cutting themes

The MTE design also involved an assessment of the ILO's cross-cutting themes. Many cross-cutting themes were already covered by the EQs (see EQM for EQ numbering):

- Gender and non-discrimination: EQs 1.4, 2.5, 3.3, 3.5, 4.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 6.6;
- Environmental sustainability: EQs 2.5, 3.3, 4.3, and 5.4;
- Tripartism: EQs 1.1 and 4.2;
- Capacity building: EQs 6.1, 6.3, and 6.4.

To provide the assessment of these four themes listed above, the evaluators synthesised findings from the relevant EQs. The only cross-cutting theme not covered by EQs was 'International labour standards': for this theme, the evaluators received inputs from the ILO programme team as to which labour standards were the most relevant for this assessment.

Evaluation norms, standards and ethical safeguards

The team employed ethical and gender-sensitive approaches to data collection. Where possible, interviews were recorded for analysis purposes. To avoid biased responses, ILO staff were asked to not attend interviews with other project stakeholders.

All interviews began by providing interviewees with full information about the purpose of the interview in order to secure their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Please see Appendix 5 for the FPIC 'script' read to interviewees before commencing an interview. While interviewees are listed in Appendix 4, all contributions have been anonymised in the report so that no individual can be identified by their interview responses.

Evaluation Process

The Canopy Lab team carried out this evaluation over five phases. The team is made up of five experts: Jessica Rust-Smith, the Evaluation Lead, who coordinated the efforts of the team members, liaised directly with ILO staff and taking overall responsibility for the quality of the work. The three regional Research Leads led field-based data collection in the pilot countries. Rodd MacGregor Dyer and Le Thi Hang Nga, based in Vietnam, lead research in this country. Kabir Lawal is based in Nigeria and lead research in Ghana. Cebisile Nyambe is based in South Africa and lead data collection in this country.

Our Evaluation Lead kept ILO staff updated and informed throughout the assignment, she led bi-weekly check-in calls with the ILO and submitted bi-weekly progress update emails.

Phase 1: Desk review and inception report

The Inception phase ran from February 1 - 22, 2024. It combined:

- A kick-off call with ILO Programme and Project staff, and a subsequent check-in call;

- Consultations with select ILO staff (Global Programme Manager and Project Managers for Ghana, South Africa and Vietnam, and officials from the ILO technical departments responsible--Enterprises and Employment) and donor representatives from SECO and NORAD in which the evaluators explicitly sought inputs on which Evaluation Questions were higher priority and which were lower;
- A desk review of documents shared prior to 12th February (country documents uploaded subsequently were reviewed selectively during Phase 2). A full list of documents reviewed are included in Appendix 6;
- Drafting of KII guides for the four different types of stakeholders (ILO/Donors and tripartite stakeholders); and
- The refinement and finalisation of the evaluation methodology.

Following a kick-off call and consultations with key stakeholders, the evaluators proceeded with refining the evaluation methodology – that includes prioritising Evaluation Questions, initial discussions about KII sampling, and initial drafts of the KII questionnaires (included in Appendix 5 of this report). Feedback from ILO and donor stakeholders was incorporated in the second and final draft of the inception report (which adhered to ILO guidelines).

Finally, during Phase 1 the evaluators also received inputs from ILO staff on suggestions of the tripartite stakeholders in each of the three pilot countries for the KIIs.

Phase 2: Primary data collection

In March 2024, evaluation team members conducted *in situ* research across the three pilot countries, exploring the evaluation questions in each case. In-person KIIs focused on ILO field staff, and tripartite stakeholders and other partners that have worked with (or benefitted from) project activities. A full list of interviewees is included in Appendix 4. The time period allocated for in-country data collection was 5 working days per country:

- In Ghana, data collection took place 11-15 March, interviews started in Tamale (to speak with SMEs in shea production), followed by data collection in Accra.
- In South Africa data collection took place between 27 March – 10 April, in Durban, Pretoria, and Johannesburg.
- In Vietnam, data collection took place between 6 March - 8 April in Hanoi, and small number of interviews were conducted remotely.
- At the Global level, remote interviews were conducted with ILO officials between 5 March – 9 April.

The team employed ethical and gender-sensitive approaches for data collection. Where possible, interviews were recorded and anonymized for analysis purposes. To avoid biased responses, ILO staff were asked to not attend interviews with other project stakeholders.

Phase 3: Data analysis, synthesis, and report writing

The third phase of the evaluation focused on triangulating the data gathered from the KIIs with existing documentation, for each of the three pilot countries. The evaluators then convened in an internal (virtual) sense-making workshop to synthesise findings from each pilot country into overall findings (including for cross-cutting themes), lessons learned, emerging good practice and recommendations for the programme's pilot to-date. The evaluators have provided (to the best of their ability) findings for the global programme as well as findings and recommendations at the individual country pilot level (country-specific recommendations are included in Appendix 3). It represents the perspectives of the tripartite stakeholders interviewed, from the macro to micro levels of the ecosystem.

Insights from data analysis and synthesis were written in the first draft of the evaluation report (drafted in accordance with ILO guidelines) which closed the third phase, submitted 26 April 2024.

Phase 4: Report revisions and finalisation

There have been two rounds of report revisions. In the first round the ILO programme and project teams had an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft report. The evaluators then reviewed the feedback and, where warranted, revised the report accordingly before resubmitting a second draft. This second draft was then reviewed by donors, external stakeholders involved in the PE4DW country projects, and ILO's EVAL department. The resulting comments were reviewed and responded to by the evaluators, resulting in this third and final version of the MTE report.

Phase 5: Presentation of findings

Finally, the evaluators drafted an evaluation summary (adhering to ILO guidelines, see below) and provided a debriefing to each ILO country team and to SECO, NORAD and the ILO at the end of the evaluation process. At the time of submission, all debriefings were completed except one, scheduled for July 31st, 2024.

Methodological limitations

Risk/Limitation	Mitigation measures
There are a large number of evaluation questions (35 questions, including cross-cutting questions). To answer all of these questions could require compromising on the depth to which each can be answered.	To mitigate this risk, during inception the evaluators consulted with the ILO, SECO and NORAD staff, asking which questions were higher priority and which were lower priority. This has informed the evaluators as to which questions to put greater emphasis on.
For at least two of the three pilot countries, a very large number of documents have been shared, this may limit the level of analysis the evaluator can provide.	During Phase 2, the country leads discussed with country project managers which documents were most relevant to the EQs. This way the evaluators could do a targeted review of select country documents.
The planned data collection period (18 March - 5 April 2024) includes the Easter holidays, which are celebrated as public holidays in Ghana and South Africa. March 12 to April 11 is also Ramadan, which is relevant to northern Ghana.	The evaluators agreed with country project teams the best dates for data collection to avoid national holidays and make the most of the time allocated for data collection.
The Team Leader was initially to lead on South Africa data collection, but due to a change in her circumstances, this necessitated finding a South Africa-based team member to fill this role.	ILO and The Canopy Lab worked together to find a replacement evaluator for South Africa. The ILO shared 3 profiles for candidates and The Canopy Lab also identified several. Three of these candidates were interviewed by The Canopy Lab, and a final selection of the replacement candidate was done with approval of ILO
The second draft of the MTE report was sent out to external stakeholders with some edits made by ILO to address comments still pending discussion between an evaluator and project team. Because of the short timelines, this was agreed to by the evaluators.	All comments that were pending in the second draft of the report have been discussed and, where necessary, revised in this third and final version of the report.

Adherence to ILO guidance and formatting requirements

The evaluators acknowledge that the ILO has formatting requirements for its evaluation reports, including how they should present recommendations, lessons learned, and emerging good practices, as well as the use of the relevant templates. The evaluators are aware that guidance is publicly available here: '[CHECKLIST 4.2: PREPARING THE EVALUATION REPORT: Date: Feb 2021, v 2 \(v.1 - 2014\)](#).' The evaluators have consulted this guidance and the ILO Evaluation Manager to ensure the draft and final report meet ILO's requirements.

Main findings

This section presents the main findings of the MTE, organized by the six evaluation criteria, and the prioritised evaluation questions within each criterion. Each sub-section begins with a short summary of the overall findings for that evaluation criterion, followed by details from the Global level and the three pilot countries.

1) Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention

The programme as a whole, and three country pilot projects are seen as highly relevant to, and consistent with, national and tripartite actors and their priorities, and interviewed stakeholders were able to articulate this relevance. This relevance is attributed to the fact that the projects were designed in collaboration with these stakeholders. In each country PE4DW's objectives are seen as relevant to all levels of the ecosystem: macro, meso and micro. At the global level, the programme's initial focus on enterprises was seen as less relevant to unions and employers, whereas broadening the programme's scope to include a macro focus, which did happen subsequently, means that the programme is now seen as relevant by these groups as well.

Global

PE4DW's objectives are consistent with those of social partners and government. In the GSAC the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) representative stated that productivity is important to employers, and they appreciate the need to work at three levels of ecosystem (GSAC Meeting minutes, Sept 2022). And the (International Trade Union Confederation) ITUC representative appreciated the way the programme is addressing 'matters of particular importance to the workers, such as industrial policies, wages and employment quality' (GSAC Meeting minutes, Oct 2023). In interviews, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP representatives stated that they found the programme's expanded scope—beyond enterprise-level interventions, the micro-level to the include the macro level—is more relevant to the interests of social partners. Both said the initial focus of PE4DW on the micro level was less relevant to workers and employers.

The programme is relevant to SMEs: the Project Document for PE4DW explains that SMEs are the ultimate beneficiaries of the project because they are integral to job creation and income generation globally. The project intends to meet their needs by helping them improve 'within-sector productivity' or enter new productive sectors. The 341st and 346th Governing Body reports (Feb 2021 and Oct 2022) also stress the importance of MSMEs to achieve productivity and decent work, and these two documents situate the ILO's Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work approach within their portfolio of previous work and their current agenda, referring to the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019).

The project is relevant to government partners, although an ILO official from the Enterprises Department acknowledged that the ILO may need to facilitate agreements within government e.g. between the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Economics. The project objectives are also relevant to donors SECO and NORAD, whose representatives notes they appreciated the programme's data-centred approach (GSAC Meeting minutes, April 2023).

Ghana

The Ghana portfolio has been able to show relevance of the intervention. It is consistent with the priorities of the central government, donors and social partners. For the partners at the macro level, increasing productivity and promotion of decent work for all workers in Ghana are activities that form part of their primary mandates. The project is working with the government through the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR), the Trade Union Congress (TUC) representing the workers and the Ghana Employers Association (GEA) to review the labour law of the country. When passed, the law will be the primary legislation on improving productivity and decent work in the country. There is also an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) bill being

promoted by the project through these partners. The need for these bills was apparent before the coming of the ILO according to feedback from partners such as the MELR and the TUC. The project helped catalyse the process by bringing together all relevant parties and creating the much-needed focus for the development and revision of the bills. The coming elections in December 2024 casts a shadow over the passage of the bills as campaigning is expected to get into full swing by the third quarter of 2024, making it challenging to get the members of parliament gathered for such purposes.

Given the challenges of managing and controlling what cannot be measured, the ILO collaborated with the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) to develop the first labour productivity statistics for the country. The GSS revealed that they were aware of the need for such statistics but did not have the internal capacity to carry it out. The project and their collaboration in the form of technical assistance has helped build the internal capacity of the service for this purpose.

There is also relevance of the program at the micro level. The productivity level especially in the shea value chain has been quite low historically due to the heavy dependence on manual techniques of processing. The capacity building sessions gave the beneficiary organizations a better understanding of operations which has improved overall efficiency on the production floor. The supply of equipment to these beneficiaries has further improved their productivity by cutting the length of time to carry out processes as well as eliminating the drudgery associated with manual processing. These can be regarded as a 'low hanging fruit' that the project quickly achieved. The next level of activities should be executing interventions that can affect the wider industry thereby incorporating sustainability of these interventions.

It is worth noting that the conceptual framework of the project is one such that it focuses on a small section of the wider ecosystem i.e. a slice from the overall 'pizza'. Given the complexities of the selected value chains, there is a limit to the level of interventions that can be carried out and the impact these interventions can have all the overall ecosystem. Expectations differ across stakeholders. On the one hand, the Geneva headquarters and the donors seek interventions that yield systemic results. On the other hand, the local partners, most especially the representatives of the Ministry of Trade and Investment (MOTI), seek more micro level results that have direct impacts on the people. The local project team needs to find a balance between both expectations while executing the project.

South Africa

The Productivity Ecosystem and Decent Work project plays an important role in enhancing economic growth and social development in South Africa. With high unemployment rates, poverty, and income inequality, the project is crucial in creating employment opportunities, improving worker's well-being, and boosting overall productivity levels. With a focus on improving productivity and promoting decent work through skills development and other forms of support, as well as assisting with the development of labour market policies, the project is set to contribute significantly to the country's long-term development goals. Moreover, the strategic fit of this intervention in South Africa is evident in its capacity to align with the government priorities and stimulate inclusive growth that benefits all segments of society through the implementation of the sector master plans for the Retail Clothing, Textile, Footwear and Leather sectors (R-CTFL) sector as well as the automotive sector.¹ (PE4DW South Africa Strategy Post Inception Phase V3.0 updated in May 2023).

The project is relevant to all participating stakeholders committed to addressing productivity challenges and improving working conditions for workers. The design was formulated in close consultation with the government, its social partners and the sector-level stakeholders. The project is coherent in its design and holistically addresses the root causes and key challenges to productivity and decent work by intervening at the macro, meso, and micro levels.

The partnership with the government (the DTIC) in implementing the two sector master plans on Automotives and Textiles (leather and footwear) further cements the relevance and fit of the intervention in the country as the project helps in supplementing and strengthening the offering of these master plans (Strengthening the

¹ For simplicity of implementation, PE4DW Project separated the clothing and textiles sector from the footwear and leather sector. With the participation of the Project Advisory Committee, and the results of a technical analysis, the project selected the "leather and footwear sector" for its interventions. This is the term used throughout this report.

employment impact of South Africa's industrial policies: Terms of Reference Jan 2024). The transformational design of these master plans is consistent with the ILO pillars of decent work as they have incorporated measures and trackers for gender equality, job creation, non-discrimination, and sustainability themes which are also priorities for the donors (SECO and NORAD) who are funding the project. SECO's Cooperation Programme for South Africa 2021-2024 priorities, which are i) Promoting a viable and resource efficient private sector and, ii) Establishing favourable economic framework conditions further, highlights the relevance of the project in South Africa.

The government of South Africa is committed to improving the productivity ecosystem and decent work. This is seen through a myriad of interventions that have been implemented and proposed in the past few years. These include the development of the National Employment Policy² (still in the draft phase) where the ILO played a crucial report in the revision process, which seeks to address the employment challenges in the country.

The proposed National Employment Policy and the associated Master Plans the project is involved in supporting have priority areas they seek to address. The priority areas seek to ensure economic transformation, job creation, education, and skills development to increase productivity, preserve jobs, create new ones, and promote decent work, amongst others, which align perfectly with the objectives of the PE4DW project. The project has further entered a partnership with Productivity SA to roll out a capacity development programme for the SMEs in the automotive and leather and footwear sectors to address constraints to productivity growth and decent work as documented in the sector analysis report commissioned by the project during its inception phase (Productivity SA Training Reports Jan 2024).

SECO's priorities are highly reflected and anchored in the objectives of the PE4DW project and are being elevated in most of the project documentation and communication to stakeholders and implementing partners of the project. One of the priorities of SECO relates to Just Transition, an area the project has incorporated well in its project strategy post-inception phase report. Concrete evidence in this area is yet to be established as the project begins to finalize interventions with the partners in the automotive and leather and footwear sectors.

The South African Country Strategy document emphasizes the importance of SMEs to SA's economy as the largest category of businesses in SA this aligns with the PE4DW's enterprise-level focus on SMEs and it notes that the project operated under the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP)³ which is consistent with the government's National Development Plan⁴ (NDP), the UNDAF, and the SDGs where the PE4DW project cuts across most of the SDGs, in particular, SDG 4,5,8,9, and 13, amongst others.

Vietnam

The PE4DW project is very well aligned with national and ILO's development frameworks in Vietnam. This project objective is consistent with multiple Government and social partner priorities (mainly direct beneficiaries⁵) to improve productivity and decent work gains at national, sectoral and enterprise scale. Indeed, success in these areas will also benefit the ultimate beneficiaries of the project (men and women SME owners and employees)⁶.

The PE4DW project closely aligns with the three priorities of ILO's Decent Work Country Programme 2022-2026⁷. It is also well aligned to Vietnam's national Socio-economic Development Strategy (SEDS) for 2021-

² Draft National Employment Policy Nov. 2023

³ https://www.ilo.org/jobspact/resources/WCMS_145419/lang--en/index.htm

⁴ https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/NDP_Chapters/NDP%202030-Prelims.pdf

⁵ The direct beneficiaries for PE4D are government ministries and agencies and provincial authorities, national and sectoral employers and business member organisation and trade unions (REF).

⁶ The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are women and men in Viet Nam's workforce, and in particular female and male entrepreneurs in SMEs with a potential to improve productivity and their workforce in the target sectors. (REF)

⁷ ILO's Decent Work Program priorities in Vietnam: 1. promote decent employment and an enabling environment for sustainable entrepreneurship opportunities; 2. reduce poverty by extending social protection for all and reduce unacceptable forms of work, especially for the most vulnerable; and 3. build effective labour market governance compliant with fundamental principles and rights and at work.

2030 and the Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP) for 2021-2025. The SEDS strategy is aimed at increasing growth through enhanced productivity, value addition, competitiveness, and environmental sustainability, rather than exploiting natural resources and cheap/low-skilled labour. The SEDP articulates targets to improve total factor productivity (TFP) growth rate and social labour productivity growth rate which are directly linked to the project objectives.

The project is also directly linked to a new National Programme for Improving Labour Productivity (NLPP) implemented by CIEM/MPI. The project contributed to the Vietnam National Productivity Forum hosted by Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST). This contributed to the Productivity improvement program led by MOST, detailed in Government Decision 1322 - 2020 on "Approval of the national program to support enterprises to improve productivity and quality of products and goods in the period of 2021 - 2030". The project will also engage the National Council for Labour Productivity that will be established under this new national programme. The project is also strongly linked to the current revisions of Employment Law (MOLISA). The PE4DW aligns with multiple other Government strategies and priorities across various Ministries, including promotion of science, technology and innovation, digital technologies adoption, value adding and processing.

Promoting a productivity ecosystem approach provides a sound conceptual framework for designing and implementing a complex project across multiple sectors, institutional stakeholders, and operating scales. This is an area of institutional weakness in the Vietnam context. Existing levels and processes of coordination and cooperation between Government Ministries and institutions, including with industry associations in Vietnam is incredibly difficult and process is slow.

The review found implementing an ecosystem approach, particularly in such a complex institutional environment, is highly challenging. However, multiple stakeholders supported the ecosystem and multi-dimensional approach, both in terms of engagement and implementation. Therefore, whilst immensely challenging in Vietnam, there remains a strong case for promoting a productivity ecosystem approach as a key part of the project objective, as long as expectations for institutional change are realistic, stepwise and longer-term.

The objectives of PE4DW also align strongly with SECO's and NORAD's country level priorities and recent activities. Both SECO and NORAD are strong supporters of the project approach and progress. SECO's priorities in Vietnam focus on promoting reliable economic framework conditions and an innovation-friendly business environment conducive to the development of Vietnam's private sector (SECO 2023). SECO Cooperation Program in Vietnam 2021-2024 has two main strategies: 1. Promoting market-oriented and reliable economic framework conditions; and 2. Enhancing the private sector's competitiveness and market access, which are directly aligned to PE4DW. SECO are keen to see the strengthened levels of cooperation and integration between Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 components and activities during the remainder of the project.

The project also aligns with NORAD's broad global development priorities (NORAD 2021). It will also explore links with the 2020-2024 NORAD project on strengthening employer's organizations in Vietnam, implemented by Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises - NHO and Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI).

The PE4DW project continues a history of co-investment by SECO and NORAD in SME and labour development initiatives through the ILO SCORE and Better Work Programmes in Vietnam between 2011 and 2021. PE4DW explicitly aims to leverage the knowledge, resources and network of stakeholders in these programs for scalability of ILO interventions in the area.

2) Validity of intervention design

The inception phase included challenges such as delays (due to recruitment challenges) but was used to adapt the programme and was an opportunity for valuable learning. It was also a challenging process in inception to negotiate which two sectors to focus on in each pilot country, due to differences in partners' priorities.

Overall, the programme's ecosystem approach appears valid, although in practice it is not always implemented, some activities appear fragmented, including being spread out across multiple geographies.

The integration of cross-cutting themes (gender and non-discrimination, including people with disabilities (PWDs); and environmental sustainability) has happened to an extent, and there have been some successes (e.g. in the sectors selected in Ghana). However, there are large gaps where the project was not designed to address certain of these themes from the outset, e.g. inclusion of PWDs and environmental sustainability.

Effective use of inception phase to design country strategies

Global

The inception phase was used effectively in that it generated a lot of learning from the challenges that emerged. A representative from PE4DW Programme management reported that the six-month inception phase was very ambitious, and some countries, South Africa in particular, faced delays. The PE4DW Technical Progress report for Jan-Dec 2022 noted the challenge of delays in recruiting project staff. An ILO official from the Enterprises department said that the inception phase needed, and benefited from, having flexibility. An integral part of the inception phase in each pilot country was the selection of sectors for interventions (Outcome 2). The ITUC representative shared concerns that unions had not been properly engaged in sector selection in South Africa (GSAC Meeting minutes, Sept 2022).⁸

Ghana

The project inception phase commenced in April 2022 and ended in February 2023. During this period, there was a challenge to recruit staff which affected activity deployment at the start. This delay forced the team to spend funds for 18 months within 8 months. The project team used this inception period to carry out extensive engagements with potential partners to get buy-in on the project objectives. The PAC was also set up to provide oversight and guidance to the project. A sector scan of 17 subsectors was conducted, from which six (oil palm, textiles, shea, renewable energy, cashew, construction) were shortlisted for a rapid appraisal (PE4DW Ghana Quarterly Report, Q3 2022). It is worth noting that the pre-selected sectors were identified as critical sectors by the government of Ghana.

The process of choosing intervention sectors from the six pre-selected sectors was inclusive and was an attempt to get the buy-in of partners. Regardless, each interest group appeared to have sectoral preferences besides the two selected sectors.

During the inception phase, the team actively engaged several partners on the design of the project. One of these key partners was the MOTI. This activity helped to design the project in a format that best suited and was most beneficial to the country as seen and guided by the MOTI. The activity was driven by the Chief Director, so institutional buy-in was obtained. According to assessment respondents, there were initial doubts about the project's ability to achieve successes in increasing productivity and employment at the same time. There was a misunderstanding of how activities at the three levels were related and what benefits they would bring. This serves as a lesson for future projects whereby communication in the beginning should be clearer for more rapid understanding and buy-in of partners.

South Africa

The project team have effectively used the inception phase to lay a strong foundation for the implementation of the project, by ensuring that key stakeholders are aligned, objectives and goals are well-defined, and that the project scope and approaches are feasible and sustainable.

⁸ During feedback on this report, another external stakeholder and PAC member shared a differing opinion, and that from their perspective there was a high level of engagement on the selection of sectors, with sufficient time afforded to allow PAC members to consult their constituencies.

The project began by conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the sectors requiring intervention⁹. This process was conducted in collaboration with the identified tripartite partners (government, workers, and business).

The project faced challenges in agreeing on the target sectors. Initially, there was a lack of consensus among project partners regarding the decision on target sectors. Each partner had their specific objectives and areas of interest within the automotive and leather and footwear sectors. This divergence in priorities sometimes led to difficulties in aligning efforts. To overcome this, the project team ensured that regular meetings and open communication channels were established to foster collaboration and ensure that all partners' concerns were addressed. This resulted in delays and hindered the project's progress. After extensive deliberations, two sectors were identified as priorities for the intervention, i.e., the automotive and leather and footwear, and indicated in the South Africa Sector Selection report (Dec 2022). This decision allowed for a more comprehensive approach to addressing productivity and decent work issues in both sectors¹⁰. These sectors were chosen based on their potential for long-term impact, alignment with the country's development goals, and the availability of resources and expertise for the PE4DW project to intervene.

Limited human resources/project team also posed a challenge to the project's effectiveness. With a complex intervention like this, enough skilled professionals are required to implement and monitor activities effectively. However, due to delays in attracting suitably qualified personnel, the project had to operate with a limited number of staff members. This constraint has occasionally during the inception phase slowed down progress and hindered the project's ability to capitalize on opportunities fully.

Vietnam

In Vietnam, the inception phase from April to November 2022 appears to have been used to effectively undertake baseline studies and design the project strategy but would have benefited from a longer timeline. During inception the project team consulted with eighteen key stakeholders. These included government ministries (e.g. MOLISA, MOIT, MPI, MOST) and departments (e.g. DOE, GSO), institutes (e.g. VPI, SME TAC, CIEM, ILSSA), business organisations (e.g. VCCI), labour organisations (VGCL) and industry associations (HAWA, BIFA, VIFOREST, VASI). The project also conducted consultations with other bilateral and multilateral development organisations during this period. The strategy report, however, doesn't mention how consultations were conducted, nor summarize the outcomes or key issues identified. This would have been helpful information.

Based on the consultations the project formulated a list of eight potential target sectors for the project. A consulting firm was selected in a competitive bidding process to review the eight subsectors and recommend priority subsectors. A detailed report was prepared. Further consultations with key stakeholders¹¹ were undertaken to validate and select the two highest-ranked sub-sectors: machinery and equipment and wood and wood products¹².

The strategic focus on SME machinery and equipment and wood and furniture sub-sectors implicitly makes sense and is supported by evidence in reports. However, it would be helpful if a brief rationale or business case supporting the two prioritised sub-sectors was provided in the project strategy and the supporting reports (especially in the conclusion of the sector selection report).

International and national consultants were engaged to undertake two separate systemic sector analyses (SSA) for machinery and equipment and wood and wood products. These reports involved desktop reviews, analysis of secondary data and key informant interviews and consultations. Detailed reports for each were

⁹ Market Systems Analysis for the Leather and Leather Products Sector of South Africa under the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Project -South Africa Jan 2023

¹⁰ Minutes of the PAC Meetings

¹¹ However, there is little reporting of these stakeholder consultations, what the differing views and comments were in the meetings. Nor the process for how final recommendations were made. Such reporting would have provided some important insights.

¹² It is unclear from the reports what criteria and evaluation process were used to prioritise and select the two final sub-sectors. The method and reporting of pairwise comparison are also unclear. The involvement on stakeholders in this selection process wasn't reported either.

produced in 2023. The SSA reports identified key issues, constraints, and opportunities to productivity in each sector. A review of relevant policies and productivity data was also undertaken. During the inception the four-person project management team¹³ was also put in place.

There is clear evidence these inception activities were critical to inform the project strategy. The strategy defined the target groups (a wide range and number of ultimate and direct beneficiaries at national, sector and enterprise levels). It also presented an intervention design with objectives, outcomes and outputs clearly defined, along with a theory of change for the project. Proposed interventions (activities) based on priority constraints identified in previous studies for each outcome and output were detailed. A detailed log frame has also been developed, which impacts, outcome and output indicators and methods of verification.

The project team's assessment (Q3 2022 Quarterly report) was that a six-month inception phase was not sufficient to complete all recruitments, sector selection, employment reviews, and sector analysis for such a complex project.

Appropriateness of strategy, objectives, assumptions

Global

The programme's strategy, using a systemic approach is appropriate for achieving the programme's end-goal: the Project Document for PE4DW clearly lays out the problem (declining productivity) and the systemic, myriad factors that contribute to it. This serves as justification for the project adopting a systemic approach in this project. In addition, as noted previously, both ACTRAV and ACT/EMP encouraged the programme to have a broader focus, encompassing meso and macro levels as well as the micro, SME level.

Ghana

The strategy of working with the tripartite partners on the project at the macro level is appropriate to carry out the required interventions. This stems from the fact that the partners are traditionally key stakeholders on the issues of productivity and decent work in the country. The composition of the PAC further strengthens the project strategy and effectiveness through deliberations and intervention execution with relevant partners.

An important aspect of project strategy is partner selection. The presence of willing partners with existing structures helps the project in more rapidly getting activities off the ground. This is particularly important knowing that at the micro level, the target of 300 enterprises will be challenging to reach without active partners at the meso level who can reach more enterprises beyond the direct intervention of the local ILO team.

There is the constant challenge of being effective in the chosen sectors when working within one slice of the pizza, hoping the other parts of the 'pizza' (ecosystem) don't have a negative effect on project work. This has not materialized but is worth noting.

South Africa

The South Africa PE4DW project strategy post inception phase clearly outlines how the project's interventions are relevant to the South African landscape. The validity and intervention design of the PE4DW project demonstrates a high level of validity at macro-level. The project effectively aligns with the overarching national development priorities and policies, such as National Development Policy, the draft National Employment Policy, the Sector Development Master Plans on leather and footwear and automotive, and other government strategies. The intervention design of the project has incorporated a comprehensive analysis of the macroeconomic context of the country, including labour market dynamics, industrial structure, and existing and proposed government regulations. By addressing key macro-level challenges, such as high levels of unemployment, and income inequality the intervention design demonstrates a strong foundation for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic development.

¹³ International Programme Manager, National Programme Coordinator – Employment Policy, National Programme Coordinator – Enterprise Development and Project Assistant

The intervention design of the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work project also exhibits a high level of validity at the meso and micro levels. At the meso level, the project demonstrates a thorough understanding of the specific industries and sectors targeted for interventions. The design incorporates detailed sectoral analysis, identifying key constraints and opportunities for productivity enhancement and decent work promotion.

At a micro level, the intervention design considers the needs and aspirations of the individual workers and enterprises. The project incorporated participatory approaches, in engaging workers, and employers through their respective labour and employer representative organizations (i.e., NACTU, FEDUSA, COSATU, and BUSA), and other stakeholders (i.e., the DTIC, DEL, and Productivity SA) in the design of the project. This ensured that the interventions are demand-driven, responsive to the specific needs of workers and enterprises, and aligned with their capabilities and aspirations. The design also includes monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the impact of the interventions at the micro level, allowing for continuous learning and adaptation. This is evident through the project's support of the development of the NEP and the implementation of the sector plans for the automotive and leather and sectors.

Overall, the intervention design of the PE4DW project demonstrates strong validity at the macro, meso, and micro levels. Its alignment with national development goals, sector-specific challenges, and individual needs and aspirations of enterprises (employers and workers) ensures its effectiveness and potential for sustainable impact.

Vietnam

The project strategy, objectives, and assumptions are appropriate for achieving planned results related to productivity improvement and decent work. There was wide support amongst stakeholders and partners of the relevance and importance of the ecosystem approach. Similarly, the importance of trying to better integrate policy, communication, coordination and cooperation between macro-, meso- and micro-levels was widely acknowledged.

As acknowledged by the project, productivity gains and decent work are impacted by multiple complex drivers, both internal and external across multiple scales, stakeholder groups and institutions. In some cases, changes in sector and macro levels may only occur over extended time frames. This all supports an “ecosystem approach”. However, the delivery of project interventions and activities as part of a systematic “ecosystem” in such institutional complexity is currently highly challenging in Vietnam.

In addition to the project focused on SME enterprises in the two sub-sectors, the project further targets clusters of enterprises linked to specific associations and geographic areas. It would be useful to know if the project can identify and target enterprises considered more innovative, more likely to invest in capability development and adopt new technologies and processes.

The preliminary evaluation suggests relevant gender equality and environmental sustainability concerns have been considered and mostly mainstreamed. However, there is little visible focus on anti-discrimination within the workplace.

The project has launched a gendered employment analysis with a focus on two target sectors, wood processing and machinery. While the purpose was to inform the revision of Employment Law, this analysis may also provide some insights into gender roles, barriers, and opportunities in each sector. While some outputs (for example Output 2.2 and 2.3 specifically mention interventions geared towards women, no clear gender targets are articulated in the log-frame beyond gender disaggregated outcomes and outputs.

There was evidence that the project had tapped into and leveraged the social capital and networks amongst some BSO's, industry associations and enterprises involved in the SCORE project, to be involved in interventions in the PE4DW project.

Lessons for design of future projects

Global

The PE4DW Technical Progress report for Jan-Dec 2022 covers the project's inception. Learning from the inception includes:

1. Poor data: The lack of data in the pilot countries poses a challenge to implementation, hence justifying the work with national statistical offices.
2. Sector selection: choosing the sectors for project interventions, given the disparate interests of tripartite stakeholders, was challenging. The criteria used for sector selection varied between countries. In addition, PE4DW's most recent annual report (March 2024) includes a reflection that sector analyses only provided a snapshot of a point in time, in rapidly changing contexts where constraints and partners' priorities can change rapidly.
3. Strategic communications: A positive finding from early in the project was that strategic communications could be used to raise the visibility of the project with government stakeholders (PE4DW Technical Progress report, Jan-Dec 2022).
4. Project ownership: An ILO official from the Enterprises Department, MSME branch, reflected on the programme's design that a critical success factor is determining who (which organisation) is willing and able to be the project 'champion' and owner in that country.

Ghana

The experience from Ghana provides lessons for future projects:

1. Sector selection: In Ghana, given the sharp differences between the two sectors and the available human resources, some representatives of the donors were not certain if it is appropriate to carry out such interventions in vastly differing sectors. This poses an operational challenge.
2. Expectation alignment: There should be better alignment in donor expectations on use of funds. For instance, on the issue of purchase of equipment for enterprises, SECO discourages this practice, but NORAD has no issue with it.
3. Staying focused: There are many aspects of each sector, and they are interconnected and broad-spectrum. The team faces a constant risk of delving deep into one aspect, therefore consistently need to find a balance with interconnection, given the volume of activities they carry out.

South Africa

There are various lessons that could be incorporated in designing future projects that can create a more effective and impactful productivity and decent work ecosystem project or similar, this include but not limited to:

1. Setting clear objectives: Clearly define the objectives of the project to ensure all stakeholders are aligned and working towards the same goal.
2. Stakeholder involvement: Conduct a stakeholder analysis to understand their capacity to engage and participate after which, involve all relevant stakeholders from the beginning to gain diverse perspectives and ensure buy-in throughout the project.
3. Data-Driven Decision-Making: Utilize data (including existing data, in the case of sector studies) and analytics to inform decision-making processes and measure the success of the project.
4. Innovation and Technology: Embrace innovation and leverage technology to enhance productivity and create more decent work opportunities (i.e., web tool, online training seminars, etc.)
5. Sustainability: Design projects with long-term sustainability in mind, considering environmental, social and economic impacts.
6. Collaboration among different organizations, government departments, sectors, and industries to maximize impact and create a holistic ecosystem. The collaborative nature of this project worked well in South Africa.

7. Continuous Learning: Encourage learning and improvement to adapt to changing circumstances and stay ahead of trends (i.e., incorporation of entrepreneurship in the programme using complementary programmes like SCORE and SIYB).

Vietnam

Three lessons from the current PE4DW project could be useful for the design of future project that intend to apply a productivity ecosystem for decent work approach:

1. Implementation strategy: Adopting a more targeted ecosystem approach for interventions is crucial. Future projects should leverage localized, sector-specific partnerships and resources which ensure more structured and effective outcomes. The adaptation of a market-systems type approach (considering macro-, meso and micro- dimensions, players, drivers and linkages) in a small number of more focused ecosystem case studies could be an approach to consider in the future.
2. Stakeholder engagement: Successful projects necessitate strong stakeholder collaboration. This can be achieved by formally engaging key partners and providing adequate resources for them to execute shared-learning activities, communication, and other stakeholder engagement initiatives effectively.
3. Flexibility: Given the dynamic nature of project environments, future projects need to be designed with flexibility and adaptability at their core. An agile approach allows easy adaptation to any changing conditions, ensuring overall project resilience and effective navigation through complex circumstances.

Designing for context: gender equality and non-discrimination and environmental sustainability

Global

The programme design took gender into account to a certain extent (but this did not go beyond mainstreaming), and environmental sustainability was incorporated as a criterion for sector selection in country projects, but the design did not account for inclusion of PWDs. ILO officials (including those from ACTRAV and ACT/EMP) all acknowledge that gender equality and non-discrimination and environmental sustainability (and the 'Just Transition') are fundamental to the ILO, and relevant to tripartite stakeholders. That being said, an ILO official from the Enterprises department said that inclusion of people with disability is not often a focus, and instead the focus is on the inclusion of women and youth (for example, a representative from PE4DW Programme management noted that the ILO always collects sex-disaggregate data). A second ILO official said that most ILO projects do not often perform well in the area of PWD-inclusion. A different representative from PE4DW Programme management reported inclusion of PWDs were not integrated into the programme from the outset.

Concerning application in country contexts, representatives from PE4DW Programme management stated that some pilot countries have targeted sectors dominated by women. In other countries, with different contexts, other demographics are deemed as important as gender, for example, race in South Africa.

Ghana

The project in Ghana is set up to provide benefits to women. A major attribute of the sectors that works positively for the project is the predominance of women as workers and employers in both sectors. This has eased the attainment of gender targets on the project. The focus on disabilities has been less prominent. For a sector such as garments, there is a limit to the type of disabilities workers can have. There has been some traction in few enterprises employing people with disabilities, but this is not a general occurrence.

On environmental sustainability, the shea sector recognizes the challenges posed by the effluent produced from processing. Respondents engaged during the assessment spoke of the use of the dry effluent as a substitute for firewood. They also expressed their desire to reduce shea tree deforestation by rejecting shea tree firewood. For the garment sector, there are three types of waste generated – paper, plastic and fabric. Ghana has a fairly well-developed paper and plastic recycling industry. However, the same cannot be said of

fabric recycling, and as a result, they end up in the municipal waste system. During the trainings delivered at the micro level, environmental sustainability is one of the topics discussed. However, direct interventions on the topic driven by the project were not observed amongst enterprises. This can be attributed to the short period of time the interventions have been ongoing.

South Africa

The project strategy post inception phase clearly outlines that the ultimate beneficiaries of its interventions are women and men, in particular female and male entrepreneurs in SMEs with potential to improve productivity and their workforce in the target sectors.

The ILO PE4WED program gender strategy (October 2019) outline country-specific interventions to streamline gender in country projects at the different levels of intervention. The PE4DW project has ensured that all the documentation and contracts that go out to service providers, and implementation partners reflect the themes of gender equality and non-discrimination and have incorporated the indicators in their work plans and monitoring frameworks.

The project effectively aligns with the overarching national development priorities and policies, such as National Development Plan, the draft National Employment Policy, the Sector Development Master Plans on leather and footwear as well as automotive, and other government strategies. All these have a particular interest in ensuring gender equality, economic growth, productivity, job creation, decent work, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and non-discrimination. This NEP draft policy and these master plans have incorporated measures for gender equality, disability, and social inclusion as they were developed to holistically transform the South African automotive and leather and footwear sectors. So, by association, the project will be delivering on these issues, but care should be taken in monitoring, evaluating, and documenting the results at a project level.

The workers representative organizations very much appreciate the interventions of the PE4DW project in South Africa, however, they have raised a concern about the non-inclusion of certain demographics and inclusion of women-owned enterprises and informal industries to encourage formalization. The wording of the project document is vague and doesn't have specifics in this regard.

Vietnam

Specific gender equality and environmental sustainability concerns relevant to the project context were considered prominently in the project design. However, there is room for improvement in implementation and non-discrimination emphasis. The project design incorporated concrete measures to address gender equality, notably in Outcome 1 with some considerations in Outcome 2. Gender-related themes have been acknowledged in action plans, Labour Law revisions, and a detailed sector evaluation during the inception phase. Non-discrimination and inclusivity measures were acknowledged in the design but have less prominence in implementation, likely due to project complexity. Whilst mentioned in the country strategy, there was no material consideration of disability inclusion. Despite efforts to align with national gender equality strategies, challenges remain for achieving equality improvements in the workplace. Key project partners have particularly emphasized the need for additional capacity building and research on gender equality in the workforce and its link to productivity.

The project design for Vietnam heavily considered environmental sustainability, explicitly tackling related issues in its objectives, strategies, and ground-level operations. Recognizing the need for Vietnamese industries, notably in wood processing and machinery sectors, to maintain environmental standards was crucial to accessing high-value foreign markets. Introduction of training and coaching activities in GHG emission accounting, energy saving, green growth and circularity models and approaches were key areas for environmental sustainability intervention.

3) Intervention progress and effectiveness

The projects have made good progress on their planned activities, especially at the micro level (Outcome 2) (e.g. through the roll-out of enterprise training, already resulting in reports of increased productivity). It is also

significant to note that, while policy change can be a very protracted process, important milestones have been met at the macro level (Outcome 1) e.g. in South Africa, the project facilitated the creation of a revised National Employment Policy, and the formulation of OSH and Labour bills are in the advanced stages in Ghana, and in Vietnam the project is involved in revisions to the Employment Law and the new National Programme for Improving Labour Productivity (NLPP).

Concerning enablers and obstacles to implementation: the programme has benefited from its complementarity with the SCORE programme (an enabler), which also ran in PE4DW pilot countries. The programme has leveraged social capital from in-country relationships formed as part of SCORE. The ILO acknowledged that the programme faces a challenge (obstacle) of its relatively short timeframe (4 years including inception phase) with respect to its objectives to implement systemic change. As noted earlier, while there is progress on activities, it can appear fragmented. In addition, some partners noted that ILO systems and procedures have caused delays in implementation. The programme management team also feels limited in the degree it can adequately address cross-cutting themes.

Project delivery against performance plans

Global

The 'ILO Development Cooperation annual progress report for Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work' (March 2024) covers the achievements of the country pilots up to Dec 2023, including revisions to national labour law and policy and support to National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to improve productivity statistics (Outcome 1). Outcome 2 activities have included implementing supporting modernisation in textile and shea enterprises using SCORE training in Ghana; addressing the issue of counterfeit products in the leather and footwear sectors and improving management practices in the automotive sector in South Africa; and promoting digitalisation in wood processing enterprises and reductions in CO2 emissions by enterprises in the machinery and equipment sector in Vietnam. The report states that Outcome indicator targets in Ghana and Vietnam have all been met or exceeded, with only one exception in each country. In South Africa, the majority of targets have been met or exceeded, but slightly more than one third of targets have not been met, reportedly due to delays related to recruitment and staff turnover.

Ghana

The project is making decent progress based on the performance plan. For Outcome 1, the project is yet to meet its target on the number of policy initiatives developed, revised or implementation improved. It has supported the development and revision of three policies (OSH, Labour and textile) but all three require parliament approval before implementation can commence. That process is out of the control of the project team. However, their tripartite partners have continued local engagements to facilitate the process. On Outcome 2, initiatives to strengthen sector-level productivity drivers implemented measured by the percentage of gender-sensitive initiatives are on-going. The sectors selected are gender sensitive with most workers and employers being female, which may be particular to Ghana. When finalised, these initiatives will aid the achievement of sector level targets.

Interventions have progressed at different speeds across the three levels. At the micro level (Outcome 2), shea sector interventions have progressed significantly with capacity building training sessions and distribution of equipment and building the capacity for local manufacturing of higher quality equipment. These two activities have been seen to increase the output and operational efficiencies of beneficiary organizations. The trainings to the garment companies have also help improved operational efficiency by improving shop floor arrangements. Enterprises in both sectors have been introduced to concepts such as department labelling, record keeping and improved operational safety on the shop floor.

At the meso level (Outcome 2), interventions are slower due to the recent commencement of interventions after the MOU signing with the garment sector organization, AGAM. An equivalent body for the shea sector does not exist and the ILO has commenced engagements with the GEA to establish one for employers, and with the TUC through its agricultural workers union to establish a workers' union in the Northern region. The formation of this group will be critical to the scaling up of interventions to a wider set of industry players. Its

formation also appears critical to the attainment of the enterprise target of 300 given the lean staff strength of the project. In addition, the shea pricing mechanism being carried out in collaboration with the Tree Crops Development Authority will support the improvement of decent jobs about shea workers. This was achieved through a technical working group comprising stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society.

The macro level (Outcome 1) interventions involve the formulation of bills, pricing mechanism and labour statistics. All these are at advanced stages of completion. The Trade Ministry in collaboration with AGAM and other stakeholders are working on a textile and garment bill to govern the affairs of the sector, although the bill is currently 'paralysed' due to changes in the Ministry of Trade and Investment (MOTI) and upcoming elections. The OSH and the Labour bill are also in the works. All these bills require parliamentary passage which may be a challenge in 2024 given the upcoming parliamentary elections.

South Africa

Despite some delays during the inception phase, the project has demonstrated good progress on its performance plans and is on track to achieving its objectives, with the hope that the political landscape and transition goes smoothly post-election in May 2024.

The PE4DW project aims at improving productivity and promoting decent within the automotive and leather and footwear sectors, with a specific focus on component manufacturers and leather and footwear enterprises has made progress in the implementation of Outcome 2 (Sectoral enterprises constraints addressed) and its relevant outputs (*Output 2.2 - Interventions in the leather sector and footwear sector implemented*) and (*output 2.3 - Interventions in the automotive sector implemented*) (grant agreement with NAACAM, 2024) to build the capacity of tier 2 and tier 3 automotive component suppliers and productive capacity of the leather and footwear enterprises.

At the macro level (*Outcome 1- Increased capacity of ILO constituents to contribute to or implement national employment policies and frameworks*)– Quarter 4 (Q4) project progress reports (Oct 2023), indicates that the first phase of strategic consultations (among government departments and agencies) on the NEP was concluded and resulted in a revised National Employment Policy and draft implementation roadmap which will guide its implementation (after public consultations and adoption by cabinet). The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Improving Productivity Statistics, has had its inaugural meeting in Pretoria under the chairmanship of the National Planning Commission (NPC), resulting in substantive initial outcomes. The project facilitated collaboration among Productivity SA, Stats SA, and the Reserve Bank of South Africa, which had been challenging in the past. The project has agreed with the International Training Centre (ITC/LO) to implement a capacity development programme that seeks to streamline workstreams and strengthen the employment impact of South Africa's Industrial Policies (the DTIC's Master Plans).

At the meso level (Outcome 2), the project and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the DTIC) and other social partners agreed with the selection and implementation of the two sector master plans developed by the DTIC (Q3 2022 progress report). The project provided grant funding to the DTIC to implement selected interventions, including monitoring the employment impact analysis of these sector policies. Further, the project's focus on enhancing labour productivity, promoting entrepreneurship through the implementation of the SCORE and SIYB training programmes, and through labour unions, e.g., NACTU in ensuring that workers are protected against any form of discrimination in the workplace, through education, collective bargaining, representation in grievances, etc., reinforces its validity at the meso level.

At the micro-Level (Outcome 2), one of the key achievements of the project has been the pilot roll-out of the comprehensive KAIZEN training program, (which aims to gradually improve productivity and making work environments more efficient) for employers in both sectors (Productivity SA training reports, Jan 2024). The training program has provided essential skills and knowledge to enhance productivity and decent working conditions at the workplace. This program has been complemented by the labour union (NACTU) training to shop stewards in the workplace where they were trained on labour rights and the four pillars of the ILO decent work principles. Further, the project initiated a significant intervention by integrating entrepreneurship into the technical training programs of the Gauteng Automotive Industry Development Centre (GAIDC). As a result,

the enterprises (employers) have reported satisfaction and improved productivity levels. *All the progress highlighted above form part of the activities under output 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3* However, the impacts on decent work are not yet evident from the current evaluation.

Vietnam

The project is making good progress delivering most outputs under challenging operational conditions. For Outcome 1, progress appears to be on-track towards Output 1.2 (*Formulation and implementation of national employment policy supported*) and Output 1.3 (*Institutional capacity is developed to produce more granular labour and multi-factor productivity measurement and use it in policy advocacy*). A series of well-targeted, highly valued, and effective technical support and capacity development activities have been very effective. Country and Global ILO specialists have worked closely with in-country partners across a range of key institutions and priority activities (e.g. MOLISA, Department of Employment, CIEM, GSO etc). This includes ILO input into the timely and important National Programme for Improving Labour Productivity (NLPP) Scheme led by CIEM/MPI and the National Forum on Productivity by MOST/STAMEQ. The outputs and outcomes from Output 1.1, activities have been identified by reviewers as critically important to strengthen stakeholder and partner engagement, awareness, and co-learning.

Project *buy-in from key stakeholders and partners* is very evident. However, progress towards “*strengthening public-private platforms and policy-dialogues bodies*” appears to be lagging. This is mainly due to the difficult ODA environment. In particular, the newly enforced Government regulations (Decision 6) which make organizing and running meetings, workshops, and dialogue activities with international partners very difficult for ILO and project partners. Key stakeholders and partners such as VCCI, VGCL, GSO, CIEM, ILSSA *et al.* would undoubtedly feel more engaged and benefit greatly mechanisms to coordinate and run a series of platforms, forum, dialogue, meetings and roundtables in the final two years of the project.

For Outcome 2, the *constraints to productivity growth and more and more decent jobs in selected sub-sectors have been identified* (Output 2.1). Two sectors have been selected and two 2 systemic sector analyses produced. Progress towards implementing interventions in the wood processing sector (Output 2.2) and the machinery sector (Output 2.3) appears mostly on track. These outputs involve many individual and relatively short-term contracted activities with many partners – industry associations, BSOs and government institutions. Institutional challenges and contracting delays (affected by the ODA environment) have meant some planned activities are yet to start (e.g., STAMEQ, VGCL). However, there is enough time for the project to meet its output targets.

Obstacles and enablers to project implementation

Global

An ILO official from the Enterprises department reported country pilots have encountered challenges choosing sectors that the whole government will have ownership of. They also acknowledged the challenge of time constraints the programme faces, when the problems are complex, but the programme is only three years in duration: this includes the challenge of how to address skills needed in a sector, and how to 'disentangle' the issues of the informal economy and productivity.

With respect to complementarity with other ILO projects, the 341st Governing Body report (Feb 2021) cites the ILO's SCORE programme as having successfully demonstrated the factors that increase enterprise productivity. All ILO officials spoke to PE4DW's complementarity with SCORE: one official from the Enterprises department said SCORE was a useful entry point to get governments' attention. Interviewees from PE4DW Programme management described SCORE as one of many tools the programme is using, that there are networks of SCORE trainers in PE4DW pilot countries they can draw on; and several ILO staff now on PE4DW worked on SCORE.

Constraints to mainstreaming inclusion of PWDs and environmentalism are noted in PE4DW's most recent annual report (March 2024): they are acknowledged as worthwhile but considered 'too many issues' for the programme to adequately address and would be at the expense of the programme making progress.

Ghana

The project in Ghana was preceded by the SCORE programme which focused interventions at the micro level. The project appears to have built on the successes and networks of the SCORE programme in its inception phase. The successes of SCORE and its incorporation into this project may be responsible for the advanced traction of interventions at the micro level.

Respondents could not highlight any major obstacles which affected project implementation. Rather, a recurring issue was the time it took to get approvals from the ILO. Partners on the workers and employers side highlighted these delays as being unfavourable and affecting the commencement of interventions.

South Africa

Stakeholder engagement has been a critical aspect of the project's success. Engaging with various stakeholders, including government agencies, industry associations, and trade unions, has allowed for a more inclusive and holistic approach. However, ensuring active participation and commitment from all stakeholders has been challenging, particularly with one of the three union federations on the PAC, due to their organizational priorities, and this has affected the project's ability to engage fully with the federation.

Despite the challenges encountered during the inception phase (noted in the previous section), the PE4DW project has made significant progress in improving productivity and promoting decent work in the two selected sectors. The interventions implemented have demonstrated positive outcomes, including improved productivity in the enterprises that have received support from the project through its partners, i.e., Productivity SA.

Moving forward, continued collaboration and effective communication among the tripartite partners, the PAC, and implementing partners will be crucial to sustaining and expanding the project's impact and will require careful management and ongoing efforts to ensure the project's success.

Vietnam

Lack of formal Government approval of the project, and the current ODA situation have been the biggest obstacles faced by the project. Despite these significant challenges the project team has been highly adaptive and effective at implementing flexible contracting approaches to ensure activities are being delivered on the ground. However, this has resulted in many short-term contracts across many partners, activities, and locations. The inevitable result is a very fragmented implementation of intervention activities, particularly under Outcome 2. These appear to lack systematic or strategic integration and opportunities for co-learning, sharing, and scaling between activities are not being realized. The contracting of several activities remains delayed by institutional barriers.

Some suggested corrective actions.

- Actively progress the reported initiative for the Centre for integrated Economic Management (CIEM) under MPI to formally become the Project Owner in Vietnam.
- Provide sufficient resources to enable CIEM to effectively coordinate public-private platforms and deliver policy-dialogue initiatives across Ministries and institutions (including forums, meetings, roundtables, workshops, dialogues etc.).
- It is important that CIEM and ILO find ways for the project to rapidly strengthen coordination, engagement, knowledge sharing, co-learning, and outreach activities across Ministries, sectoral (e.g. VCCI, VGCL, industry associations), provincial governments, and institutional project partners.
- Consider the engagement and resourcing of a strategic outreach-communication coordinator into the project for the remaining period. This position could perhaps be identified from within the current project partners.
- Develop an outreach, knowledge sharing and cooperation plan-strategy for the project which includes resourcing for initiatives and activities to strengthen communication, knowledge sharing, co-learning, and cooperation:

- Between and within Outcome 2 intervention areas, both project partners (e.g. BSO, training institutions, associations) and their target enterprises in the wood processing and machinery sectors; and
- Between Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 component activities

4) Effectiveness of management arrangements

The programme's management arrangements are effective but also have room for improvement. Despite initial delays in inception, during this current phase time frames and workplans are adhered to across the three countries, with some exceptions in delayed activities.

The PACs in Ghana and South Africa, and the GSAC are working effectively. They are considered useful bodies to offer advice to the projects/programme. There is room for improvement – there have been suggestions that PAC meetings in Ghana could be more streamlined; and a suggestion that the GSAC meetings could provide more space for dialogue and exchange between members. In Vietnam there is no PAC—it is currently non-operational due to lack of formal government approval, nor is there any forum for informal dialogue for employer and worker representatives.

The programme and country project teams find the M&E system appropriate and straightforward to use, although the team has consistently stated that it will be difficult to attribute impacts to the programme. Donor representatives in Ghana have said they find the reporting to them could be improved, for example it currently does not include gender-disaggregated data. The M&E system is currently being revised to include country-level KPIs and may change further to reflect the programme's systemic approach.

Adherence to work plans

Global

Concerning the implementation of the programme's M&E system and adherence to the budget, a representative from the PE4DW Programme management reported that the country teams provide their quarterly updates on time, and they update their performance plans every six-months—these are then reviewed by the Project Officer. Regarding the budget, in the first year of the programme there was a low level of spending on delivery (the programme's Financial Statement (Dec 2022) shows USD \$1.4 M in expenditure up to Dec 2022 out of a total budget of USD \$8.2 M), but this is expected to increase/speed up in years 2 and 3 of the programme.

Ghana

Based on the feedback from donors, timeframes and workplans are adhered to by the local team. It was acknowledged that there was a delay in the start of the inception phase. However, the team has been able to catch up in most parts and appear to be on track in their activities. It was acknowledged that the team provides timely updates on activities and workplans despite their limited staff strength and workload.

A point of note is the means of communicating the results to the donors. A more user-friendly format which provides key summaries at a glance has been suggested by the donors to ease decision making given the volume of projects the team on the donor end oversee.

South Africa

The project team has demonstrated its adherence to work plans and has ensured project activities are carried out as intended. The project's well-defined work plan outlines the objectives, tasks, timelines, and responsibilities of each team member. Their adherence to the work plans proves that everyone is involved and understands their roles and responsibilities, leading to improved coordination and efficiency. The team conducts regular monitoring (weekly meetings) of progress against work plans which helps them identify any deviations, bottlenecks and delays, allowing for timely corrective actions (project quarterly progress reports).

The stakeholders expressed appreciation for the receptiveness and responsiveness of the project's leadership team that is open to suggestions and feedback and adept at incorporating them seamlessly in a cohesive and successful manner.

Vietnam

Time frames and work plans for PE4DW in Vietnam are largely being respected. This was evidenced initially by the successful completion of a comprehensive set of review and consultation activities and project strategy during the Inception Phase. Since inception, the project has continued to effectively implement numerous interventions and activities, across multiple partners and sectors in the two Outcome areas. These are largely on track, despite the complex multi-institutional and multi-stakeholder “ecosystem” nature of the project and the challenging institutional environment. This appears to have been possible due to the efficiency, effectiveness, and efforts of the ILO Country team. Flexible and adaptive approaches have been used to getting activities up and running.

Institutional issues relating to the ODA environment appear to be delaying contracting and the implementation of some activities with government and institutional partners (e.g. STAMEQ, VNPI, VCCI, and SME TAC). These appear to be largely outside the control of the project.

It appears likely the project will be able to successfully complete and achieve the activities and outputs identified in the log frame. However as mentioned previously, there are important opportunities for strengthened coordination and cooperation within and between project components and stakeholders to broader and more sustainable outcomes and impact.

Effectiveness of Global and National Advisory Committees

Global

The Global Strategic Advisory Committee (GSAC) is functioning and adding value in terms of providing useful advice to the programme. It is comprised of tripartite representatives, ILO officials, and members of other international organisations including UNCTAD, the OECD and the World Bank. It meets bi-annually: the first meeting was in September 2022 and there have been three meetings in total. Interviewees made clear that the GSAC is not a steering committee: its purpose is to provide advice, but not to make programme decisions.

The GSAC has successfully engaged social partners, according to interviewees from ACTRAV and ACT/EMP: it was straightforward to engage IOE because they were also members of SCORE's GSAC; and the meetings have been a useful way to answer workers' concerns raised by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), including some initial scepticism about the programme. PE4DW Programme management noted members like the OECD and World Bank have shared some useful resources and contacts relevant to the programme. There was a suggestion from one ILO Official that this forum would be more helpful if there were more opportunities for dialogue and exchange between members.

Ghana

The Project Advisory Committee is seen as being a useful body to offer advice to the project. The PAC meets twice a year and has been consistent in that timing. The meetings are co-chaired by the representatives of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and the Ministry of Trade. Membership has expanded over the lifetime of the project to include new partners as the project expands its operations at the different levels. From the PAC, the project has been able to receive guidance and buy-in on intended activities. It also serves as a platform for interaction of members that would otherwise have found difficulty in setting up such engagements.

It was acknowledged that the ILO sends briefings on topics to be discussed for review by members prior to the meetings which help in enriching the deliberations. This was commended by the members of the PAC interviewed during the assessment.

Some members have noted the possibility of the meetings drifting from the core issues for discussion. They also noted the invitation of non-PAC members to the meetings, which tended to make them public. This prolongs the length of the meetings which some members find as non-beneficial. It has been recommended by various PAC members that the meetings be streamlined to remain focused. Another point of concern was the unavailability in all meetings of the specific persons that represent the member organizations. This does not allow for continuity and feedback transmission and can prolong meetings.

South Africa

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) has been effective in guiding the project management team, given its diverse set of skills and expertise. The PE4DW project advisory committee is comprised of carefully selected stakeholders, experts, and representatives from relevant and reputable organizations who provide guidance, support, and expertise throughout the project duration. Their role is to review project plans, provide strategic advice, and make informed decisions to ensure project intervention success. From reviewing the minutes of the PAC, it can be deduced that the committee actively engages in discussions, offers valuable insights, and helps resolve any challenges and bottlenecks that arise during the implementation.

These expertise and diverse perspectives have contributed to the overall effectiveness of the project (PAC Meeting Minutes). Moreover, the PAC, because of the role of some of the members of the Tripartite Alliance in the National Economic and Development Labour Council (NEDLAC) stand-out as a strategic platform to influence decisions at highest level in the country, through their participation in the development of the National Employment Policy among other roles.

Vietnam

The Project Advisory Committee in Vietnam is not formally operational. This is mainly because the project is yet to be formally approved by the Vietnam Government (not an uncommon occurrence across multiple ODA projects at present) and partners are unable to formally participate. Regulations such as Decision 6 also make holding project meetings, dialogues, and roundtables difficult if not impossible.

Whilst these barriers are largely outside the control of ILO, the project could explore and resource some initiatives to promote engagement and dialogue with and between key stakeholder institutions identified to be part of the PAC. Strengthening engagement of VGCL and VCCI is particularly important. Both are very supportive of the project, but currently don't feel they are strongly engaged.

Effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system

Global

The programme and project teams consider the M&E system appropriate and practical for their purposes. PE4DW's Monitoring & Evaluation system is described in the M&E guidance note (August 2023). Although this version appears to be a draft containing notes and comments, it is the latest version. The guidance note emphasises that the M&E system will be gender sensitive, it contains an explanation of the PE4DW's Theory of Change, and detailed definitions of the Outcome and Impact indicators. These definitions sensibly include caveats that for some impact indicators it will be difficult to attribute change to PE4DW e.g. in the case of wage increases. Indeed, an interviewee from PE4DW Programme management said the ILO team has consistently flagged to donors that higher level outcomes/impact will be difficult to attribute to PE4DW. They feel the monitoring system is straightforward – the team are able to implement it, spending 5-10% of their time on it (this same interviewee noted that ILO advises that 3% of a programme's resources be spent on all M&E related work e.g. guidance, evaluations, etc.).

The system includes the collection of gender disaggregated data. This interviewee noted that the M&E system may need to change to reflect a market systems approach (which requires flexibility). They also noted that countries are currently developing tailored Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which will complement the universal KPIs contained in the M&E guidance note—the intention is that a consultant will be brought in to assist country teams with this process.

Ghana

The M&E system used by the project is seen as clear and reporting has been provided on time by the ILO to the donors. For the PAC members, reporting is provided prior to the meetings for deliberation and discussions during the sessions. This has been seen to be too infrequent by some members and poses the risk of partners losing track of specific responsibilities.

The donors noted that the level of external communication being carried out by the project was insufficient i.e. the use of online media to showcase its activities and accomplishments. There have been discussions on the recruitment of a communications person for the project, but they have not been concluded.

South Africa

The project team finds the M&E system useful and uses it to track progress, identify bottlenecks, and make timely and informed decisions to resolve any potential challenges to identify any potential risks evaluate the efficiency of project activities, and ensure that the project is on track to achieve its outputs and goals. The PAC meetings used to be held bi-annually, through the suggestion of the PAC members to the team, the frequency of these meeting have been increased to four, which allows the team to implement, track and report on the project progress quarterly to the PAC and other relevant stakeholders (Quarterly project progress report, Oct 2023). The weekly meetings initiated by the leadership further ensure results are tracked, bottlenecks are identified and addressed quickly and efficiently to allow for smooth implementation of the programme.

Vietnam

The project appears to be systematically and appropriately monitoring and documenting the project results from the numerous interventions and activities from both Outcome areas. Comprehensive intervention reports, guidelines and outputs have been produced and were available for most of the project activity areas. The quality of the various reports and their findings was very high.

However, up to now the project does not appear to have integrated or shared these valuable findings and learnings with partners and stakeholders either within or between the Outcome areas. This is understandable given the project stage and focus on intervention implementation. It was evident talking with various project partners, that most had little knowledge about what other partners were doing or the findings and learnings that were being generated between activities. Communicating and synthesizing the findings and learnings from the numerous activities should be a high priority for the remaining project period. This is a key part of the knowledge sharing, co-learning and cooperation strengthening activities needed.

While the review did not thoroughly examine the project's monitoring and evaluation system, some concerns were raised about its ability to evaluate outcome and impact level achievements due to the complex nature of productivity drivers. The project's log frame is practical at the output level, but less insightful at the outcome and impact levels. Potential issues with linking outputs and outcomes question the feasibility of measuring stated outcomes and impacts. It's suggested that more robust evaluations at the activity level, such as exit surveys or impact evaluations, could better reflect the project's impact on human capacity development and provide indications of the effectiveness of its outreach activities.

5) Efficiency of resource usage

The programme does make efficient use of its financial and human resources but is understaffed when it comes to technical expertise. The programme team at the global level and project teams at country level are very lean, even by ILO standards. This means high workloads (including having to cover multiple geographies within a country) for a small number of staff, and a risk of burnout. This has hampered the programme with respect to the mainstreaming of gender and environmental sustainability, although the teams have tried to address these cross-cutting themes where possible using in-house resources. It is however difficult to address some of these constraints within the ILO and donor's standard practices, with in the case of the former make recruitment a long process, and in the case of the latter, limit spending on technical staff and other project resources such as vehicles.

Global

The programme is making efficient use of its human resources, which are stretched, affecting programme delivery. The Project Organisational chart (Feb 2024) shows the team for this programme is very lean, with only five people in the Global, three of which have technical roles. The PE4DW global project team is also managing the SCORE programme, which means none of these staff are full-time on this programme. Similarly, at the country level, Ghana has five staff, and South Africa and Vietnam each have four. There is one administrative member of staff in each country. This appears to be a small team for the technical scope (macro, meso and micro) as well as the geographic coverage within each country.

As interviewees from the PE4DW Programme team explained, not all project staff at country level are full-time. For example, in Ghana, where there is no permanent ILO office (only a project office), this means project staff are often involved in non-project ILO work. One interviewee acknowledged that the programme team is 'slim', which is not unusual for ILO, but even by ILO standards PE4DW's team is quite slim. They acknowledged that to do more of a market systems development approach this would probably require more staffing. The programme is trying to mainstream gender and environmental sustainability using existing resources, but they would be able to do more with more resources (e.g. a consultant). However, an ILO official from Enterprises noted that it is difficult to justify spending on technical staff to the donors.

Noting the programme has experienced challenges addressing staffing, an PE4DW Programme team interviewee said part of the problem is the length of time ILO takes to do recruitment,¹⁴ which has good labour protection, but means they're not as flexible as, for example, a USAID programme run by a contractor that can recruit quickly.

Ghana

The project team has demonstrated efficient use of resources despite their limitation in staff numbers. The team is seen to be very engaged and on top of the situation by the donor representatives interviewed for this assessment.

The team in Ghana is lean, comprising five staff and two interns. They operate out of Accra. The operations of the project span various locations including Accra, Kumasi and Tamale. All shea butter interventions take place in the Northern Region, which is a significant distance from Accra. The process of managing all partners in the various locations poses a logistical challenge to the team. Respondents from the donors indicated that they had raised the issue of staffing with the ILO. One hurdle to achieving this is the salary competitiveness.

In addition, one donor thinks management can, at times, be too austere in managing resources. For instance, having a project vehicle with a designated driver should be taken as important by management given the poor safety records of commercial vehicle rental providers.

Resources were seen as being adequate and well used by the project. There is a sound financial management system within the project that allows for efficient utilization of financial resources.

South Africa

The PE4DW project's financial and human resources have been managed efficiently, with clear budget allocations and roles assigned to staff members. The project has demonstrated efficiency in the utilization of its financial and human resources. Budget allocations are planned and monitored to ensure resources are allocated judiciously across different project components. The project team consistently tracks expenses and adjusts resource allocations based on evolving needs, resulting in optimal utilization of funds. Similarly, human resources were effectively managed, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined to maximize productivity and expertise. However, a concern was noted about the staff turnover attributed to unattractive remuneration, and workload, leading to delays, especially during the inception phases of the project.

¹⁴ A PE4DW project team member also noted that the short timeline for the project makes it difficult to recruit and retain experienced, in-country experts.

The implementation strategy adopted by the PE4DW project is highly cost-effective. The project leadership carefully weighed the costs and benefits of different approaches, opting for strategies that offered the best value for money. This foresight will enable the project to achieve its objectives within the allocated budget, without compromising on the quality or timelines. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process will further ensure that resources are utilized efficiently to deliver desired outcomes.

The distribution of resources among staff and activities within the project is well-balanced and aligned with the project goals. Human resources are deployed based on individual strengths and expertise, ensuring each team member contributes effectively to project deliverables. Additionally, resources were allocated strategically across diverse project activities, with priority given to critical tasks to prevent bottlenecks or delays. This approach facilitated smooth coordination and collaboration among team members, enhancing overall project efficiency. There is a need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of resource usage going forward, continuous monitoring of financial resources (allocation of sufficient funds to various budget lines) and human resources (staffing levels, skills and expertise of team members, workload distribution, and productivity levels), procurement processes timelines, implementing partners contracts and costs control measures to ensure overall project success.

The project design and strategy have factored in a variety of cost-specific activities, outputs, and outcomes to address gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion of people with disabilities to create a more equitable and supportive environment for all individuals, regardless of gender or disability. These factors have included budgeting for resources such as training programs, accommodations for disabilities where opportunities exist, outreach initiatives, and measures to promote diversity and inclusivity in the workplace which is championed by both the labour unions and the employers and project implementing partners through the interventions they are providing on behalf of the project. The PE4DW project stands out for its management of resources as it partially achieved its outputs successfully while optimizing resource utilization. Moving forward, sustaining this focus on resource efficiency will be essential for maintaining project momentum and driving continued success.

Vietnam

The project makes efficient use of its human resources, especially the ILO's Country and Global technical expertise. However, while efficiency is high, strategic long-term impact may be limited due to reliance on numerous short-term contracts and a fragmented approach. Areas like gender and social inclusion could benefit from increased focus and resourcing, as well as initiatives and responsibility for partnership engagement, outreach, and communication.

Assessing the optimal distribution of resources between staff and activities is complex. The high-value technical input from both Global and Country-level ILO staff is highly regarded by partners and effective. Yet, there might be a resource insufficiency needed to support crucial tasks such as enhancing engagement, cooperation, and shared learning amongst stakeholders and partners. This involves investing resources into these partner institutions to manage these duties effectively. This suggests a possible need for resource reallocation from other staff tasks or intervention activities, which may require a more streamlined and focused project approach.

6) Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention

There are early signs of the programme's *potential* impact. There are encouraging signs of national ownership and changes in policy, even at the mid-term point of this programme. However, changes in leadership (e.g. in Ghana's PAC the co-chair was an MP but is now a civil servant) can threaten the process and government ownership. In Vietnam, establishing stronger ownership engagement will require that the project invest more in outreach, partnership engagement and knowledge transfer.

At the macro-level (Outcome 1), there has been progress on policies, although the impact of these cannot yet be seen, as they are still to be passed by government and then implemented. At the meso-level (Outcome 2),

the projects have facilitated certain sector-level innovations as productivity-enhancing equipment in the shea sector in Ghana and a web-based tool introduced in South Africa for SMEs under the BUSA, the main employer's association represented on the PAC. In Vietnam, while the project has supported multiple improvements, the effectiveness of sector-level interventions remains unclear. At the micro level (Outcome 2), there have been tangible improvements in efficiency in supported enterprises.

The impact of the systemic approach is still to be seen, and there are opportunities to strengthen its implementation.

National ownership and capacity building

Global

With respect to national ownership, there are opportunities to embed this more effectively: the interviewed representative from ACT/EMP thinks employers organisations are not involved enough in the projects and could, in future, be involved in delivering services to enterprises. This would both contribute to their ownership of the project and its sustainability. An ILO official from the Employment department described how, through the programme's work on productivity statistics, the country projects have brought siloed government departments together.

Concerning changes in policy as part of the programme, the ACTRAV representative thinks PE4DW's ecosystem approach is more likely to result in a conducive environment for productivity enhancements and improved working conditions now that it is not focused on the enterprise-level only. Progress has already been made on employment policy/law in South African and Vietnam (ILO official, Employment department).

Ghana

The level of ownership being exhibited by the partners is encouraging and this results from the collaborative approach used by the team in developing interventions and carrying out the activities. Leveraging partners natural roles in conducting some of these activities and building their capacities where necessary, has been able to build the much-needed ownership which is expected to go on even after the project rounds up.

Many activities on the project require capacity building of partners and stakeholders to empower them to achieve set goals. By building capacity, the ILO is transferring the required technical know-how to these institutions. This is helping to build ownership of the project activities within these institutions. It is also evident that the interventions being carried out with the ILO were decided through a collaborative process which involved suggestions of interventions from the partners. Some of these interventions were based on activities that the partners knew would impact the productivity and decent work ecosystem in Ghana but did not have the capacity to carry out on their own.

A significant example of this is the intervention with the Ghana Statistical Service to develop labour and multifactor productivity statistics. The technical assistance provided by the project is building the capacity of GSS staff therefore institutionalizing the knowledge of such statistics within the organization.

There are however concerns about the level of ownership within the ministries because given the structure of government, it will depend on the person that is driving the process from within. For instance, it was stated that the co-chair of the PAC from the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations has changed from the deputy minister who is a Member of Parliament to a director who is a civil servant. The presence and support of an MP will help accelerate activities particularly at the macro level where bills are expected to be passed by parliament. Such an MP can serve as a focal point to drive the process. The change to the director may slow the process.

So far, policy changes have not started to yield benefits. This is because the bills have not yet been passed by parliament. However, the passage of the Labour bill will help improve the measurement of unemployment thereby providing the government with insights on the direction to take to improve workers' welfare. The productivity statistics will help shape wage negotiations between employers and workers, providing evidence of workers output, and the factors affecting it in the various sectors of the Ghanaian economy. It will also shed

more light on ways to improve overall worker productivity. The Textiles and Clothing Industry Development Policy is designed to attract investment and build production capacity of the sector. These were key industry requirements raised by the sector players interviewed in the assessment. Given the political climate, there is a possibility that the bills may not be passed before the end of the tenure of the current administration. It is also possible that delays in forming the government of the next administration may impede the passage of the bills in 2025. However, the ownership exhibited by the workers and employers' associations suggest they are well equipped and motivated to get the bills passed even after the intervention of the ILO.

South Africa

Although the project experienced delays at inception and some of the activities at the meso and micro levels are delayed, the project has managed to demonstrate some impacts at different levels of its interventions as outlined below:

The project's focus on building the capacity of the sector enterprises through partners like Productivity SA, Gauteng AIDC, NACTU, COSATU, NUMSA, the DTIC, SAFLEC and others with the tools and resources necessary to enhance their productivity not only contributes to economic growth but also creates a positive impact on the labour market by promoting decent work practices.

National ownership and capacity building are integral components of the project's sustainability framework. The emphasis on national ownership ensures that the interventions are tailored to specific needs and the context of the country. The involvement of the tripartite partners via the PAC and consultations with NEDLAC, and other local stakeholders in the design and implementation of the project, has helped build their capacity to sustain the initiatives beyond the project's duration. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among the government and its social partners, thereby increasing the likelihood of long-term sustainability of the project interventions.

Vietnam

The PE4DW project in Vietnam has effectively tapped into and contributed to building national awareness and ownership of people and institutions involved in the labour productivity agenda, across institutions, stakeholder groups and sectors. Firstly, improving labour productivity, is a high priority national government agenda in Vietnam, with numerous policies, strategies and initiatives being implemented across multiple ministries and institutions. Awareness and recognition of the importance of labour productivity and decent work agenda was also very high amongst business representatives (e.g., VCCI), industry associations (e.g., VASI and Forestry Products Association (FPA)) and trade union organisations (e.g. VGCL).

The project has meaningfully engaged with most of the key institutions within the complex productivity ecosystem (at government, industry and enterprise level), with carefully targeted activities and technical support that address key gaps and needs in each organisation. Interventions are highly demand-driven, contextual, and nuanced. Activities have also been supported by specialized technical expertise both from within ILO and from external specialists. Presumably this also has a high transaction cost, however, this approach appears to engender a high level of appreciation and satisfaction amongst partners. Examples of these activities include the technical input into revisions of the Employment Law, training and technical guidance provided to GSO for improving labour productivity statistics, support for a productivity information platform within CIEM of MPI, support being provided to upgrade the Public Employment Service within MOLISA, and targeted research with VASI to understand sector cost of production.

Similar levels of ownership and capacity development were evident amongst the BSO's, wood processing and machinery industry associations and enterprises involved in Outcome 2 interventions. Collectively these reasonably modest interventions and activities (modest in terms of duration of activity, the amount of resources, and the number of businesses involved) are likely to convert efficiently into meaningful outputs and outcomes, in relation to investment.

The demand and expectations for training and capacity development amongst partners is very high. However, the level of engagement and implementation of activities with some organisations (e.g., VGCL, VCCI,

STAMEQ, SME TAC and VNPI) has been delayed or limited. As mentioned previously, this is due to contracting difficulties and delays due to the ODA environment.

The project could efficiently achieve deeper and broader ownership and engagement with more focused investment into strategic outreach, partnership engagement and knowledge transfer activities – with and between project partners and the broader stakeholder groups. This involves tapping into the existing member networks and communication channels of organisations such as VCCI, VGCL, industry associations and national institutions (e.g. SME TAC). This should include initiatives to strengthen and promote cross-institutional and cross-Ministerial engagement and participation – particularly the tripartite partners – ILO, Government, VGCL and VCCI.

Sector-level best practices

Ghana

Sector level interventions are yet to lead to best practices because they are still in their infancy. At the meso level, interventions are more advanced in the garments sector due to the absence of a sector association in the shea sector. The MAGIC Fashion Trade Show in Las Vegas facilitated by the ILO has led to two potential investors visiting Ghana. These visits have not yielded contract agreements. Respondents in the assessment indicated that the process of going from visits to contracts can take upwards of a year. The local team also anticipates that these investor visits will lead to the establishment of factories that will introduce new technologies to the garment industry. The Textile & Garment Industry Development Policy is yet to be passed by parliament, so its sectoral impact is yet to be felt as well. The capacity building and consultant follow-up activities have yielded immediate benefits in workplace organization and setup. These have helped improve efficiency. In addition, the equipment built by the GRATIS foundation and provided to the shea processors has improved their productivity by increasing their output while reducing the manual nature of tasks. The introduction of a shea pricing mechanism by the Tree Crops Development Authority will lay a foundation for the future pricing of the products while putting into consideration decent work of the actors.

South Africa

At the sector level, the project in collaboration with the sector stakeholders has identified and disseminated best practices and learning tools that have been proven to be effective in enhancing productivity and promoting decent work and entrepreneurship culture to some of the lower-tier suppliers (tier 2 and tier 3) in the automotive sector and support by industry representative organizations like (SAFLEC¹⁵) in the leather and footwear sector, which is instrumental in ensuring that the sector is competitive and productive for global markets.

By showcasing successful case studies and providing training on the best practices from past and present programmes and projects, the project empowers participating enterprises to implement similar strategies within their operations, e.g. KAIZEN, SCORE, and SIYB tools amongst others. This knowledge-sharing and capacity development approach not only benefits individual enterprises but also contributes to sector-wide improvements in productivity and working conditions. Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), with the assistance of the project, based on a previous ILO initiative, have developed a 'Web and App Tool' that provides online information on labour practices/laws and operational challenges faced by SMEs. . This further demonstrates the project's importance and ability to work with diverse partners for the common good without duplicating efforts.

Vietnam

It is still too early to determine whether sector-level interventions have led to the development of best practices that can be replicated across similar industries and/or countries. The level of engagement and involvement of VCCI in tangible capacity strengthening has not progressed far due to engagement and contracting issues mentioned previously. Similarly, research to better understand and strength VGCL's capacity on labour productivity issues hasn't been initiated.

¹⁵ South African Footwear & Leather Export Council

The project has supported research with VASI to better understand enterprise costs of production, which is considered an important knowledge gap. However, research findings are still being consolidated. Similarly training and coaching support has been provided by contracted BSOs to FPA staff and wood processing enterprise members. This focused on methods for greenhouse emission accounting and reduction strategies. It is understood that GHG topics relevant to business are very new in Vietnam and project is mainly at the stage of enterprise awareness raising. There is an opportunity to understand how existing institutional and communication networks, and business champions could be utilised to support these key messages within target sectors.

The level of strategic engagement with, and support to sector-level associations is an area which could be strengthened in the remaining project period. Sector level engagement would have benefit in two dimensions. Bottom-up interactions - i.e., sharing, synthesizing and promoting learnings from BSO and enterprise support activities. And top-down - i.e., sharing, refining and communicating key developments and learnings from policy activities.

Changes in participating enterprises

Ghana

At the micro level, the beneficiary enterprises have exhibited some improvements in operations and an improvement in productivity. In the shea sector, the companies have been able to show an improvement in the working conditions of the workers with mechanization improving the quality of work. The 5S and Kaizen principles have helped organizations in the shea and garment sectors to organize and sustain a productive work environment. Respondents indicated that the implementation of these principles has resulted in a reduction in workplace accidents. There was a recurring statement among the enterprises “You cannot manage what you cannot measure”. This has helped the enterprises increase their level of recordkeeping of various topics such as staff contracts, inventory management and workplace accidents. Some have set up in-house teams that meet to review the worker challenges and proffer solutions to management.

South Africa

Changes observed in participating enterprises serve as tangible evidence of the project's impact. Through the adoption of the KAIZEN training tool delivered to the leather and footwear and automotive SMEs, by Productivity SA, to improve business processes and labour practices, the enterprises have reported increased productivity¹⁶ and improved competitiveness in the market. One of the SMEs in the automotive sector has reported a 2% increase in production efficiency within a three-week period from when the intervention was made, by streamlining processes and identifying bottlenecks in its operations¹⁷. This has also resulted in one (1) job opportunity added by the factory to complete the new effective production line.

Similarly, among the leather and footwear SMEs interviewed, they have reported increased production in the number of shoes produced per day by 33.33% per operator and resulted in a 135% increase in efficiency (ILO KAIZEN Programme Close-out report for Angel Footwear-Productivity SA, Feb 2024). By applying the KAIZEN 5S (Sort, Set- in- order, Shine, Standardize and Sustain) (principles they have seen seamless and smooth process in the factory flow processing, this was achieved by identifying some bottleneck at the start of the production line and fix them, which has a positive ripely effect to other line departments though to the closing department. These positive outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of the project intervention in driving sustainable change at the enterprise level.

Vietnam

There was evidence from BSO reports and site visits of measurable changes following the implementation of interventions in a small sample of participating enterprises. The review was able to evaluate the effectiveness of business support interventions implemented by two BSO's, STI Consulting and ProFM with enterprises in

¹⁶ Productivity SA Reports

¹⁷ Expert Automotive Trim Productivity SA KAIZEN Training Close-out report

the machinery sector. This included site visits with two participating enterprises. Whilst the scale of engagement was relatively modest (in terms of number of enterprises in the sample provided), it was evident the support from BSO's was highly valued by participating enterprises and considered effective. There was evidence of measurable knowledge, practice and productivity changes within relatively short time periods (several months) resulting from BSO training and support. Cost-effectively scaling and leveraging the learnings from these activities is a key challenge and opportunity.

Interventions implemented by STI Consulting focused on capacity building and digital transformation programs for participating enterprises mainly in the machinery sector. STI engaged directly with 20 enterprises, offering deep-dive interventions, and targeted support to five of them, aimed at productivity improvements. Methods such as practical training, problem-solving and micro-learning helped improve capacity and engagement of middle managers was crucial for productivity improvements. Besides, lean manufacturing techniques and adoption of technology like QR labels for traceability enhanced overall business efficiency. Interventions resulted in real-world improvements, with results often seen within a span of 3-4 months. One enterprise was in the process of implementing real-time digital monitoring of key machining equipment that could provide detailed analytics about the human and equipment operational processing efficiency, product quality and pinch points. The technology had only recently been installed, so it was too early to determine what productivity improvements were possible.

ProFM was working with ten enterprises, providing advice on organizational management structure and operational processes for productivity improvement. A visit to Kyoyo, a recently established precision machining firm to export customers, indicated significant benefits. ProFM provided valuable assistance in business organisation, operational processes, product quality assurance, and 'learning by doing' methodologies. ProFM played a pivotal role in enabling Kyoyo to target increased efficiency, reduced defect rates and expanded customer base, along with improved customer order scheduling and alignment. Digital engagement and face-to-face training sessions, facilitated by ProFM, helped enhance businesses' management capabilities and spurred continuous improvement in productivity, quality control and workforce management.

The systemic approach and its replicability

Global

Thus far, there is a lack of evidence on the results of the systemic approach and therefore the potential for it to be replicated in other countries. The ILO believes the programme is 'going in the right direction' because of coherence between the micro, meso and macro levels of the programme (GSAC Meeting minutes, Oct 2023). PE4DW's most recent annual report (March 2024) states that programme is flexible enough to be applied in different, disparate countries because a country can choose what 'slice of the productivity ecosystem' to focus on.

Ghana

Replication of the intervention in other sectors or regions is feasible using the approach adopted in Ghana. A key success factor in this is the presence of structure across selected sectors. The systemic approach employed by the Ghana team was designed to address issues affecting productivity with the aim of keying into already established systems in the country through the relevant stakeholders. Using a collaborative approach, the activities embarked on with partners were those that would have naturally been carried out if all resources (financial, human capital) were available to them.

Intervention replication in other sectors or regions is possible if a similar collaborative approach is adopted. The more structured the sector the better, due to the availability of established organizations that can be partnered with from the outset. A case in point is the absence of a meso level partner in the shea sector which the ILO is working with the TUC to establish.

South Africa

The project's interventions and approaches are replicable to any sector of the economy and can be imported to other regions, considering their respective context. The engagement of key stakeholders by the PE4DW project at multiple levels, including government, businesses, and civil society, the project has created a conducive environment for sustainable growth and development. This approach recognizes the interconnectedness of various factors influencing productivity and decent work, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive solutions that address root causes rather than symptoms by all interested parties, which is something the project has managed well from inception to date.

The PE4DW project interventions can be replicated in other regions. Each region may have its own unique characteristics and challenges, but the concept of creating an ecosystem approach to enhance productivity and decent work can be adapted and implemented in different contexts. By understanding the specific needs and resources of a particular region, similar strategies and initiatives can be developed to improve productivity and drive economic growth.

Vietnam

Replicating the interventions in other regions or sectors will require careful consideration of resources, context, and stakeholder engagement. The PE4DW interventions in Vietnam have been highly appreciated by participating partners and enterprises, demonstrating changes within a short timeframe. However, their tailored, direct engagement model suggests a substantial investment in terms of time and specialized expertise. Therefore, resource availability for such in-depth interventions may be a challenge to consider during replication. Contextual differences in the operating environment, regulatory framework, or sectoral characteristics would also need to be considered, possibly requiring adaptations to the intervention model. Importantly, stakeholder buy-in, crucial to any such effort, was reported to be high among the Vietnamese project partners. Therefore, an essential part of replication efforts should include early and ongoing stakeholder engagement to ensure similar support.

Cross-cutting themes

Gender and non-discrimination themes and inclusion of people with disabilities

ILO officials acknowledge that gender equality and non-discrimination are fundamental to the ILO, and relevant to tripartite stakeholders. However, inclusion of people with disability is not often a focus of, or an area of strong performance for, the ILO, and instead the focus is on the inclusion of women and youth. The inclusion of PWDs was not integrated into the programme from the outset. In Ghana, for example, PWD are not integrated into the project. Constraints to mainstreaming inclusion of PWDs are noted in PE4DW's most recent annual report (March 2024): it acknowledged as worthwhile but considered (alongside environmental sustainability) 'too many issues' for the programme to adequately address and would be at the expense of the programme making progress.

Concerning the application of gender inclusion: at the global level, the M&E system is gender aware, and the programme collects sex-disaggregated data. In country contexts, some pilot countries have targeted sectors dominated by women (e.g. shea and textiles in Ghana). However, in some countries, a representative from the PE4DW team said other demographics are deemed as important as gender, for example, race in South Africa. Workers in South Africa raised issues of the project not including certain demographics-women and black-owned enterprises.¹⁸ South Africa's (ILO-supported) NEP and Master Plans have a strong focus on gender inclusion. In Vietnam gender was considered in the project's design (particularly in Outcome 1, where

¹⁸ Although the ILO project team contests this, stating they have made efforts to include a female owner in the footwear sector, historically dominated by men; and that interventions in townships have benefitted only black-owned businesses; and that the project team has also aimed for equitable representation of women and men in project trainings.

there is a documented gender equality focus on policy documents)¹⁹, but results for gender inclusion are not very visible. The programme is trying to mainstream gender using existing resources, but the ILO acknowledges that their teams already have heavy workloads, and they would be able to do more with more resources (e.g. a consultant).

Tripartism and social dialogue

Globally, tripartism is central to ILO's work across different countries and all the levels of the programme as instruments of good governance and fostering an enabling environment for realization of decent work for all. The evaluation results from the three countries implementing the PE4DW programme shows that the objectives of the programme are generally consistent with government and social partner priorities and have the potential to meet the needs of the beneficiaries.

The PE4DW programme aims to promote productive employment and decent work and sustainable economic growth which are often key priorities for governments and social partners globally. The programme's focus on improving labour productivity, enhancing skills and employability, promoting social dialogue, and ensuring workers' rights and social protection are key in development long-term sustainability of the programme results and in achieving the priorities of the government and social partners. These objectives are consistent with the priorities of tripartite partners in creating decent jobs, improving working conditions, and fostering inclusive and sustainable development. The needs of social partners and that of the programme's ultimate beneficiaries are addressed through the platforms that have been set-up by the project in different countries. These include the formation of the Project Advisory Committees (PACs) and Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) and Labour Unions and other forums where social partners deliberate productivity enhancement issues and policies.

In South Africa, the PE4DW project has successfully fostered dialogue between government, employers, and workers, where, it has supported and facilitated development and drafting of national policies (for example, the National Employment Policy-NEP) amongst many other pieces of legislation that the ILO has been involved in the past and currently in meeting the needs of all stakeholders. There is a good level of participation of social partners from inception to date, and their support role can be seen in some of the interventions provided by the PE4DW programme in the pilot countries.

In Ghana, the project is in collaboration with the government, chiefly through the MELR and MOTI, the workers via the TUC and GAWU (for the shea sector) and the employers via the GEA. This collaboration at the macro level is influenced by the need for policies to drive the increase in productivity and the improvement of working conditions for employees across all sectors of the country. The project on its part, aims to improve the productivity and decent working conditions of workers which are critical issues to the Government of Ghana and its social partners. The PAC was set up quite early in the project to provide guidance to the team. It is co-chaired by the MELR and MOTI with several other partners as members. The PAC meets twice a year and is seen as useful and supportive of the project.

Similarly, in Vietnam, the PE4DW project supports labour productivity and decent work gains on multiple levels, complying with national plans like SEDS, SEDP, and NLPP, and schemes like ILO's Decent Work Country Programme and SECO Cooperation Program. However, curating the connection across various sectors and institutional stakeholders appears challenging due to coordination and cooperation difficulties between ministries and institutions. Despite these challenges, stakeholders support the productivity ecosystem approach, with realistic, stepwise expectations for long-term change. The Project Advisory Committee isn't functioning formally yet, primarily due to pending government approval. Nevertheless, the project is exploring "informal" initiatives to promote stakeholder engagement and dialogue. The lack of active engagement from VGCL and VCCI, who are supportive of the project, albeit not fully immersed yet, highlights the need to strengthen social dialogue.

Overall, the tripartite and social dialogue themes have been addressed effectively by the programme. The alignment with the government and social partner priorities and meeting the needs of beneficiaries, the

¹⁹ The ILO PE4WED program gender strategy (October 2019) indicates that at the policy level the programme will mainstream gender in policy frameworks.

programme is playing a crucial role in promoting sustainable economic growth. This report highlights the significance of promoting dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders to achieve shared goals and create a more inclusive and productive work environment.

International labour standards

The project promotes several of the ILO's conventions and recommendations through its interventions at the three levels. At the policy-level its work on the revision of the Employment Law in Vietnam and the Employment Policy in South Africa promotes the Employment Policy convention (C122), the Employment Services Convention (C88) and the Labour Statistics Convention (160). In Ghana, the revisions of the Labour Act and the OSH Act are promoting the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (C98), and the Occupational Safety and Health Convention (C187). Related to its work on gender equality and non-discrimination, the project promotes the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (C111) and the Violence and Harassment Convention (C190).

Sector and enterprise-level work further promotes the R189 – 'Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998' (No. 189). R189 states that SMEs 'are increasingly responsible for the creation of the majority of jobs throughout the world'. The Project Document for PE4DW explains that SMEs are the ultimate beneficiaries of the project because they are integral to job creation and income generation globally. R189 also asserts that some of the constraints SMEs face include 'low levels of productivity', and the PE4DW project document lays out how the programme intends to meet SME's needs by helping them improve 'within-sector productivity' or enter new productive sectors.

R204 – 'Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015' (No. 204) recommends that that ILO Members facilitate a transition from the informal to formal economy, for reasons that include addressing the 'decent work deficit' in the informal economy and improving public revenues. One of the ways of doing this is through the promotion of MSMEs, which, as noted above, is integral to the PE4DW programme. R204 also includes the instruction that 'Members should formulate and implement a national employment policy'—which PE4DW is doing in South Africa and Vietnam. However, the programme has encountered obstacles in promoting formalization: one Global-level ILO official said that because of the time constraints the programme faces, it is difficult to 'disentangle' informality and productivity. Using South Africa as an example, the goals and scope of the South African PE4DW pilot do not have activities and outputs that seek to address the issue of informality in the two sectors that the project has selected. All the interventions delivered so far have been targeting formal enterprises. In addition, in South Africa the PAC does not include representation from the informal economy in social dialogues.²⁰

Environmental sustainability

The PE4DW programme consideration of environmental sustainability is evident to different extents across its global reach and specific country contexts. Environmental sustainability was included as in country sector analyses and as a criterion for sector selection, and it's evident in country-specific applications. The country-level projects reflected a nuanced understanding of local environmental contexts and challenges. These include gender imbalances in labour market participation in Ghana, South Africa's focus on sustainable national development policies, and Vietnam's need for environmental considerations particularly in relation to greenhouse emission reduction within the export focused wood processing and machinery sectors.

Despite the varied degrees of project design, the overall objectives to mitigate adverse environmental impacts were observed, particularly in the project's strategies. In Ghana's shea and garment sectors, environmental concerns have been highlighted with steps towards waste management and emission reduction. Within some interventions there was a notable desire to limit deforestation caused by sourcing shea tree firewood, and to

²⁰ In response to this finding, ILO programme team members noted that the Ghana country project is being used to pilot the programme's approach to formalisation, through the 'Formalize your Business' package; in Vietnam this issue is being addressed through the Employment Law; and in South Africa the project has an entrepreneurship module for the automotive supply chain that aims to support informal businesses in the township economies.

find alternatives for fabric waste, currently contributing to municipal waste. In Vietnam, more concrete environmental measures have been implemented.

In South Africa, the PE4DW project has integrated environmental sustainability considerations into its design and strategic approach. The project's training materials emphasize the mutual benefits for SMEs adopting environmentally responsible practices. The October 2023 quarterly report reports collaboration with unions to tackle skills challenges in justifying environmental sustainability transitions, and dialogues with Eastern Cape AIDC to centre sustainable approaches while transitioning to New Energy Vehicles (NEVs). Training modules for enterprises, conducted by Productivity SA, also incorporate environmental sustainability. However, due to limited detailed information on specific interventions, a comprehensive evaluation remains challenging. Despite varied commitment levels to environmental sustainability initiatives across country contexts, the South African arm reaffirms its environmental commitment, albeit with room for strengthening systematic progress tracking and enhancing communication of these initiatives within the project scope.

The Vietnam project introduced substantive strategies, including training of trainers (TOT), training and coaching delivery between industry associations, government SME support and training institutions, BSOs and enterprises. Many of these initiatives focus on increasing awareness and adoption of circularity models, greenhouse gas emission accounting and energy-saving strategies, to align industries with better sustainable practices and increasing export market requirements.

Despite these environmentally oriented initiatives, the systematic monitoring and documentation of these environmental sustainability results appear less defined throughout the project. The capacity to monitor progress in these aspects needs some careful consideration. A comprehensive tracking and communication mechanism may be required to ensure ongoing improvement and awareness of environmental initiatives within the project's scope. Overall, while environmental sustainability is embedded within the project strategy, its global framework and specific country scenarios present varied levels of integration and focus.

It should also be noted that whilst the various environmental sustainability issues are regarded as high priorities by the various project partners, they may be a lower immediate priority for enterprises. Pragmatic expectations, awareness raising, and promotion of sector champions and role models are useful strategies.

Medium- and long-term effects of capacity development

Capacity development in the productivity ecosystem and decent work programme can have various medium and long-term effects. On this project, there are capacity building activities at all three levels (macro, meso and micro). The project's interventions were well-received, particularly for their technical inputs, skills trainings, and targeted research, resulting in improved capacities across organizations and enterprises.

At the enterprise (micro level), after capacity building sessions, there are immediate changes that occur within participant enterprises. Training on the 5S and the Kaizen principles has led to valuable and measurable changes in enterprise capacity (micro level) all three countries. These changes include an immediate improvement in enterprise shop floor efficiency, increased record keeping and a reduction in workplace accidents. At the sector (meso) level, capacity building activities have included support to sector associations, such as BSO-provided training to the Forestry Products Association in Vietnam on GHG accounting and reductions. In this example the focus of the training was on awareness raising, and it is too early to assess a change in capacity. In Ghana, the project is collaborating with the Tree Crops Development Authority on the shea pricing mechanism. This was achieved through a technical working group comprised of stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society.

At the government (macro) level, there have been a myriad of capacity building activities under Outcome 1. For example, the programme is building the internal capacity of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to improve productivity statistics (in Ghana and Vietnam), or strengthen existing capacity (in South Africa), through project TAGs. An ILO official described how, through this work, the country projects have brought siloed government departments together. Other examples of project support for capacity building include support being provided to upgrade the Public Employment Service within MOLISA in Vietnam.

In the medium term, at micro, meso and macro levels, although it is too early to see outcomes, it is expected that the immediate improvements are institutionalized and the increase in the skills and knowledge of individuals involved in the project are fixed within these organizations. This will lead to further improvements in efficiency and effectiveness in their work. This can result in better outputs and outcomes, as well as increased job satisfaction and motivation. New hires can also learn from experienced hands to ensure a maintenance of efficiencies.

In the long term, again, at micro, meso and macro levels, capacity development can lead to sustainable improvements in productivity and quality of work, as well as a more resilient workforce capable of adapting to changing circumstances. This can contribute to overall economic growth and development, better job opportunities, and a more competitive workforce. Additionally, capacity development can lead to a positive impact on the organizational culture, fostering a learning environment and promoting continuous improvement. It can also contribute to enhancing the reputation of the organization and its ability to attract and retain talent. Capacity building cannot be taken in isolation to cause all these improvements. Implementation of sectoral policies and investments in the enterprises will further potentiate the effects of capacity building.

Overall, investing in capacity development in the productivity ecosystem for a decent work programme has the *potential* to yield significant benefits both in the medium and long term, contributing to sustainable development and inclusive growth.

Conclusions

The programme as a whole, and three country pilot projects are seen as highly relevant to, and consistent with, national and tripartite actors and their priorities, and interviewed stakeholders were able to articulate this relevance. This relevance is attributed to the fact that the projects were designed in collaboration with these stakeholders.

Overall, the programme's ecosystem approach appears valid, although in practice it is not always implemented—some activities appear fragmented, including being spread out across multiple geographies. The inception phase included challenges such as delays (due to recruitment challenges) but was used to adapt the programme and was an opportunity for valuable learning (including learning related to the process of sector selection).

The country projects have made good progress on their planned activities, especially at the micro level (Outcome 2), here implementation has been made more effective through the programme's complementarity with the SCORE programme. At the macro level (Outcome 1), while policy change can be a very protracted process, important milestones have been met. The ILO acknowledged that the programme faces a challenge of its relatively short timeframe (4 years including inception phase) with respect to its objectives of implementing policy change and systemic change. In addition, some partners noted that ILO systems and procedures have contributed to delays in implementation, in what is already a short timeframe.

The programme's management arrangements are effective but also have room for improvement. For the most part, time frames and workplans are adhered to across the three countries. The advisory committees at the Global level and in Ghana and South Africa are working effectively and are considered useful. Some members have suggested improvements. However, in Vietnam there is no such functioning body, because of administrative issues affecting all UN agencies and development partners in the country. The M&E system is considered appropriate and straightforward to use, although it is a work in progress, and could be used to better communicate with donors and project partners.

The programme does make efficient use of its financial and human resources but is understaffed. There are high workloads for a small number of staff, and a risk of burnout. It is however difficult to address some of these constraints within the ILO and donor's standard practices around recruitment and spending on staff.

There are early signs of the programme's *potential* impact. At the macro-level (Outcome 1), there are encouraging signs of national ownership and changes in employment policy, even at the mid-term point--although the impact of these policies cannot yet be seen. At the meso-level (Outcome 2), the country projects have made various inroads, but the effectiveness of sector-level interventions remains unclear. At the micro level (Outcome 2), there have been tangible improvements in efficiency in supported enterprises. The impact of the systemic approach is still to be seen, and there are opportunities to strengthen its implementation.

Gender and non-discrimination assessment

Gender inclusion is built into the global programme's objectives and systems, but its application on the ground and subsequent results varies significantly by pilot country and by ecosystem level. Ghana appears to have made the most progress at the micro-level because the selected sectors are dominated by women. At the macro level, in South Africa, the ILO-supported policies (the National Development Plan, the draft National Employment Policy, and the Sector Development Master Plans) address gender inclusion, as do the ILO-supported policies in Vietnam. On the whole, the programme is inconsistent when it comes to gender inclusion, this may in part be due to a lack of technical resources to mainstream gender. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming may not be sufficient - good practice in promoting gender equality is to use a 'twin track' approach: involving both mainstreaming and targeted interventions to address systemic inequalities.

The inclusion of PWDs was not integrated into the programme from the outset, nor has it been integrated subsequently, with virtually no results to show. Although it is a cross-cutting issue for the ILO (and included the ToRs for this evaluation), the programme has been quite vocal in stating this issue is among too many

cross-cutting issues being added to its objectives. To mainstream inclusion of PWDs, this would require changes in the programme design and likely, as with gender, additional resources. In addition, while the business case for gender is increasingly understood by private actors, that is not the case for disability inclusion. In addition to mainstreaming, the programme would need to invest heavily in raising awareness among all stakeholders.

Tripartism assessment

Globally, tripartism is central to ILO's work across different countries and all the levels of the programme as instruments of good governance and fostering an enabling environment for realization of decent work for all, as is evident in the representation of tripartite actors in the GSAC and PACs. Collaboration by government and its social partners at the macro level is influenced by the need for policies to drive the increase in productivity and the improvement of working conditions for employees across all sectors of the economy. These engagements are showing positive results in the progress made by the projects in the different countries. The assessment conducted on the PE4DW projects in the three pilot countries learned that the tripartite alliances are proving useful in the aiding the implementation of the programme. There are challenges and issues that impact the effectiveness of tripartite and social dialogues in Vietnam related to its state-led model of social dialogue and the challenging ODA environment where partners are more reluctant to engage.

Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders to prioritize social dialogue, build mutual trust and understanding, address structural inequalities, and ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making processes for the benefit of all citizens.

International labour standards assessment

The programme promotes several of the ILO's conventions and recommendations through its interventions at the three levels. At the policy-level its work promotes six different ILO conventions. Related to its work on gender equality and non-discrimination, the project promotes two ILO conventions.

The PE4DW programme strongly upholds the principles of the International Labour Standard for 'Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises' (R189), with SMEs as its ultimate beneficiary. If anything, the programme was initially criticized for being *too* focused on SMEs, and subsequently expanded its scope. The programme is less focused on R204, 'Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy,' although it is implementing aspects of this recommendation, through engagement with SMEs and supporting the creation of national employment policies and piloting an approach to formalisation in Ghana.

Environmental assessment

The PE4DW program integrates environmental sustainability in its strategic approach, albeit with varying emphasis across global and country-specific contexts. Country-specific projects demonstrate sensitivity towards local environmental issues, with a pronounced focus on sustainable development policies, gender imbalances, and emission reduction strategies in different sectors. Environmental sustainability was included as in country sector analyses and as a criterion for sector selection, and so was firmly incorporated in country-specific programs aligned to local environmental challenges. Project interventions currently being implemented included awareness raising, environmental training and coaching support with participating enterprises. Across Ghana, South Africa, and Vietnam interventions covered waste management, green growth, carbon accounting and emissions reduction strategies. The project also delivered knowledge and capacity strategies focusing on circularity models and energy-saving. It should be noted that current levels of enterprise engagement are quite modest. Environmental priorities might rank lower for enterprises, leading to relatively low levels of engagement. However, this can be managed by maintaining realistic impact expectations, and focusing on longer-term awareness raising, knowledge and capacity building and role-model promotion. While the project demonstrates a commitment to integrating environmental sustainability, there's a need to

strengthen systematic monitoring and documenting of environmental outcomes. This may require a tracking and communication mechanism to enhance progress visibility.

Capacity Development

Capacity development yields several positive effects and improvements in the short, medium, and long-term. In the short-term, the results of capacity building activities can already be seen in the form of improved efficiency at the enterprise (micro) level. At the sector (meso) level, capacity building activities have included support to sector associations to improve their functioning and improve the services they provide to their members. At the government (macro) level, there have been a myriad of capacity building activities under Outcome 1. The programme is building the internal capacity of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to improve productivity statistics through project TAGs. This has already had the effect of bringing siloed government departments together. While it is too early to assess long-term capacity development, the programme has the *potential* to yield significant benefits both in the medium and long term, contributing to productivity and decent work.

Lessons learned and Emerging good practices

All lessons learned, emerging good practices and recommendations listed here are intended for the programme as a whole. Country-level recommendations are included in Appendix 3.

Lessons learned

The following lessons stem from the main findings and conclusions. They are intended for the programme as a whole and are applicable to all three country projects. The full details of each lesson are included in ILO's template format in Appendix 1.

1. **Mainstreaming gender inclusion and non-discrimination:** Choosing sectors for project interventions that already include women (and potentially other marginalized groups) is a way of mainstreaming gender inclusion and non-discrimination within the programme.
2. **Strengthening engagement and embracing social dialogue:** For effective capacity building and ownership, engaging stakeholders using existing communication channels in an open and inclusive conversations to gain diverse perspectives, build consensus, and co-create solutions. This will help ensure cross-institutional needs and priorities of all relevant parties are taken into account, fostering ownership, trust, and collaboration towards achieving programme goals.
3. **Intervention design:** The intervention design should be carried out in a collaborative manner, feeding from partners' knowledge and sectoral direction. For a programme of this nature, it is most ideal to work in sectors that are of economic importance to key stakeholders, particularly in the public sector and policy side. This will bring an added push for these key stakeholders to execute activities and to see them to fruition. Local partners are well placed to understand the outlook of the intervention sectors and can guide the development of interventions to align with industry targets and government goals.
4. **Ecosystem approaches:** Adopting a more strategic and targeted ecosystem approach for interventions (and projects) is crucial. Future interventions should leverage more localised contexts, sector-specific partnerships, and resources to ensure more systematic and effective outcomes. A plan for strengthening and leveraging linkages, knowledge sharing, coordination, and cooperation amongst ecosystem actors and institutions is needed. This also requires dedicated resources (human and financial) and expertise.
5. **Programme timeframe:** ILO representatives have already articulated a disconnect between the programme's short timeframe (4 years including inception phase) and the ambitions of the project to achieve systemic change—which is a long-term goal. The challenges of this timeframe have already been evidenced in the inception period, intended to last six months, but which ran over. In addition, ILO's procedures (e.g. for recruiting and contracting) mean that some activities can be slow to start, when there is already little time for implementation.
6. **Under resourced with respect to staffing:** the team has experienced and is experiencing the effects of being understaffed: high workloads, requiring travel to widely dispersed locations; high turnover (which is also related to non-competitive levels of compensation), and a lack of in-house expertise to adequately address cross-cutting themes such as gender and environmental sustainability.

Emerging good practices

The following emerging good practices stem from the main findings, conclusions and lessons learned. As with lessons learned, they are intended for the programme as a whole, applicable to all three country projects. The full details of each emerging good practice are included in the ILO's template format in Appendix 2.

1. **Mainstreaming gender inclusion:** In Ghana, a major attribute of the sectors that works positively for the project is the predominance of women as workers and employers in both sectors chosen shea and

garments. This has eased the attainment of gender targets on the project. The share of women working by sector was one of the criteria in the project used in the sector selection process.

2. **Strengthening engagement and social dialogue:** In the case of South Africa, the project success in facilitating collaboration among social partners and government departments has led to reduced duplication of efforts and resources and enhanced the provision of demand-driven interventions, e.g., selection of the sector master plans. To achieve the desired results, the projects need to effectively engage stakeholders using existing communication channels in an open and inclusive conversations to gain diverse perspectives, build consensus, and co-create solutions.
3. **Intervention design:** The collaborative development of interventions with key partners aids buy-in and limits resistance. By working with industry players and actively seeking their input, interventions can be designed to best fit the capacity of the partners and state of the sector. For instance, the project will have a clearer sense of the level of technological advancement of the sector, which will in turn aid proffering solutions to address the gaps in line with the industry outlook.
4. **Solutions to address staffing resources constraints:** Although the team is affected by their small size relative to the large task of delivering this systemic change programme, there have been instances where country teams have made use of technical resources in other ways. They have made use of consultants e.g. in Ghana for the textiles sector the project brought in an international consultant to work with enterprises on exporting. However, this is not a sustainable systemic solution because this consultant's services would be unaffordable for enterprises. Country teams have found other creative ways to address staffing constraints, for example the project team in South Africa was able to draw expertise from other ILO current projects' staff to assist specific interventions when they had only one national project officer.

Recommendations

The following recommendations, applicable to the programme as a whole, flow logically from the evaluation's conclusions, lessons learned and good practices. A list of country-specific recommendations is included in Appendix 3—some country-level recommendations reflect these programme-wide recommendations (e.g. on mainstreaming gender inclusion and non-discrimination) whereas others are very country-specific (e.g. one recommendation is for securing a country project vehicle).

1. **Mainstream gender inclusion and non-discrimination through sector selection:** During design stage, in future country projects, choose sectors for project interventions that already include women (and potentially other marginalised groups, such as PWDs). Because sectors are chosen through tripartite dialogue, influencing the choice to include sectors that already include women and marginalised groups will likely require advocacy by the ILO and gender and equality champions within the other tripartite groups. The ILO must accept that ultimately, they have limited control over the outcome of sector selection. The design can be flexible depending on the difficulty of enhancing/achieving gender inclusion in a particular sector.²¹ In existing projects, the teams would benefit from using the programme's financial resources to bring in more capacity (e.g. consultants) to better integrate gender within the programme, potentially even going beyond gender mainstreaming to having targeted interventions.

In addition, the programme should clarify within ILO, PACs, and donors to what extent it is feasible to integrate activities specifically targeted at people with disabilities in the programme design, because of the programme resource constraints.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing

²¹ In addition, the evaluators acknowledge gender mainstreaming within sectors does not need to involve specifically selecting sectors dominated by women or PWDs. Instead, it involves making efforts to create awareness and support the development of policies and interventions that addresses the needs of women in all sectors.

ILO Programme management, Donors	PACs,	Medium	Medium	Short-term
----------------------------------	-------	--------	--------	------------

2. **Strengthen macro and meso level engagement and collaboration:** Continue to encourage constant knowledge exchange between bottom-up activities (BSO and enterprise support activities) and top-down policies. This will continue to help reduce wastage of resources and duplication of efforts and enhance demand driven interventions. The ILO country offices should continue to facilitate these engagements and collaborations with Tripartite partners and sector-level players to help streamline efforts, avoid redundancy, and maximize impact in addressing the needs and priorities of the partners and stakeholders.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Offices	High	Low	Short term

3. **Intervention design:** Improve communication with all relevant stakeholders during and after intervention design to improve understanding and reduce apprehension. Given the complexity of the sectors and the multitude of interventions required, partners need to clearly understand the goals of the project and how each intervention keys into the larger ecosystem to achieve results. An inadequacy of this information sharing can lead to stalling of partners.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Offices	Medium	Low	Short term

4. **Ecosystem approaches:** Consider focusing and integrating interventions by addressing key obstacles of targeted enterprises within one or two specific geographic areas and association clusters. Strengthen linkages and information sharing between enterprises and supporting services such as business and industry associations, provincial government departments and other key stakeholders. The adoption of a market systems development approach may be beneficial at enterprise- and sector levels. It's crucial to support and allocate sufficient resources to key stakeholders for the implementation of communication and co-learning activities, as these are foundational to the success of the project.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Programme management, ILO Country Offices	High	Medium-High	Medium term

5. **Increase programme timeframe:** increase the programme's timeframe (and associated resourcing) beyond the 4-year pilot to at least 5 years, not including inception. This is necessary to accommodate the programme's objectives of achieving systemic change, which includes policy change. Whether a no-cost extension or costed extension would be best may vary from country to country: it depends on the budgets of individual country projects and spend to date—some country projects are limited by time for implementation rather than their budget. Future country projects should have inception periods

longer than 6 months, potentially as long as one year to allow for the projects to establish themselves in terms of staffing, to identify and bring together tripartite partners, and to design the project using collaborative methods.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Programme management, ILO Department Heads, Donors	High	Medium - High	Medium term

6. **Optimize staffing:** The ILO should review and submit a revised staffing structure, in particular to address in-country administrative bottlenecks in projects (to help overburdened administrative staff) and bring in house more sector-focused and national technical expertise. This will require appealing to donors regarding policies on programme costs going to technical staff. Gaps in capacity may be addressed through the use of consultants (e.g. to bring in expertise in cross-cutting themes), but when doing so it is recommended that local consultants or staff are used wherever possible. Lastly, a more sustainable solution to address gaps in capacity would be to embed essential roles (e.g. services to enterprises) within partner organisations, as these are already part of the ecosystem and will remain when the projects end. This recommendation is made in conjunction with the recommendation below to improve the ILO's internal procedures.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Programme management, Donors	High	Medium - High	Medium term

7. **Peer Learning between Countries:** Facilitating knowledge exchange, experiences, and best practices, countries can learn from each other's successes and failures. These include innovative strategies, technologies, and policies that can be implemented in their own contexts and peer learning can also help facilitate social dialogue and cooperation among them.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Programme management, ILO Country Offices and Donors	Low	Low	Short term

8. **Improve (shorten) ILO internal procedures:** ILO systems and procedures have caused delays in PE4DW's implementation. Therefore, the programme would benefit from any and all efforts by the ILO to make their internal processes (e.g. for procurement and contracting) more efficient.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO administrative departments	High	Medium	Long term

Appendix 1: Lessons learned templates

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Jessica Rust-Smith

Date: 23 April 2024

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Mainstreaming gender inclusion and non-discrimination
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Choosing sectors for project interventions that already include women (and potentially other marginalised groups) is a way of mainstreaming gender inclusion and non-discrimination within the programme.
Context and any related preconditions	Depending on the country and sector, some are dominated by women (e.g. shea in Ghana) and other are not (e.g. automotives in South Africa).
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Women other marginalised groups e.g. People with Disabilities (PWDs)
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	In South Africa the intervention in the automotive sector does not include informal businesses, where more women and black-owned enterprises would be represented.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	In Ghana, a major attribute of the sectors that works positively for the project is the predominance of women as workers and employers in both sectors chosen—shea and garments. This has eased the attainment of gender targets on the project.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	This has ramifications for the design stage of future country projects. Because sectors are chosen through tripartite dialogue, influencing the choice to include sectors that already include women and marginalised groups will likely require advocacy by the ILO and gender and equality advocates within the other tripartite groups.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent

Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Cebisile Nyambe

Date: 26 April 2024

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Strengthening Engagement and Embracing Social Dialogue
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	For effective capacity building and ownership, engaging stakeholders using existing communication channels in an open and inclusive conversations to gain diverse perspectives, build consensus, and co-create solutions. This will help ensure cross-institutional needs and priorities of all relevant parties are taken into account, fostering ownership, trust, and collaboration towards achieving programme goals.
Context and any related preconditions	South Africa have established platforms for social dialogue, which have played a role in streamlining the interventions of the PE4DW programme, However, there is room for improvement strengthening and embracing social dialogue in other countries like Ghana and Vietnam in particular.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Governments, Industry Sectors, Labour Unions and the ultimate beneficiaries who are SMEs and Workers
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Conflicting interest and political landscape could hamper development efforts and difficulty in coordinating and aligning different perspective and goals. This could lead to delays and lack of buy-in from partners because of power dynamics.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	In South Africa, the project has leveraged the unique strengths and expertise of different partners to implement innovative solutions tailored to meet specific needs of the sectors selected and ensuring sustainable and impactful outcomes for all partners. Ghana and Vietnam, although they have made good progress, more can be done to foster better collaborations.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO staff to pay attention to balancing power dynamics and managing conflicting priorities and resource allocation. In a tripartite partnership, power dynamics can play a significant role in decision-making. Project team must navigate these dynamics carefully to ensure that all partners feel heard and valued in the design process and leverage the strengths of the partners and distribute resources equitably to meet the needs and expectations of all partners.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Kabir Lawal

Date: 26 April 2024

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON ELEMENT	LEARNED
Collaborative approach to designing interventions	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The intervention design should be carried out in a collaborative manner, feeding from partners' knowledge of the issues in the chosen sectors and the planned growth direction of the sectors as seen by its key stakeholders.
Context and any related preconditions	Ghana selected sectors of interest to the government of the country so that increases the incentive for the partners to drive activities.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO, Government, Trade Unions, Employers' Associations
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Non-engagement of partners at the intervention design phase risks using false assumptions in designing interventions. This raises the tendency for delays, limited buy-in and intervention failure.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The project team in Ghana utilized its engagements with high level government officials in the key ministries to guide intervention design. It was also used as a means for the partners to own the process of implementation.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The ILO should conduct stakeholder mapping to identify the most critical partners for collaboration in intervention designing. There may be several of these partners therefore the team should be prepared to bring them together for engagements when required.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Rodd Dyer

Date: 26 April 2024

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Ecosystem approaches
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Adopting a more strategic and targeted ecosystem approach for interventions (and projects) is crucial. Future interventions should leverage more localised contexts, sector-specific partnerships, and resources to ensure more systematic and effective outcomes. A plan for strengthening and leveraging linkages, knowledge sharing, coordination, and cooperation amongst ecosystem actors and institutions is needed. This also requires dedicated resources (human and financial) and expertise.
Context and any related preconditions	The PE4DW project has adopted a productivity ecosystem approach across a complex array of sectors, dimensions, institutional stakeholders, and operating scales in three target countries. The relevance and importance of an ecosystem approach was widely acknowledged by stakeholders and partners. The importance of improving policy, communication, coordination, and cooperation between macro-, meso- and micro-levels and institutions was a high priority.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO HQ and Country Project Leaders and Coordinators.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	- Achieving systematic change and impacts within a “productivity ecosystem” with such institutional complexity is highly challenging. An effective approach requires a clear strategy, dedicated human and financial resources, specialised expertise (similar to market-systems development experience) and a long-term investment horizon.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Staff, resources, design and implementation -

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Jessica Rust-Smith

Date: 26 April 2024

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Programme timeframe
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	ILO representatives have already articulated a disconnect between the programme's short timeframe (4 years including inception phase) and the ambitions of the project to achieve systemic change—which is a long-term goal. The challenges of this timeframe have already been evidenced in the inception period, intended to last six months, but which ran over. In addition, ILO's procedures (e.g. for recruiting and contracting) mean that some activities can be slow to start, when there is already little time for implementation.
Context and any related preconditions	Achieving systemic change is a process that takes a long time. PE4DW's goals for ecosystem change also include changes in policy (the macro-level, Outcome 1) which also can take a long time. Lastly, the projects are operating in challenging country contexts (e.g. where there is macro-economic instability, or governments unsupportive of ODA projects), which adds to the time needed for implementation.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Country ecosystems and their tripartite actors
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	The challenges of this timeframe have already been evidenced in the inception period, intended to last six months, but which ran over due to delays such as challenges with recruitment.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The country teams have made good progress at the activity level during implementation thus far.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO Programme management, ILO Department Heads, and Donors would need to discuss an extension to the programme timeframe and associated resources required.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Jessica Rust-Smith

Date: 26 April 2024

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Under resourced with respect to staffing
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The team (programme and country teams) has experienced and is experiencing the effects of being understaffed: high workloads, requiring travel to widely dispersed locations; high turnover (which is also related to non-competitive levels of compensation), and a lack of in-house expertise to adequately address cross-cutting issues such as gender and environmental sustainability.
Context and any related preconditions	ILO teams are normally lean, so staffing arrangements for PE4DW are not unusual; however, given the systems approach being used—involving interventions across micro, meso and macro levels, the multiple geographies covered in each geography, and the need to integrate cross-cutting issues it is clear teams would benefit from more staff resources.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	The PE4DW programme team and project teams
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	The effects of being understaffed include high workloads and high turnover (although the latter is also related to non-competitive levels of compensation).
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The team is delivering effectively given its small size and has made use of consultants or seconded ILO staff to address some of their gaps in capacity.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	ILO Programme management and donors will need to agree what increase in resources for staffing (and/or consultants) is acceptable.

Appendix 2: Emerging good practices templates

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Jessica Rust-Smith

Date: 23 April 2024

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Mainstreaming gender inclusion
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	In Ghana, a major attribute of the sectors that works positively for the project is the predominance of women as workers and employers in both sectors chosen—shea and garments. This has eased the attainment of gender targets on the project. The share of women working by sector was one of the criteria in the project used in the sector selection process.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	In Ghana, the shea and garment sectors have many female workers. In any given country there will be sectors where there is a relatively large proportion of women workers. These sectors would need to be identified on a country-by-country and sector-by-sector basis.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Because the tripartite actors in Ghana chose for sector-level interventions two sectors where there is a relatively large proportion of women workers, women are well represented in the country project's results.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Women MSME owners; For the KPI 'Nr. of beneficiary MSMEs' 40/61 (66%) are female owned (PE4DW Ghana Performance Plan)
Potential for replication and by whom	This could potentially be replicated in the design stage of future country projects. Because sectors are chosen through tripartite dialogue, influencing the choice to include sectors that already include women and marginalised groups will likely require advocacy by the ILO and gender and equality advocates within the other tripartite groups.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	With reference to The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25, this emerging good practice links to point 27 'Advancing a transformative agenda to achieve gender equality at work' and point 49 d) 'Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan means that by 2025 the ILO will have...reinforced its activities for the most disadvantaged or vulnerable in the world of work...with focus on a transformative agenda for gender equality and the informal economy'
Other documents or relevant comments	PE4DW Program Gender Strategy (October 2019)

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent

Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Cebisile Nyambe

Date: 26 April 2024

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD ELEMENT	PRACTICE	Strengthening Engagement and Social Dialogue
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	In the case of South Africa, the project success in enforcing collaboration among social partners and government departments has led to reduced duplication of efforts and resources and enhanced the provision of demand-driven interventions, e.g., selection of the sector master plans. To achieve desired results the projects, need to effectively engage stakeholders using existing communication channels in an open and inclusive conversations to gain diverse perspectives, build consensus, and co-create solutions.	
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The availability of existing social dialogue structure like the National Economic and Development Labour Council (NEDLAC) where government, employers and labour unions are represented has enabled the PE4DW project through the ILO long term involvement with this structure to have access to relevant partners and departments that are crucial in aiding the implementation of the project initiatives and leveraging resources.	
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The role played by ILO within the tripartite partners resulted in the project being able to carefully select relevant expertise and individuals who form part of the PAC, which is the driving force for the project as they have high level of authority in decisions relating to issues of productivity, employment and decent work and providing guidance on other relevant stakeholders who are adding value to the project interventions.	
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Institutionalized capacity development programmes within the government departments, sector bodies and enterprises. The KAIZEN training programme by Productivity SA to SMEs has seen an increase in their production efficiency.	
Potential for replication and by whom	Institutionalizing capacity programmes is applicable and can be replicated in any sector of the economy. Example is the project work with Government Statistics Services, this we see both in South Africa and Ghana. Government and social partners including local and international development organizations can make use of the lessons from this project.	
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	The ILO Strategic Plan (2022-25) explicitly highlight the role of the ILO in advocating for social and economic policy responses, focusing on four pillars, where the fourth pillars speak to relying on social dialogue for solutions . Strengthening engagement and social dialogue in the respective countries and beyond will ensure that this pillar is achieved by 2025.	
Other documents or relevant comments	The involvement of social partners in the drafting of the Decent Work Country programmes (DWCPs), National Development Plans and Policies including the National Employment Policy in the case of South Africa will ensure that stakeholders have a voice and a role to play in their country's development agenda.	

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Kabir Lawal

Date: 26 April 2024

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO INTERVENTION DESIGNING
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	During the inception phase, the collaborative development of interventions with key partners on productivity, employment and decent work aids collective buy-in and limits partner resistance in the implementation phase.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Some of such collaborative approaches may be required with private sector players. The absence of a structured body or association with an understanding of the lower-level challenges can impede the effectiveness of this approach at the sectoral level. The absence of a worker or employee association in shea is an example.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The ILO actively engaged organizations such as the Ministry of Trade and Investments (MOTI) in the designing of interventions. The ministry used these high-level interactions to provide direction for the project. The engagements also helped in increasing the ownership of these partners in the project.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The consultative meetings with the MOTI held in Q3 2022. These deliberations provide a platform for ILO to understand the specific policies that are relevant to this project, matters arising on those policies and actions needed to be taken to align with the government direction while keeping an eye on the project targets.
Potential for replication and by whom	The ILO can adopt this approach in other projects of similar types. Proper partner identification is required through a stakeholder mapping exercise.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This approach is in line with the pillars representing the responsibilities of the ILO. This approach is a method of using social dialogue for solutions. In the long term, it ensures stimulation of the economy by addressing the actual root causes of the problems which the local players are best suited to identify.
Other documents or relevant comments	Effective communication among partners in collaboration is important so information asymmetry is prevented most especially when multiple interventions are designed.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Jessica Rust-Smith

Date: 26 April 2024

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Solutions to address staffing resources constraints
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Although the team is affected by their small size relative to the large task of delivering this systemic change programme, there have been instances where country teams have made use of technical resources in other ways. They have made use of consultants e.g. in Ghana for the textiles sector the project brought in an international consultant to work with enterprises on exporting. However, this is not a sustainable systemic solution because this consultant's services would be unaffordable for enterprises. The country teams have also made use of 'borrowed' staff from other ILO programmes to address cross-cutting issues e.g. in South Africa an ILO staff member from a different team was helping the PE4DW project on issues of environmental sustainability with respect to New Energy Vehicles (NEVs).
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Bringing in non-project staff to deliver project activities is relevant when existing staff are overstretched, and to not bring in external technical capacity would mean the project could not deliver a particular activity. However, when bringing in external resources, consideration should be given to whether or not this is a sustainable solution
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Because the projects brought in non-project experts (either as consultants or ILO staff from other projects) the project was able to deliver on activities that they would not have been able to deliver otherwise.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	This benefits project staff, lightening their heavy workloads; it benefits the project—enabling it to continue to deliver in a timely fashion and it benefits those who may be receiving direct support from those external experts e.g. enterprises.
Potential for replication and by whom	This approach can be adopted by the PE4DW programme to address similar instances where there are gaps in capacity, but in the long term a more sustainable solution should be found.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	With reference to The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25, this emerging good practice tangentially links to point 48 'Optimizing the use of ILO resource: In addition to investing in recruitment and retention of high quality and diversified staff...the Office will explore and encourage innovation in working methods to promote teamwork...'
Other documents or relevant comments	

Appendix 3: Country-specific recommendations

Ghana

1. The ILO should increase the focus on people with disabilities to increase their employability in the sectors. Some enterprises have started processes to employ these individuals. There is a general need for guidance on how to go about the process.
2. The ILO should speed up interventions at the meso level which can help it increase the number of enterprises engaged. The meso level activities appear to be the ones with the least traction.
3. The PAC and its member institutions should be constantly reminded of the M&E framework, so the stakeholders have a view of where things are. This will reduce the risk of lagging behind. They currently receive updates twice yearly prior to the meetings. This risks the slowing of some activities which may impact the final results.
4. The team should increase external communication to better showcase activities and accomplishments. This will involve increasing interactions on its social media handles and sending out publications and/or newsletters to its key partners.
5. The ILO should review staffing requirements to meet current needs. This will reduce the burden on the already hired staff and can improve their work efficiency.
6. The availability of a programme vehicle will increase efficiency and reduce the risk of exposure to commercial drivers which the team currently faces as a result of using car rental companies for their local logistics.

South Africa

1. Long-term support to allow for full implementation of the proposed National Employment Policy
2. Understanding the challenges faced by different enterprises and sector partners, working with them to identify bottlenecks and work out solutions and approaches to address them and provide value-added services. This will avoid providing standardized solutions to unique problems faced by stakeholders, e.g., training tools, and prevent enterprises from double dipping on support.
3. A clear plan on how the project plan delivers and monitors its cross-cutting issues of gender equality, non-discrimination, including people with disability, and environmental sustainability.
4. Peer learning between countries to share and learn from each other.
5. As the project is big on capacity development, gathering lessons from its intervention for possible replication, it will be necessary to invite the participation of the Department of Higher Education to the PAC as they are suitably placed to address the skills crises in the country and ensure proper skills for the economy are being developed across all industries and sectors of the economy, which aligns with the world of work.
6. Inclusion of textile and automotive workers in the informal sector and possible involvement of the community constituency member in the PAC in the spirit of Leave No One Behind²².

Vietnam

1. Expedite the process for CIEM to formally become the Project Owner in Vietnam and allocate sufficient resources to enable effective coordination of public-private platforms and delivery of policy-dialogue initiatives across Ministries, institutions and partners.

²² We acknowledge that this recommendation might not be feasible given the stage at which the project is in, however, it could be considered for future programming of similar interventions.

2. Prioritize allocation of resources towards tasks related to gender and social inclusion, partnership engagement, knowledge sharing, outreach, and communication. Promote cross-institutional and cross-Ministerial engagement and participation, especially focusing on the tripartite partners: ILO, Government, VGCL, and VCCI. Clarify and strengthen the role of VCCI and VGCL in the project.
3. As forming a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) is currently not feasible, enhance engagement and communication with key PAC stakeholders by exploring initiatives like informal dialogues, roundtables, and regular project reporting and planning meetings.
4. Refine the strategic focus of Outcome 2 interventions and promote communication and knowledge-sharing between intervention activities. Consider assigning a strategic outreach-communication coordinator and developing a project-wide knowledge sharing plan.
5. Enhance engagement at the sector level, encouraging constant knowledge exchange between bottom-up activities (BSO and enterprise support activities) and top-down policies.
6. Implement measures to scale the beneficial findings from the business support interventions. Prioritize stakeholder engagement in any effort to scale or replicate interventions in other regions or sectors to ensure a high stakeholder buy-in. The ILO Vietnam team could facilitate a knowledge sharing workshop or similar, with project BSOs and other training and consulting partners to explore some ideas and suggestions for scaling mechanisms they could pilot.²³
7. Address delays in procurement and contracting by requesting authorization for simplified administrative practices which are being applied in other project offices.

²³ Some interesting ideas that emerged from interviews with businesses that could contribute to scaling included:

1. One business owner was part of a long established informal social network of similar businesses who shared information and regularly helped each other out when needed. These social networks could be better understood and explored for knowledge sharing, referrals and group learning.
2. Some BSO's appeared to have very good knowledge of and links to Government funding support for business training.
3. Engaging and supporting groups of capable businesswomen, particularly those that may not initially be very visible, may also be a model for more efficient scaling of training and consulting services.

Appendix 4: List of persons interviewed

S.N.	Name	Organization	Designation (Role)	E-mail	Mode of interview*
Global					
1	Luca Fedi,	ILO	Technical Specialist, Employment Dept.	fedi@ilo.org	Online
2	Jean Francois Klein	ILO	Head, Employment Department Management Unit	kleinj@ilo.org	Online
3	Dragan Radic	ILO	Chief, MSME Branch, Enterprises Dept.	radic@ilo.org	Online
4	Stephan Ulrich	ILO	PE4DW Programme Manager	ulrich@ilo.org	Online
5	Rie Vejs-Kjeldgaard	ILO	Department Director, Enterprises	vejs@ilo.org	Online
6	Na Eun Mun	ILO	PE4DW Project Officer, Enterprises Dept.	mun@ilo.org	Online
7	Michael Watt	ILO	ACTRAV	watt@ilo.org	Online
8	Roberto Villamil	ILO	ACT/EMP	villamilr@ilo.org	Online
Ghana					
1	David Marcos	ILO	Project Manager	marcos@ilo.org	Personal
2	Dr. Forster Boateng	Tree Crop Development Authority	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	orleansboateng@gmail.com	Personal
3	Mrs. Laceera Zakaria	Yumzaa Shea Processing Centre	Chief Executive Officer	yumzaalaceera@yahoo.com	Personal
4	Prince Asafu-Adjaye	Trade Union Congress (TUC)	Deputy Director, Research and Policy	princeb65@hotmail.com	Personal
5	Anthony Oduro-Denkyirah	Ghana Statistical Service (GSS)	Focal Person, Economic Unit	anthony.oduro@statsghana.gov.gh	Personal
6	Haruna Haleem	Gratis Foundation	Regional Manager, Northern Region	kaleemharuna@yahoo.com	Personal
7	Harry Sarpong	Sekaf Limited	Head of Human Resources	hsarpong@sekafghana.com	Personal

8	Charlotte Esenam Afudego	SECO	Private Sector Development & Trade Specialist	charlotte.afudego@eda.admin.ch	Personal
9	Magdalena Wüst	SECO	Deputy Head of Cooperation	magdalena.wuest@eda.admin.ch	Personal
10	Gloria Bortele Noi	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR)	Director, Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	gloria.noi@melr.gov.gh	Personal
11	Carolyn Kuuzegh Ansoah	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations	Project Officer, Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	carolyn.kuuzegh@melr.gov.gh	Personal
12	Kingsley Laar	Ghana Employers Association (GEA)	Senior Research Officer, Research and Policy	kingsleylaar@ghanaemployers.com.gh	Personal
13	Cudjoe Enoch	ILO	National Programme Coordinator – Employment Policy	cudjoe@ilo.org	Personal
14	Onoma Asiedu	ILO	National Programme Coordinator – Enterprise Development	asiedu@ilo.org	Personal
15	Fredrick Pappoe	NORAD	Senior Advisor (Politics, Health, Economy)	Fredrick.Pappoe@mfa.no	Personal
16	Nana Poquah A. A. Adiamah	Association of Ghana Apparel Manufacturers (AGAM)	National Coordinator	agamofghana@gmail.com	Personal
17	Wumbe Abdulahi	Ghana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU)	Regional Officer		Personal
18	Felicia Kraja	Trade Union Congress	Regional Officer, Northern Region		Personal
19	Moses Laar	Sixteen47 Limited	Head of Compliance	mosessixteen47@gmail.com	Personal
20	Janet Agyarko	Damaris and Garments	Chief Executive Officer	jane@damarisdgarments.com	Personal
South Africa					
1	Ms. Beverley Jack	Business Unity South Africa (BUSA)	Designation Role - Member representative	bevjservices@gmail.com	Personal
2	Mr. Sipho Ndebele	Department of Employment and Labour	Chief Director of International Relations	Sipho.Ndebele@labour.gov.za	Online

3	Ms. Pretty Zondo	Productivity SA	Senior Productivity Advisor	prettyz@Productivitysa.co.za	Personal
4	Ms. Amelia Naidoo	Productivity SA	Acting Executive Manager	AmeliaN@Productivitysa.co.za	Personal
5	Dr. Aneline Chetty	Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC)	Chief Operations Officer	achetty@thedtic.gov.za	Online
6	Ms. Nerisha Jairaj	SAFLEC South African Footwear and Lether	Executive Director	nerisha@saflec.co.za	Online
7	Mr. Shakespear Mudombi	SECO (Swiss Embassy)	National Programme Officer	shakespear.mudombi@eda.admin.ch	Personal
8	Mr. Daniel Lauchenauer	SECO (Swiss Embassy)	Head of Corporation of South Africa	daniel.lauchenauer@eda.admin.ch	Personal
9	Mr. Thompson Nii Moi	ILO	Chief Technical Advisor	thompsonn@ilo.org	Personal
10	Mr. Monde Nyanginstsimbi	ILO	National Project Officer Employment	nyanginstsimbi@ilo.org	Personal
11	Ms. Tendai Matika	ILO	National Project Officer Enterprise	matika@ilo.org	Online
12	Ms. Matilda Dahlquist	ILO	Technical officer	dahlquist@ilo.org	Online
13	Ms. Chriselda Tabane	ILO	Finance and Admin Assistant	tabane@ilo.org	Personal
14	Mr. Jens Dyring Christensen	ILO	Senior Specialist: Enterprise	dyring@ilo.org	Online
15	Ms. Sindile Moitse	ILO	Programme Officer	moitse@ilo.org	Online
16	Mr. Bernd Mueller	ILO-ITC	Manager Employment Policy & Analysis	b.mueller@itcilo.org	Online
17	Ms. Louisa Nxumalo	COSATU	Coordination Service Practitioner	louisa@cosatu.org.za	Personal
18	Ms. Lebalang Molobele	NACAAM	Project Manager Skills Development	lebalang@naacam.co.za	Personal

19	Ms. Desire Manamela	Statistics SA	Chief Director Labour Statistics	desireem@statssa.gov.za	Online
20	Mr. Claude Pillay	AIDC	Department Manager ESD	cpilay@aidc.co.za	Online
21	Ms. Keranisha Reddy	Palm Footwear	Assistant Accountant	keranisha@palm.co.za	Personal
22	Mr. Rishalan Govendor	Palm Footwear	Team Leader Clicking Department	rishalan@palm.co.za	Personal
23	Mr. Khayelihle Makhathini	Palm Footwear	Manager Closing Department	khayelihle@palm.co.za	Personal
24	Mr. Tyran Pillay	Angel Footwear	Production Manager	tyran@angelfootwear.co.za	Personal
25	Mr. Linga Moodley	Angel Footwear	Clicking Department Supervisor	linga@angelfootwear.co.za	Personal
26	Mr. Pragasen Naidoo	Expert AutoTrim	Director/Owner	pragasen@expertautotrim.co.za	Personal
Vietnam					
1	Ms. Gulmira Asanbaeva	International Labour Organisation	International Programme Manager, Vietnam	asanbaeva@ilo.org	Personal
2	Mr Phung Duc Hoang	International Labour Organisation	National Project Coordinator	duchoang@ilo.org	Personal
3	Ms. Tran Nhu Trang	Swiss Import Promotion Programme Viet Nam (SIPPO)	SIPPO Country Representative	tran.nhutrang@sippon.vn	Personal
4	Mr. Karl Tran	STI Consulting	President	k.tran@stivina.com	Personal
5	Ms. Truong Chi Binh	Vietnam Association of Supporting Industries	Vice President- General Secretary/ Head of Research and Data Dept.	truongchibinh@gmail.com	Personal
6	Pham Hai Phong	Vietnam Association of Supporting Industries	Member of Executive Committee	phamhaiphong@visa.org.vn	
7	Ms Thai Quyen	Institute of Labour Studies and Social Affairs (ILSSA) under Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs	Senior Researcher		Personal
8	Đinh Văn Sỹ	Duc Hop enterprise	Production manager		Personal

9	Nguyen Thi Hong	Duc Hop enterprise	Human Resource manager		
10	Mr. Do Quang Huy	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs	Senior National Program Officer	huy.doquang@eda.admin.ch	Personal
11	Mr Ngo Xuan Lieu	National Public Employment Service Center	Director of the National Public Employment Centre	lieungoxuan67@gmail.com	Personal
12	Mr. Tran Kien Dung	ProFM Vietnam, LTD	Vice Director	dungtk.vn@gmail.com	Personal
13	Mr Dao Hong Son	ProFM Vietnam, LTD	Director	thesonxx@gmail.com	
14	Mai Phuong TBT	TBT Vietnam	Head of Notification & Enquiry Division	maiphuong@tbt.gov.vn	Personal
15	Pham Le Cuong	Director for Standards, Metrology and Quality under Ministry of Science and Technology	Vice chief Office	phamlecuong@tc.gov.vn	
16	Ms. Mette Moglestue	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation	Deputy head of mission/Counsellor	mette.moglestue@mfa.no	Personal
17	Dang Tran Thuy	Kyoyo Investment Casting Ltd.	General Director	thuysceo@kyoyo.vn	Personal
18	Ms Vu Thi Thu Thuy	General Statistics Office	Head of Department		Personal
19	Mr. Nguyen Tung Lam	Vietnam National Productivity Institute under Ministry of Science and Technology	Deputy Director General	ntlam@vnpi.vn	Online
20	Ms. Ingrid Christensen	International Labour Organisation	Country Director	christensen@ilo.org	Online
21	Ms Tran Binh Minh	Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM) under Ministry of Planning and Investments (MPI)	Deputy Head, Sectoral Policies Department of CIEM-MPI	tbminh78@gmail.com	Online
22	Mr. Tran Le Huy	Forestry Products Association	Vice Chairman and General Secretary	tranlehuy50@gmail.com	Online
23	Ms. Pham Thi Thu Lan	Viet Nam General	Deputy head of the Institute for	phamthithulaniwtu@gmail.com	Online

		Confederation of Labour	Workers and Trade Unions		
24	Mr. Le Van Khuong	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Technical Assistance Center under MPI	Director	khuong.levan@gmail.com	Online
25	Ms. Mai Hong Ngoc	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Manager Bureau for Employers' Activities	hongngocmai@gmail.com	Online

* Personal interview, group interview, telephonic interview, Skype based interview etc.

Appendix 5: Data collection instruments: Key Informant Interview (KII) guides

Free, Prior and Informed Consent

All interviews will begin by providing interviewees with full information about the purpose of the interview in order to secure their Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

“Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. The Canopy Lab is conducting a Mid-Term Evaluation of the ILO’s Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Programme (PE4DW). This evaluation has been commissioned by the ILO and its donors the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

We are talking to you today because we believe you have important insights to share given your experience as a stakeholder in the PE4DW Programme. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Should you decline to participate, this will not in any way affect your involvement in the PE4DW Programme.

This data is being collected by The Canopy Lab, a consulting company, in order to generate this evaluation. Your responses will be stored securely on The Canopy Lab’s Drive. The information you share with me today will not be shared with anyone outside of the ILO, SECO and NORAD and The Canopy Lab team. Should we wish to quote you in the evaluation report we will seek your explicit consent first. The final report will be shared on the ILO EVAL website.

I will be asking you a series of questions, but you are free to refuse to answer, and you are free to stop the interview at any time. I believe our conversation will take approximately 60 minutes.

Do you have any other questions or concerns before we start?

Do you give your consent to proceed with the interview?

Interviewee provided consent to continue? [Yes – proceed / No – do not proceed]

Do you give your consent for me to record this conversation?”

If the answer is yes, start recording

Notes regarding KII guides:

- The use of *italics* indicates instructions for the interviewer, including probing questions they might ask.
- The guides are guides and will not be used verbatim by the interviewers: each country and each stakeholder within each country is unique and requires that the interviewer prepare accordingly, e.g. referring to PE4DW’s country-specific interventions, and adjusting terminology so that it will be understood in a given context.

Government Stakeholder KII guide

- a. What work do you/your department currently do in cooperation with the ILO's Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work (PE4DW) programme?
 - i. *Prompts: are they a member of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC)?*
 - ii. *For Outcome 1 work might include productivity statistics; policy dialogue and coordination; capacity development [interviewer to describe country-specific national and sectoral interventions];*
 - iii. *For Outcome 2 work might include the selection of sectors for interventions [interviewer to describe country-specific sectoral interventions].*

1. Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention

- a. Are the objectives of Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work (PE4DW) intervention [interviewer to explain PE4DW objective and outcomes²⁴] consistent with Government/your department's priorities? (EQ 1.1)
- b. Is the PE4DW project intervention linked to and coherent with the government's national development frameworks [interviewers to refer to country-specific frameworks]? (EQ 1.3)
 - i. Is the project aligned with national-level policies on gender equality and non-discrimination including inclusion of people with disabilities [interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood]? (EQ1.4)

2. Validity of intervention design

- a. How well do the chosen interventions and activities [interviewer to describe country-specific national and sectoral interventions] address the challenges to productivity at the national level and in the two sectors selected for project interventions? (EQ 2.3)

[The following questions are applicable to government actors who are members of the PE4DW National Advisory Committees, also called Project Advisory Committee (PAC), but not to other government actors not involved in the PAC (except in the case of Vietnam, where there is no PAC, but certain stakeholders are involved in project plans, these questions are applicable to those stakeholders).]

- a. Has the inception phase been used effectively to design the country's project strategy? (EQ 2.1)
 - i. *If yes, please explain how:*
 - ii. *If there were challenges with inception, please explain:*
- b. Based on your experience participating in the design phase, what lessons can be learned for the design of future projects that intend to apply a PE4DW or similar approaches, either in new sectors in this country, or in other countries? (EQ 2.4)

²⁴ 'The overall objective of the programme is to promote a productivity ecosystem that creates productivity and decent work gains at macro, sectoral, and enterprise levels...[with] two outcomes:
 Outcome 1: Increased capacity of ILO constituents and key ministries to formulate and implement national employment policies and productivity frameworks.
 Outcome 2: Sectoral and enterprise constraints to productivity and decent work addressed and relaxed.'
 (Terms of Reference: Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation)

- c. Did the project design take into account the following, and if so, please explain how:
 - i. Gender equality and non-discrimination?
 - ii. Inclusion of people with disabilities?
 - iii. Environmental sustainability? (EQ 2.5)

3. Intervention progress and effectiveness

- a. Is the project on track to deliver its outputs in your country (*interviewer to specifically ask with respect to country-specific Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 regarding employment policies and productivity frameworks, which are particular to this stakeholder*)? (EQ 3.1)
- b. What obstacles did the project encounter in project implementation [*with respect to the outcomes/outputs this government department has been involved in*]?
 - i. What corrective action does the project need to take to achieve its objectives? (EQ 3.2)
 - 1. *Prompts: What problems could be avoided next time? What are some alternative approaches?*
- c. Has the project taken specific measures (in implementation) to address issues relating to the following [*interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood*]? And if so, please explain how:
 - i. Gender equality and non-discrimination?
 - ii. Inclusion of people with disabilities?
 - iii. Environmental sustainability? (EQ 3.3)

4. Effectiveness of management arrangements

[These questions are applicable to government actors who members of the PE4DW National Advisory Committees are, also called Project Advisory Committee (PAC), but not to other government actors not involved in the PAC]

- a. [*For government stakeholders in Ghana and South Africa only*] Is the National Advisory Committee, also called the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), functioning as it should?
 - i. [*For all countries, including Vietnam*] Do you feel you are able to make a meaningful contribution to the project that is valued? (EQ 4.2)
- b. Does the ILO report to you on progress on the project? If so, does this reporting provide you with the information you need to work effectively? (EQ 4.4)
 - i. Does it include information about project results with respect to gender equality and non-discrimination and environmental sustainability? (EQ 4.3)

5. Efficiency of resource usage

These questions are not applicable to tripartite stakeholders.

6. Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention

- a. Do you feel ownership of this project and its outcomes for productivity and decent work? Do you think the project has increased the capacity within your institution *[e.g. in South Africa with respect to producing productivity statistics]*? (EQ 6.1)
- b. How likely is it that the policy changes (or planned policy changes) are going to contribute to fostering a conducive environment for productivity enhancements and improved working conditions? (EQ 6.2) *[At this early stage in implementation this question is asking interviewees to look ahead at possible impacts.]*
 - i. How likely are these changes to advance gender equality and the inclusion of people with disability in 'the world of work'? (EQ 6.8)
- c. Have you seen, or do you expect to see, interconnected benefits and improvements that have arisen / might arise from the combined effect of policy, sector, and enterprise interventions *[PE4DW's systemic approach]*? (EQ 6.5)

Employer Stakeholder KII guide

These questions apply to business representatives e.g. sector associations.

- a. What work do you/ your organisation currently do in cooperation with the ILO's Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work (PE4DW) programme?
 - i. *Prompts: are they a member of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC)?*
 - ii. *For Outcome 1 work might include policy dialogue and coordination [interviewer to describe country-specific national and sectoral interventions];*
 - iii. *For Outcome 2 work might include the selection of sectors for interventions and/or implementation of interventions [interviewer to describe country-specific sectoral interventions].*

1. Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention

- a. Are the objectives of Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work (PE4DW) intervention *[interviewer to explain PE4DW objective and outcomes²⁵]* consistent with your activities as a partner? (EQ 1.1)
- b. Within the context of your interventions, are the project activities aligned with issues on gender equality and social inclusion, including inclusion of people with disabilities *[interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood]*? (EQ1.4)

2. Validity of intervention design

²⁵ *'The overall objective of the programme is to promote a productivity ecosystem that creates productivity and decent work gains at macro, sectoral, and enterprise levels...[with] two outcomes:
Outcome 1: Increased capacity of ILO constituents and key ministries to formulate and implement national employment policies and productivity frameworks.
Outcome 2: Sectoral and enterprise constraints to productivity and decent work addressed and relaxed.'*
(Terms of Reference: Productivity Eco-Systems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation)

- a. Are the programme's objectives appropriate for achieving planned results that have been set out with your organisation? (EQ 2.2)
 - i. *If yes, please explain how:*
 - ii. *If not, please explain why not:*
- b. What are the underlying causes of poor productivity and working condition challenges in your country [*for stakeholders operating at the macro-level*] or in this sector [*for stakeholders operating at the meso-level*]? (EQ 2.3)
 - i. How well do the chosen PE4DW interventions and activities [*interviewer to describe country-specific national and sectoral interventions*] address these challenges? (EQ 2.3)
- c. What changes/alternate approaches would you recommend be made to the current approach if such an intervention was to be carried out at another time (in a different country or sector)? (EQ 2.4)

3. Intervention progress and effectiveness

- a. Is the project on track to deliver its outputs in your organisation (*interviewer to specifically ask with respect to country-specific Outputs under the 'meso-level' of the ToC – sector constraints identified and addressed; dialogue and capacity development of sector stakeholders*)? (EQ 3.1)
- b. What obstacles (internal and external) did your organisation encounter in project implementation? (EQ 3.2)
 - i. What corrective action does the project need to take to achieve its objectives? (EQ 3.2)
- c. What factors (a) facilitate and (b) limit the project's contribution/potential contribution to [*interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood*]:
 - i. Gender equality and non-discrimination? (EQ 3.5)
 - ii. Inclusion of people with disabilities? (EQ 3.5)
 - iii. Environmental sustainability? (EQ 3.3)

4. Effectiveness of management arrangements

[These questions are applicable to employer representatives who members of the PE4DW National Advisory Committees are, also called Project Advisory Committee (PAC), but not to other employer representatives not involved in the PAC]

- c. Is the National Advisory Committee, also called the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), functioning as it should? Do you feel you are able to make a meaningful contribution to the project that is valued? (EQ 4.2)
- d. Does the ILO report to you on progress on the project? If so, does this provide you with the information you need to work effectively? (EQ 4.4)
 - i. Does it include information about project results with respect to gender equality and social inclusion and environmental sustainability? (EQ 4.3)

5. Efficiency of resource usage

These questions are not applicable to Employer stakeholders.

6. Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention

- a. Does your organisation feel ownership of the interventions and outcomes for productivity and decent work? Do you think the project has increased the capacity within your institution? (EQ 6.1)
- b. What changes have you observed within your organisation following the implementation of the interventions? (EQ 6.4)
 - i. How likely are these changes to advance gender equality and the inclusion of people with disability in 'the world of work' *[interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood]*? (EQ 6.8)
- c. Have you seen, or do you expect to see, benefits and improvements that have arisen / might arise from the combined effect of policy, sector, and enterprise interventions *[macro, meso and micro-levels, PE4DW's systemic approach]*? (EQ 6.5)

SMEs/Enterprise Stakeholder KII guide

These questions apply to SMEs, the ultimate beneficiaries of the programme.

- a. What work do you/ your SME/enterprise currently do in cooperation with the ILO's Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work (PE4DW) programme?
 - i. *Prompts: For Outcome 2 work might include enterprise capacity building, adoption of advanced technology, R&D [interviewer to describe country-specific sectoral interventions].*

1. Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention

- a. Has the support you have received from the project met your needs as an SME/enterprise? (EQ 1.1)
- b. Does your SME/enterprise have any mandate regarding gender equality and social inclusion, including inclusion of people with disabilities *[interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood]*? (EQ1.4)

2. Validity of intervention design

- a. Has your enterprise struggled with low productivity and/or challenging conditions for workers? If so, what have been the causes of these challenges? (EQ 2.3)
 - i. How well does the support you receive from PE4DW address these challenges? (EQ 2.3)
- b. Based on your experience, what changes/alternate approaches would you recommend be made to the current project support if it was to be carried out at another time (in a different country or sector)? (EQ 2.4)

3. Intervention progress and effectiveness

- a. Is the project on track to deliver its intended results for enterprise (*interviewer to refer to outputs under Outcome 2 discussed in opening question*)? (EQ 3.1)
- b. What challenges (internal to your enterprise and external to your enterprise) did your enterprise encounter in working towards the intended results from the project activities? (EQ 3.2)
 - i. What corrective action does the project need to take to address these challenges? (EQ 3.2)
- c. If your SME/enterprise has mandate regarding gender equality and social inclusion, including inclusion of people with disabilities [*interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood*], and/or environmental sustainability:
 - i. Has the PE4DW project support helped you improve in these areas? (EQ 3.3)
 - ii. What factors (a) help and (b) prevent the project from helping you address these areas (EQ 3.5)

4. Effectiveness of management arrangements

These questions are not applicable to SME stakeholders.

5. Efficiency of resource usage

These questions are not applicable to SME stakeholders.

6. Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention

- a. What changes have you observed within your enterprise following the implementation of the interventions? (EQ 6.4)
 - i. How likely are these changes to help your enterprise address gender equality and the inclusion of people with disabilities [*interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood*]? (EQ 6.8)

Worker Stakeholder KII guide

These questions apply to worker representatives, e.g., labour associations, unions. In the case of Vietnam, forward looking questions will need to be asked as the VGCL has joined the project in 2024.

- a. What work do you/your organisation currently do in cooperation with the ILO's Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work (PE4DW) programme?
 - i. *Prompts: are they a member of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC)?*
 - ii. *For Outcome 1 work might include policy dialogue and coordination [interviewer to describe country-specific national and sectoral interventions];*
 - iii. *For Outcome 2 work might include the selection of sectors for interventions [interviewer to describe country-specific sectoral interventions].*

1. Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention

- a. What are the strategic objectives and main function and role of [the labour organisation]?
- b. How are the objectives of the PE4DW project [*interviewer to explain PE4DW objective and outcomes*²⁶] consistent with priorities of [the labour organisation]? (EQ 1.1)
- c. How does the project align with or meet worker needs? What are important gaps? (EQ 1.1)

2. Validity of intervention design

- a. How well do the PE4DW intervention strategies and activities [*interviewer to describe country-specific national and sectoral interventions*] align with working condition challenges experienced in your country [*for macro-level stakeholders*] and/or sector [*for meso-level stakeholders*]? (EQ 2.3)
- b. How useful or relevant is the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work approach? Why? What are some of the main challenges and opportunities of this approach? What lessons can be learned for the design of future projects in this or other sectors? (EQ 2.4)
- c. What gender equality, discrimination [*interviewer to use country-specific terminology if there is a concern these inclusion terms will not be understood*], or environmental sustainability concerns exist in targeted SME sectors? How well has the PE4DW project addressed these concerns? (EQ 2.5)

3. Intervention progress and effectiveness

- a. How effective and relevant are the project interventions to the main issues facing the labour organisation and workers? How could interventions be strengthened?

The questions below are applicable if the labour organisation is directly involved in project activities, e.g. as PAC member:

- b. Is the project on track in relation to delivering its outputs [*with reference to outputs relevant to this stakeholder*]? (EQ 3.1)
- c. What difficulties or obstacles have been experienced in project implementation? What actions need to be taken? (EQ 3.2)

4. Effectiveness of management arrangements

- a. What involvement and level of engagement does [the labour organisation] have in the PE4DW project?
- b. What representation or involvement (if any) does [the labour organisation] have on the National Advisory Committee [*also called the Project Advisory Committee (PAC)*]?
 - i. [*For labour organisations involved in the NAC/PAC*] How well does this Advisory Committee function and what value does it add? (EQ 4.2)

²⁶ 'The overall objective of the programme is to promote a productivity ecosystem that creates productivity and decent work gains at macro, sectoral, and enterprise levels...[with] two outcomes:

Outcome 1: Increased capacity of ILO constituents and key ministries to formulate and implement national employment policies and productivity frameworks.

Outcome 2: Sectoral and enterprise constraints to productivity and decent work addressed and relaxed.'

(Terms of Reference: Productivity Eco-Systems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation)

- c. *[Communicating and engaging]* How aware are [the labour organisations] of PE4DW project activities, reports, and results? How are project results communicated? Does this include communicating results on gender and environmental sustainability? (EQ 4.3)

5. Efficiency of resource usage

These questions are not applicable to tripartite stakeholders.

6. Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention

- a. Does your organisation feel it has ownership of the PE4DW project? Has the project contributed to strengthening the capacity of your institution? (EQ 6.1)
- b. Is it likely PE4DW policy changes [*interviewee to refer to country-specific policies under Outcome 1*] will support a more conducive environment for [*productivity enhancement and*] improved working conditions? (EQ 6.2)
- c. Have you seen evidence of PE4DW sector-level interventions leading to the development of best practices that will benefit workers?
 - i. If so, please provide details (EQ 6.6):
 - ii. If so, do you think these can be replicated across similar industries? (EQ 6.3)
- d. [*If worker representatives are aware of enterprise-level interventions*] What measurable changes have you seen/do you expect to see in participating enterprises following the implementation of the PE4DW interventions, with respect to benefits for workers? (EQ 6.4)
 - i. If you have observed changes, please provide details (EQ 6.6):
- e. Have you seen, or do you expect to see, interconnected benefits and improvements that have arisen / might arise from the combined effect of policy, sector, and enterprise interventions [*PE4DW's systemic approach*]? (EQ 6.5)
 - i. If so, please explain, and provide examples (EQ 6.6):
 - ii. If not, please explain challenges to the systemic approach:

ILO and Donor Stakeholder KII guide

1. Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention

- a. Do you think the objectives of the Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work (PE4DW) intervention are consistent with the priorities of tripartite stakeholders? (EQ 1.1)
 - i. *Prompts: have there been conflicts between the ILO's priorities and those of tripartite stakeholders?*

2. Validity of intervention design

- a. Has the inception phase been used effectively to design the country project strategies? (EQ 2.1)
 - i. *If yes, please explain how:*
 - ii. *If there were challenges with inception, please explain:*
- b. Are the project strategy, objectives, and assumptions appropriate for achieving the ILO's planned results? (EQ 2.2)
 - i. *If yes, please explain how:*

- ii. *If there were cases where parts of the strategy/objectives/assumptions did not seem to 'fit' please explain why not:*
- c. Based on your experience of the design phase, what lessons can be learned for the design of future projects that intend to apply a PE4DW or similar approaches, either in new sectors, or in other countries? (EQ 2.4)
 - i. *E.g. types of stakeholders to involve, method/criteria used for sector selection,*
- d. Did the project design take into account the following, and if so, please explain how:
 - i. Gender equality and non-discrimination?
 - ii. Inclusion of people with disabilities?
 - iii. Environmental sustainability? (EQ 2.5)

3. Intervention progress and effectiveness

[Interviewer to refer to country performance plans for questions a and b, taking note of disaggregated results respect to women, people with disabilities, and results concerning environmental sustainability]

- a. The country pilot appears to be on track with respect to the following Outputs and or Outcomes *[Interviewer to refer to country performance plans]*: what can you tell me about success with respect to these results? (EQ 3.1)
- b. The country pilot appears to be *off* track with respect to the following Outputs and or Outcomes *[Interviewer to refer to country performance plans]*:
 - i. What challenges did you face that affected performance? Were you able to/or are you planning to take actions to address these? (EQ 3.2)
- c. Has the project taken advantage of complementarity with other ILO projects, past or present? (EQ3.4)
If so, please state which ones and what this complementarity looks like:

4. Effectiveness of management arrangements

- a. Are time frames and work plans respected, at the global and country levels? Have there been challenges adhering to certain timelines? If so, is corrective action taken? (EQ 4.1)
- b. *[At the global level]* Is the Global Advisory Committee functioning as it should? Does it make meaningful contributions to the project, in a timely fashion? (EQ 4.2)
 - i. *Have there been challenges with engaging GAC members?*
- c. *[At the country level]* Are the National Advisory Committees, also called the Project Advisory Committees (PACs), functioning as they should? Do they make meaningful contributions to the project, in a timely fashion? (EQ 4.2)
 - i. *Have there been challenges with engaging PAC members?*
- d. Is the project's monitoring & evaluation system:
 - i. Easy/straightforward to use?

- ii. Is reporting done on a regular basis? How much of your/your team's time is spent on M&E?
- iii. Are there challenges when using the M&E system?
- iv. Do the M&E outputs provide you with the information you need to work effectively? (EQ 4.4)
- v. Does it capture data on gender equality and social inclusion and environmental sustainability? (EQ 4.3)

5. Efficiency of resource usage

- a. Do you think the project is using its resources in the most effective way? (EQ 5.1, 5.2)
 - i. *Are there instances of inefficiencies that could be addressed?*
- b. Does the project have sufficient resources to achieve its objectives, including:
 - i. resources with respect to staff?
 - ii. resources needed for activities? (EQ 5.3)
 - iii. resources needed to address the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, inclusion of people with disabilities and environmental sustainability? (EQ 5.4)

6. Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention

- a. Have you seen evidence of national ownership of this project (by stakeholders at the macro, meso and micro levels of the ecosystem) and its outcomes for productivity and decent work? Do you think the project has increased the capacity within stakeholder institutions? (EQ 6.1)
 - i. *If so, please provide details:*
 - ii. *If not, please explain challenges encountered:*
- b. How likely is it that the policy changes (or planned policy changes) [*interviewer to list relevant policy changes*] are going to contribute to fostering a conducive environment for productivity enhancements and improved working conditions? (EQ 6.2) [*At this early stage in implementation this question is asking interviewees to look ahead at possible impacts.*]
 - i. How likely are these changes to advance gender equality and the inclusion of people with disability in 'the world of work'? (EQ 6.8)
- c. Have you seen evidence of PE4DW sector-level interventions leading to the development of best practices?
 - i. *If so, please provide details:*
 - ii. *If so, do you think these can be replicated across similar industries? (EQ 6.3)*
- d. What measurable changes have you seen and/or do you expect to see in participating enterprises following the implementation of the PE4DW interventions? (EQ 6.4)
 - i. *Please provide details:*
- e. Have you seen, or do you expect to see, interconnected benefits and improvements that have arisen / might arise from the combined effect of policy, sector, and enterprise interventions [*PE4DW's systemic approach*]? (EQ 6.5)
 - i. *If so, please explain, and provide examples (EQ 6.6):*

ii. If not, please explain challenges to the systemic approach:

- f. What are the most significant contextual factors (with respect to country, sector) that you think must be taken into account when rolling out this project to other countries/sectors? (EQ 6.7)

Appendix 6: Bibliography

Global documents

PE4DW documents reviewed during inception phase:

Project Document for PE4DW (Nov 2021),
PE4DW Technical Progress report for 2022 (Annual report),
M&E guidance note (August 2023),
Project Organisational chart (Feb 2024),
341st and 346th Governing Body reports (Feb 2021 and Oct 2022),
Financial Statement (Dec 2022), and
Final Budget for Global Inception Phase (Jan 2022).

ILO documents reviewed during data collection phase:

Meeting minutes – 3rd Global Strategic Advisory Committee meeting: ILO Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Programme - 10th October 2023 (virtual meeting);

Meeting minutes – 2nd Global Strategic Advisory Committee meeting: ILO Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Programme - 25th April 2023 (virtual meeting);

Meeting minutes – 1st Global Strategic Advisory Committee meeting: ILO Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Programme. 27th September 2022 (virtual meeting)

ILO. Productivity measurement and analysis: A guidance note. Luca Fedi, Ezzahid El Hadj. February 2024.
https://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---fp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_915962.pdf

ILO Development Cooperation annual progress report: Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work; Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises Programme (SCORE) - Phase IV. MSME / ENTERPRISES [Department]. March 2024.

[R189 - Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 \(No. 189\).](#)

[R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 \(No. 204\).](#)

Country documents: Ghana

PE4DW documents reviewed during inception phase:

Ghana pilot quarterly reports of 2022 and 2023
The Project strategy post-inception phase document (February 2023)
PAC meeting minutes of September 2022, April 2023 and December 2023
Sector system analysis documents of shea butter and textiles & garments.

ILO documents reviewed during data collection phase:

Ghana Performance Plan
Ghana Inception Phase Budget
The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25
PE4DW Automation Support Strategy

Draft Labour Act

Draft Occupational Safety and Health Bill

Draft Ghana Textile and Garment Industry Policy

Enterprise baseline & endline assessments for shea enterprises (Yumzaa and Sekaf)

Enterprise baseline & endline assessments for garment enterprises (Sixteen47 and Damaris)

Action Plan Adopted for Implementation of Improvement Activities – AGAM

Implementation Agreement between ILO and Gratis Foundation

Country documents: South Africa

PE4DW documents reviewed during inception phase:

South Africa Strategy v3.0, Nov 2022,

‘South Africa Sector Selection Report’ (Dec 2022),

PE4DW Technical Progress report for 2022 (Annual report),

PE4DW SA quarterly reports for 2022 and 2023.

ILO documents reviewed during data collection phase:

PE4DW Project Overarching Project Document Nov. 2021

PE4DW South Africa Project Strategy Post-Inception Phase Version 3 updated in May 2023

Draft National Employment Policy

NEP Stakeholder Consultation Report Nov.2023

Productivity SA PE4DW Training Close-out reports

PE4DW Annual Work Plan 2023-2024

PE4WED Gender Strategy 2019

ILO Strategic Framework 2022-2025

SECO Cooperation Programme for South Africa 2021-2024

PE4DW Project Monitoring Framework

Sector Master Plans

ToRs for PAC and TAG

PAC Meeting Minutes

ToRs for Implementing Partners

- NACTU
- Productivity SA
- SAFLEC
- GAIDC
- NAACAM
- ITCILO
- DTIC

Country documents: Vietnam

PE4DW documents reviewed during inception phase:

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Vietnam. Overarching “chapeau” project document (Nov 2021).

Sector selection for productivity ecosystems for decent work in Vietnam (July 2022).

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Vietnam. Project strategy post-inception phase (November 2022, updated May 2023).

Viet Nam’s wood and furniture industry - A systemic sector assessment. (August 2023).

Viet Nam's machinery and equipment industry - A systemic sector assessment (September 2023).

Vietnam Quarterly reports for 2022 and 2023.

Annual Report 2022.

Appendix 7: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference, Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Independent Mid-term Evaluation, Oct 2023:

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/productivity-eco-systems-decent-work-midterm-evaluation-0>