

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Independent project evaluation:

**Enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting in Africa and Latin America (United Nations Development Account project 1819H)\***

Independent Evaluation Unit  
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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADT	Accounting Development Tool
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EAs	Expected accomplishments
GCI	Guidance on Core Indicators
ICPAK	Certified Public Accountants of Kenya
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IGE	Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts
ISAR	International Standards of Accounting and Reporting
ISSB	International Sustainability Standards Board
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MSMEs	Micro, Small, & Medium Enterprises
PAOs	Professional Accountancy Organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDG 10	<i>Reduce inequality within and among countries</i>
SDG 12	<i>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</i>
SDG 17	<i>Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</i>
SEGEPLAN	Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Presidency (Guatemala)
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
Target 12.6	<i>Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle</i>
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
VNR	Voluntary National Review

## Executive summary

### Overview

Company reporting can potentially be a primary source of information for the SDG monitoring framework by providing stakeholders with the means to assess the economic, environmental, and social impact of the private sector. From the companies' point of view, measuring and disclosing their impact on the SDGs can help them to better engage stakeholders, enhance sustainable decision-making processes and strengthen their accountability.

Yet, many countries lack the institutional and technical capacity to adapt their corporate reporting environments to the requirements of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, governments struggle to effectively assess the private sector's contribution towards attaining the SDGs. To unlock the full potential of company reporting as part of the 2030 Agenda, further efforts are needed towards harmonization, comparability, and consistency of financial reporting and sustainability reporting.

In response to this, the "Enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting in Africa and Latin America" project aimed at strengthening the capacities of governments to measure and monitor the private sector's contribution to the 2030 Agenda. This project is an initiative based on the development and implementation of a strategic tool consistent with the SDG monitoring mechanism. This tool is meant to enable countries to coordinate efforts among different authorities (e.g., ministries, departments and/or institutions), and design and enforce policies linked to high-quality private sector reporting frameworks.

In this context, the goals of the project were the following:

- G1. Develop and implement a mechanism to coordinate efforts among different national authorities in establishing a sustainability reporting framework.
- G2. Help companies prepare and publish useful sustainability reports within that framework.
- G3. Support governments in the collection of comparable and reliable information on companies' contribution towards the SDG implementation aligned with the global framework of SDG indicators.

### Evaluation purpose, objective, scope, users

This evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cross-cutting issue mainstreaming efforts of the project, implemented between February 2018 and June 2022. The project was initially implemented in four countries: Guatemala, Colombia, Kenya and South Africa and had a regional component in both regions of intervention (Latin America and Africa). Later on, the project also provided technical assistance to three additional countries: Cameroon, Uganda, and Mexico.

The specific objectives of this evaluation were to (1) assess the degree to which the desired project results have been realized, including the extent of environmental, gender, human rights and disability mainstreaming ; and (2) identify good practices and lessons learned from the project that could feed into and enhance implementation of related interventions.

More specifically, the evaluation aimed at (1) highlighting what has been successful and can be replicated, (2) highlighting specific achievements that provide additional value for money and/or relevant multiplier



effects, (3) indicating shortcomings and constraints, (4) drawing pragmatic recommendations and lessons learned.

The evaluation primary users are the management of UNCTAD, the Capacity Development Programme Management Office/Development Account of DESA, project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's member States with whom the final evaluation report will be shared.

## **Methodology**

The evaluation employed a mixed-method approach to support its findings. An online survey, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and a thorough document review that incorporated and reflected various sources of information and perspectives, provided the foundation for rigorous triangulation, supporting the validity and reliability of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The evaluation commenced with an inception phase, during which the inception report and data collection tools were agreed upon and developed. During the subsequent data collection phase, the Evaluator carried out an in-depth document review and 16 key-informant interviews. The Evaluator also collected data from 37 respondents out of 218 contacted through an online survey. Data from different sources were then carefully analyzed and triangulated to produce this report.

The Evaluator encountered the following challenges when conducting the evaluation: 1) difficulties to engage with stakeholders, 2) impossibility to carry out group interviews as planned, and 3) virtual rather than face-to-face interactions. To reduce the risks generated by the above limitations, the Evaluator had regular contact with UNCTAD staff based in Geneva. The team was able to provide additional support by reaching out to specific stakeholders, which helped to boost response rates.

## **Key finding and conclusions**

Relevance: Evidence demonstrates that the project has been relevant and has responded to the needs and priorities of the beneficiary countries as well as regions. At the country-level, the stakeholders strongly believed that the project was pertinent and aligned with their priorities and aspirations. While the primary beneficiary countries were already quite advanced in the field of sustainability and SDG reporting in their regions, the project managed to identify gaps and provide each of the countries with relevant skills and knowledge to overcome the gaps and to answer to their needs. Regarding the three additional countries that requested technical assistance, stakeholders agreed that the assistance provided by UNCTAD was crucial and highly important. The project in this regard adapted itself and was able to respond to the specific needs of these countries that are in the early stages of sustainability reporting.

The project also had a regional component: to create two partnerships (one in Latin America and one in Africa) to improve awareness and promote experience sharing at the regional level. The two regional partnerships were found to be relevant as they provide all participating countries, regardless of their stage of implementation and their resources available, an important learning and sharing platform as well as a conducive environment for multi-stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation all agreed that these regional partnerships were key to kick-starting sustainability and SDG reporting processes in countries that are lagging behind and to make further progress.

Stakeholders from different groups (primary beneficiary countries, additional beneficiaries of technical assistance from the project, regional partnerships) as well as UNCTAD's staff all considered the project's activities relevant and well aligned with UNCTAD's mandate. The review of strategic documents also supported this finding.

Effectiveness: The project reached its planned indicator-related targets in alignment with the project's results framework. All activities were implemented as expected along with additional ones. The overall effectiveness of the project was evidenced by respondent's satisfaction with the project's outcomes in terms of knowledge gained, skills developed and overall capacity building. Yet, when assessing the achievement of the planned outcomes (EAs), it is important to note that the indicators measured were effective in initiating some of the processes to improve on the long term: capacity (technical and institutional), awareness, and experience sharing. As a result, it is not feasible at this stage of the project to assess the impact of the planned outcomes. However, it is likely that the project and its activities will result in the improvement of the technical and institutional capacities of the selected countries, which is important to ensure sustainability.

Interviews with key informants as well as survey results identified enabling factors that played a key role in the success of the project. The first factor is the selection of beneficiaries. The selection was demand-driven, meaning that beneficiaries were interested and motivated to take part in the project. Other factors are the participatory approach and the selection of critical stakeholders. Both aspects were incorporated in the project and ensured the successful implementation of the activities. Additionally, the evaluation identified the creation of national and regional partnerships as key to enabling the success of the activities and project overall. The last factor identified is UNCTAD's long-standing contribution and recognition.

However, participating stakeholders also identified a few challenges and obstacles to tackle, including limited human capacity, regulations, infrastructure, and resources. In particular, stakeholders suggested that the lack of human capacity at the country level could be a major obstacle to ensure the continuity of the capacity developed under this project. The lack of human capacity in terms of staff and skills in each of the beneficiary countries could negatively impact the implementation of the national action plans developed under the project. In addition, some stakeholders identified the lack of institutional, political, or private sector buy-in as an important challenge that could impact the long-term perspectives of the project.

Efficiency: In terms of efficiency, the project's implementation was commensurate to its scale, implemented at first in four countries and in two regions, and then in three additional countries with the collaboration of focal points in each country. Based on the evidence, the project's management and implementation were efficiently conducted. Focal points in the different countries of intervention praised the constructive contribution of UNCTAD's staff that led to smooth implementation of activities. The survey also asked respondents questions regarding the publications and communication: apart from the strong use of the specific tools (i.e., GCI, ADT), a high number of respondents did not read the studies and publications developed. Although stakeholders did not suggest any alternative to achieve better results in terms of communication efficiency, it is important to note that it could be improved.

The efficiency criteria also looked at the efficiency of the regional partnerships. As mentioned previously, regional partnerships have been praised by the majority of stakeholders and are considered key. Yet, the results show that some stakeholders, especially in Latin America, are in general expecting more out of these partnerships as they are very eager to start the processes in their own countries. This shows enthusiasm for the regional partnerships.

The project's duration was initially planned from 2018 until end of 2021, and later the UNCTAD team sought an extension until June 2022. This extension also helped to bridge some of the gaps created by the crisis and the absence of face-to-face activities. In this regard, the extension helped to strengthen what has been learned/achieved.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, some of the activities could not take place face-to-face and were delivered online or in hybrid mode. As a result, the project was able to allocate the savings to other activities such as the technical assistance provided to Uganda, Cameroon, and Mexico, which was not initially planned in the scope of the project.

Sustainability: The project promoted the principle of national ownership throughout its design and implementation by focusing on four key aspects: the capacities, knowledge and skills transferred to the project stakeholders; the design of National Action Plans; the regional partnerships; the participatory and iterative approach, by promoting collaboration among key stakeholders at the country and regional level; and creating steering committees

Additionally, the evaluation identified unexpected outcomes that derived from the project that will help to ensure the sustainability of the results. The first outcome is the development of an Asian regional partnerships based on the blueprint developed under the project in other regions. The second outcome is the recognition of the project's results at the 39<sup>th</sup> ISAR session and at the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission. In line with the recognition of the project's results in international fora, UNCTAD has been receiving an increasing number of demands from countries to receive technical support in this domain.

However, the stakeholders also identified challenges that could impede the long-term outcomes of the project. Some of the challenges identified are similar to the ones encountered during the project's implementation, namely: the lack of capacity, the lack of political buy-in and the potential burden on the private sector.

Cross-cutting issues: UNCTAD is committed to gender equality and has adopted measures to incorporate this aspect into its operations. In this project, management used a gender sensitive approach by monitoring the number of women involved in each activity. Nevertheless, the issues of gender, disability, and environment were mostly mentioned by stakeholders in regard to the GCI and its indicators that are explicitly looking at these issues. There was no information from evaluation respondents regarding the incorporation of these aspects in the project's activities apart from the GCI, the ADT, and the policy recommendations developed during the extended activities. For example, respondents were not able to specify whether environmental aspects were considered in implementing or organizing the activities. In terms of human rights, the evaluator found some link between the project's activities/goals and key issues

that embed human rights issues. In conclusion more efforts may be needed to explicitly mainstream gender equality, disability, human rights, and environment throughout future activities.

Response to COVID-19: The UNCTAD team has been able to adapt and mitigate COVID-19 impacts by adapting face-to-face activities to online meetings. Additionally, the responsiveness of the UNCTAD team and their capacity to organize activities in the field, in the context of lockdowns, as well as facilitating exchange of key information with focal points, was crucial to the success of the project.

### **Lessons learned**

- 1. Flexibility with the original project document** is necessary to allow activities to adapt to unpredicted changes, local conditions as well as interests of the key stakeholders.
- 2. Close cooperation and coordination with appointed focal points** in beneficiary countries is an important success factor.
- 3. Identifying and involving key stakeholders in processes** such as the development of National Action Plans is important to ensure the relevance, buy-in to the plan and the sustainability of the results.
- 4. Exchanging good practices and lessons learned at the regional level** is proven to be beneficial for the different stakeholders involved. The creation of regional partnerships is identified as a good practice that should be replicated in other projects where relevant.
- 5. Lack of capacities** in the beneficiary countries have been identified as an important hindering factor facing the work initiated by UNCTAD. It is a challenge that countries will have to work with and focus on in order to implement the national action plans developed under the project.

### **Recommendations**

After a thorough analysis of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project, the evaluation formulated the following recommendations:

1. The results of this evaluation showed that the project was delivered successfully overall and able to expand its reach drawing on unused travel funds. UNCTAD should seek additional funding for the continuation and scaling-up of their work on sustainability and SDG reporting. The regional partnerships in particular should be further strengthened through capacity-building initiatives based on UNCTAD's policy guide on tackling the sustainability challenge and replicated in other regions.
2. Given the lack of capacity or high-level support in some countries to sustain the pathway to long-term outcomes, UNCTAD is encouraged to further assess possible sustainability measures and build these into future projects. This could include building on synergies with other entities such as regional organizations, CSOs and private sector organizations in order to promote benefits of SDG reporting and to help disseminate relevant UNCTAD resources.

3. UNCTAD should include a clear and detailed communication plan in its project documents (with dedicated time and resources and appropriate communication tools) to ensure key project outputs and outcomes, and ensuing responsibilities, are well understood by the project stakeholders. In particular, this could include updated and streamlined guidance on the ADT, as well as an emphasis on dissemination of key project outputs to ensure that beneficiaries are well-equipped to apply this knowledge.
4. UNCTAD should continue to work on indicators and guidelines for the systematic mainstreaming all cross-cutting issues including environmental concerns, human rights and disability inclusion. For example, by further emphasizing some of these aspects in company reporting.

## 1. Introduction

The “Enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting in Africa and Latin America” project, or herein referred to as “the project”, was an initiative based on the development and implementation of a strategic tool consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) monitoring mechanism. This tool is meant to enable countries to coordinate efforts among different authorities (e.g., ministries, departments and/or institutions) to design and enforce policies linked to high-quality private sector reporting frameworks. The project was funded through the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) whose management team is located in the Capacity Development Programme Management Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) implemented the project in Africa (primarily in Kenya and South Africa), as well as in Latin America (primarily Colombia and Guatemala) in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other UN entities. The project started in February 2018 with an approved budget of US\$740,000 and was scheduled for completion by December 2021. Following challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to further enhance the sustainability of project activities, the project requested and was granted an extension to 30 June 2022. In addition, the project returned unutilized funds of US\$17,000 to the Development Account in 2021.

The specific objectives of this evaluation were to (1) assess the degree to which the desired project results have been realized, including the extent of environmental, gender, human rights and disability mainstreaming; and (2) identify good practices and lessons learned from the project that could feed into and enhance implementation of related interventions.

The evaluation aimed at providing credible and useful assessments as well as practical and constructive recommendations to UNCTAD management, the primary user of the evaluation, with the goal to optimize results of future projects, including on operational and administrative aspects.

## 2. Description of the Project

### 2.1 Background

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In addition to the SDGs themselves, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development established specific indicators – within the context of a global indicator framework – to help monitor the implementation of the SDGs. As part of this framework, SDG12 Target 12.6 is defined as to “*encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle*”<sup>1</sup>. Reforming company reporting is a complex issue that requires addressing two main challenges, (1) harmonization and consistency of sustainability reporting in general and (2) alignment of sustainability reporting with the SDG monitoring framework and its indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. 2021. SDG Indicator Metadata. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-12-06-01.pdf>

Overall, there is a lack of harmonization, comparability, and reliability of SDG reports mostly due to the voluntary nature of sustainability reporting, and the use of multiple competing frameworks and standards.

Acting as the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR), UNCTAD has played a leading role conducting research and facilitating corporate reporting. Generally speaking, a number of sustainability reporting initiatives and frameworks have been developed and have contributed to raising the private sector's awareness on sustainable development challenges and good company practices. For example, UNCTAD – through ISAR – developed the Accounting Development Tool (ADT). This tool is a capacity-building initiative that addresses requests from UNCTAD Member States<sup>2</sup> for guidance on how to converge towards international standards in accounting and reporting.

More recently, UNCTAD, in close consultation with ISAR, worked specifically on the topic of company reporting on core SDG indicators, including by issuing a comprehensive guidance for Sustainability Reporting and SDG Impact Reporting. Moreover, as custodian of SDG indicator 12.6.1 *“Number of companies publishing sustainability reports”*, UNCTAD together with UNEP developed metadata to measure such an indicator and designed a mechanism for data collection on its progress.

Company reporting has the potential to become a primary source of information for the SDG monitoring framework by providing stakeholders with the means to assess economic, environmental, and social impact of the private sector. From the companies' point of view, measuring and disclosing their impact towards the SDGs can help them better engage stakeholders such as investors, enhance sustainable decision-making processes and strengthen their accountability.

Yet many countries still lack the institutional and technical capacity to adapt their corporate reporting practises to the goals contained in the 2030 Agenda. In addition, they struggle to effectively assess the private sector's contribution towards attaining the SDGs. To unlock the full potential of company reporting as part of the 2030 Agenda monitoring framework, further efforts are needed towards harmonization, comparability, and consistency between the areas of financial reporting and sustainability reporting.

In response to this, the project aimed at strengthening the capacities of governments to measure and monitor the private sector's contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular indicator 12.6 *“Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.”*

In this context, the goals of the project<sup>3</sup> were the following:

- G1. Develop and implement a mechanism to coordinate efforts among different national authorities in establishing a sustainability reporting framework;
- G2. Help companies prepare and publish useful sustainability reports within that framework;
- G3. Support governments in the collection of comparable and reliable information on companies' contribution towards SDG implementation aligned with the global framework of SDG indicators.

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<sup>2</sup> 195 countries

<sup>3</sup> Project Document (Prodoc)

Additionally, the project helped to prepare an enabling environment in the beneficiary countries prior to the upcoming global standardization.

## 2.2 Project objectives and expected accomplishments/results

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The main objective of the project was to “strengthen the capacities of governments in Africa and Latin America to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular indicator 12.6 on enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting”.

Under the project, a number of new tools have been developed and the existing tool, the Accounting Development Tool<sup>4</sup> (ADT), has been further enriched. The tools developed under the project are the Guidance on Core Indicators for Sustainability and SDG Impact Reporting (GCI)<sup>5</sup>, the Core SDG Indicators for Entity Reporting -Training Manual<sup>6</sup>, and the Metadata for SDG indicator 12.6.1<sup>7</sup>. These tools were designed to 1) provide guidance to reinforce regulations, institutions, and human capacity at the country level to improve the quality, comparability, and reliability of sustainability and SDG reporting, 2) enable collaboration among key stakeholders in the public and private sectors and civil society, 3) assist governments to better assess the private sector contribution towards the implementation of the SDGs, and 4) assist entities in providing data on sustainability issues in a consistent and comparable manner. Additionally, in the long run, the tools also aim at efficiently addressing reporting options for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

The project was initially designed to be implemented in four beneficiary countries in two different continents (Africa and Latin America). For both regions, the countries were selected based on their capacity to serve as hubs to share the technical tools and lessons learned within their respective geographical regions. In addition, priority was given to countries that had shown interest in advancing their sustainability reporting systems. Based on these criteria, Colombia, Guatemala, Kenya, and South Africa were selected. On top of these four primary beneficiary countries, the project also provided technical support to three additional countries in the same regions, namely Cameroon, Uganda, and Mexico.

The project’s expected outcomes as per its results framework (Annex 3), also referred as expected accomplishments (EAs)<sup>8</sup>, are the following:

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<sup>4</sup> ADT, retrieved from <https://adt.unctad.org/fr/>

<sup>5</sup> UNCTAD. 2019. Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on contribution towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. [//new GCI tool Guidance on Core Indicators for Sustainability and SDG Impact Reporting \(unctad.org\)](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2019d1_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> UNCTAD. 2020. Core SDG Indicators for Entity Reporting – TRAINING MANUAL. <https://unctad.org/webflyer/core-sdg-indicators-entity-reporting-training-manual>

<sup>7</sup> United Nations. 2021. SDG Indicator Metadata. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-12-06-01.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> In Development Account projects, the expected accomplishments are equal to expected outcomes.



O1. Enhanced country-level multi-stakeholder capacity to assess their national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting.

O2. Improved technical and institutional capacity among authorities of selected countries to achieve an enabling national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting.

O3. Improved awareness and experience sharing among policy makers, private sector and civil society at national, regional, and global levels on achieving enabling policy framework for enterprise sustainability/SDG reporting.

Overall, the project's aim was to contribute to improving the quality of sustainability reporting and facilitating international comparability. It also enabled governmental authorities to articulate, collaborate, and better assess the private sector contribution towards attaining the SDGs. In the long term, the project is also expected to contribute to the enhancement of the SDG monitoring mechanism at the national level.

## 2.3 Project strategies and key activities

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To achieve its objectives, the project was implemented in four phases:

- **Phase 1:** The development of a sustainability reporting assessment tool supported by global consultations and inputs from international stakeholders in this field.
- **Phase 2:** Roll-out of the tool at country level in each of the selected countries. Remote training was delivered to relevant authorities in preparation of a set of country-based activities including a national assessment of the financial and sustainability reporting structure supported by multi-stakeholder dialogues, workshops, and consultations.
- **Phase 3:** Improving the reporting infrastructure in the selected countries by assisting national stakeholders in developing an action plan and implementing priority actions for high-quality sustainability reporting. UNCTAD assisted companies in pilot-testing on the SDG indicators arising from the endorsed national action plan, and also assisted governments in SDG reporting .
- **Phase 4:** Regional collaboration and experience sharing of the lessons learned from the pilot countries through two regional workshops (one in Africa and one in Latin America).

The planned activities can be found in the results framework in Annex 2. Based on the final report provided by UNCTAD, three additional activities have been carried out: A.2.4, A.3.4, and A.3.5. These activities have been added to the results framework in Annex 2 in red. Additionally, a more detailed breakdown of the activities that took place can be found in the Theory of Change (ToC) in Annex 4.

The overall project also integrated an overarching goal of achieving gender equality and women empowerment, by providing guidelines for gender disaggregated data related to company-level information. Additionally, prior to the start of the project, the team identified vulnerable groups in corporate reporting that need to be addressed following the approach of leaving no-one behind: (1) Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and (2) gender balance and inclusion of disadvantaged populations.

As a result the project aimed at:

- 1) Pioneering the provision of guidance to governments to collect reliable data on the contribution of MSMEs to the SDG monitoring mechanisms.
- 2) Emphasizing the efforts needed to ensure that gender indicators are effectively incorporated into national reporting frameworks and that gender perspectives are further mainstreamed across the reporting chain. For example, emphasizing the importance of the gender lens in their indicators on matters related to social and corporate governance.

## 2.4 Beneficiaries and target countries

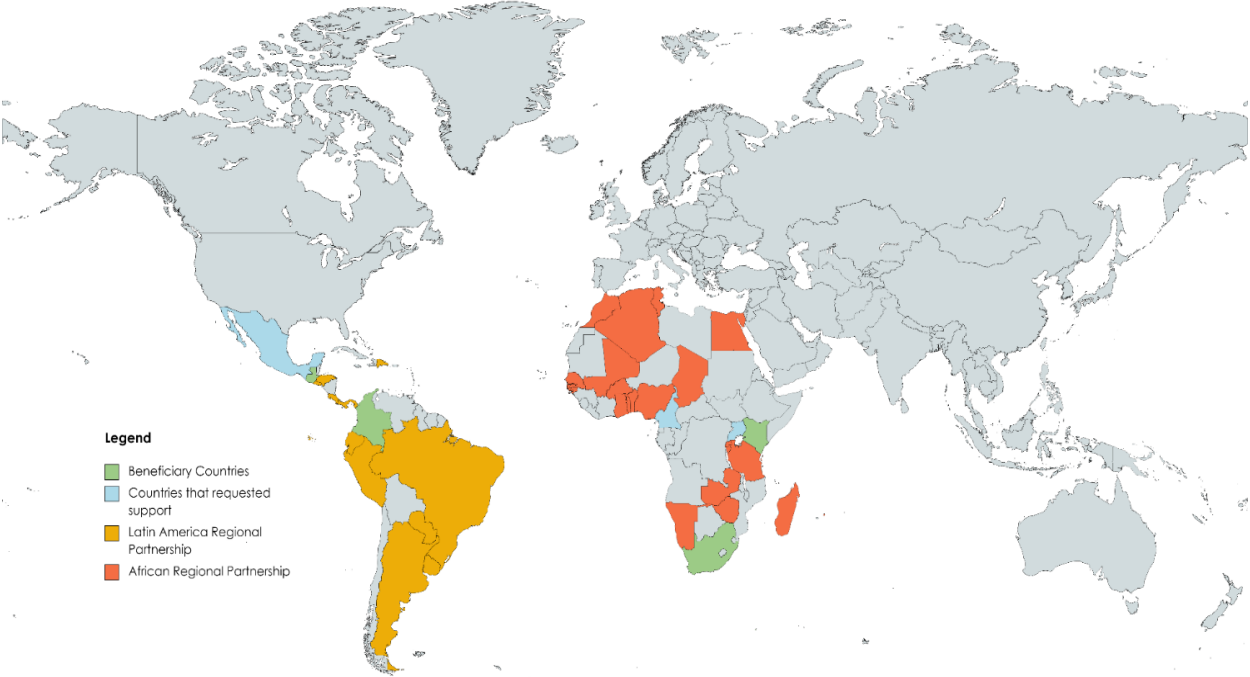
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The primary beneficiaries of the project are the following four countries: Colombia, Guatemala, Kenya, and South Africa. These four countries were selected considering their interest and motivation towards sustainability reporting. Originally, the project had also identified Brazil as a potential beneficiary due to its strong interest in UNCTAD's work on sustainability and SDG reporting in the context of ISAR sessions.

However, at the start of project implementation, due to political changes, Brazil was not in a position to support activities at the national level. As a result, UNCTAD approached Guatemala as its government also expressed high interest in the implementation of the GCI and ongoing activities in the area of sustainability and SDG reporting.

The project also received additional requests from Mexico, Cameroon, and Uganda, and delivered tailored support to strengthen their sustainability reporting infrastructure. Furthermore, through the regional partnerships in Latin America and Africa, an additional 33 countries<sup>9</sup> have benefitted from the project, as shown on Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 - Map of beneficiaries and target countries<sup>10</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Latin American Regional Partnership: Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru , Panama, Paraguay, and Uruguay. African Regional Partnership: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Chad, The Gambia, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

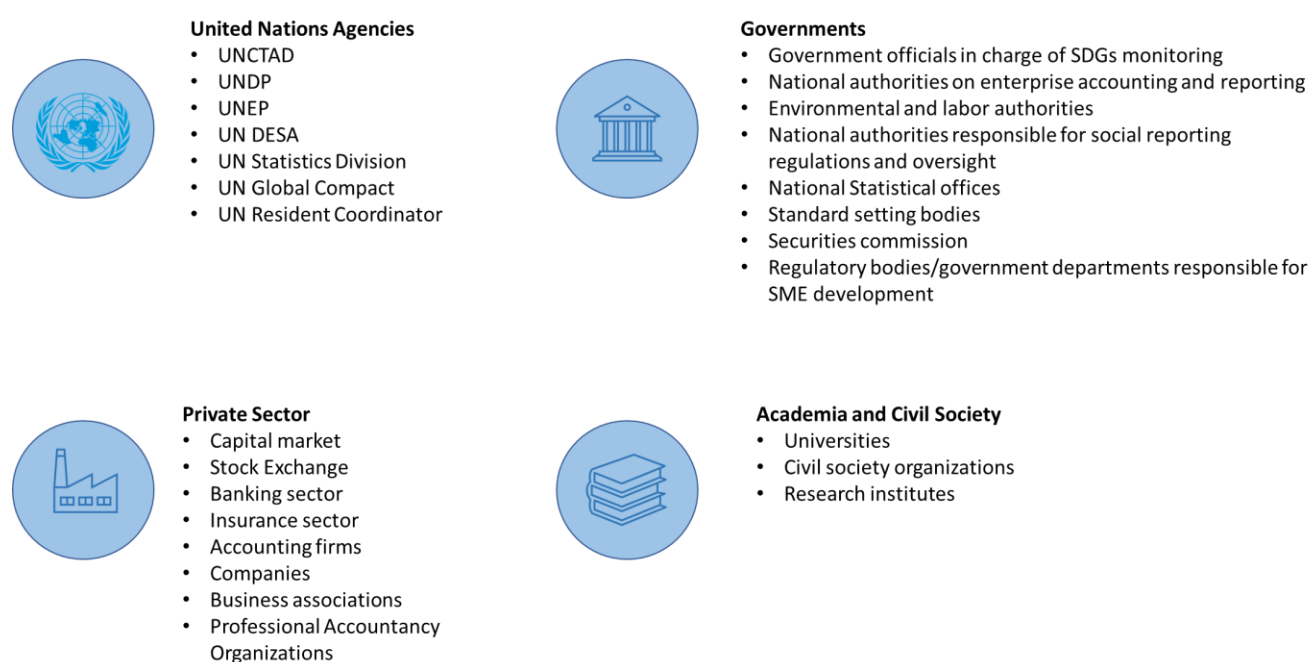
<sup>10</sup> Source: Map designed by the evaluator

## 2.5 Key partners and other key stakeholders

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Throughout the project, UNCTAD and its partners organized consultations and workshops with key private and public stakeholders, including professional accountancy organizations, business associations, firms from the banking and insurance sectors, key government ministries and public agencies as well as stakeholders from academia and civil society. Figure 2 below presents a mapping of key partners and stakeholders of the project.

Figure 2 - Key Partners and Stakeholders<sup>11</sup>



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<sup>11</sup> Source: Figure designed by the evaluator

Table 1 below describes the role of the stakeholder groups in the project, their involvement in the evaluation, and how they could use the outcomes of the evaluative process.

Table 1 - Stakeholders Analysis<sup>12</sup>

United Nations Agencies		
<b>Implementing Agency:</b> UNCTAD <b>Funding Programme:</b> United Nations Development Account (11 <sup>th</sup> Tranche)		
<u>Role in the project:</u> UNCTAD is the executing entity (project management lead).	<u>Involvement in the evaluation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Formulation of the ToRs</li> <li>▪ Sharing relevant documentation</li> <li>▪ Assistance in the preparation of data collection</li> <li>▪ Assistance in identifying appropriate respondents to interviews and surveys</li> <li>▪ Provision of inputs during the data collection process</li> <li>▪ Participation in the management responses</li> </ul>	<u>Use of the evaluation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project finalization and planning for sustainability of results achieved</li> <li>▪ Improvement of formulation and implementation of similar projects</li> <li>▪ Promotion of sustainable reporting among other countries</li> </ul>
<b>Partner Agencies:</b> UNEP, UN DESA, UN Statistics, UNDP, UNRCO <b>Other UN network/intergovernmental bodies related to sustainability reporting:</b> UN Global Compact Network, ISAR		
<u>Role in the project:</u> UNEP and UN DESA are co-operating entities.  UN Statistics Division, UNDP are UN partners and programs involved in the project (knowledge transfer).  UN Global Compact Network and ISAR network benefited and	<u>Involvement in the evaluation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No involvement in the evaluation process</li> </ul>	<u>Use of the evaluation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Future UN activities planning</li> <li>▪ Using and sharing knowledge</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Source: Table created by the evaluator

<p>contributed to the project activities (i.e. development and improvement of the tools). The project provided evidence to ISAR activities.</p>		
<p><b>Governments</b></p>		
<p><u>Role in the project:</u> Governmental agencies and technical bodies identified and designed policy, regulatory and institutional reforms to promote SDG monitoring in the private sector.</p>	<p><u>Involvement in the evaluation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of inputs during the data collection process</li> </ul>	<p><u>Use of the evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Future planning and, if necessary, corrective action</li> <li>▪ Informing national strategies and policies in line with Target 12.6</li> </ul>
<p><b>Private sector (Companies, Experts, Sectors representatives such as Accounting, Banking, and Insurance)</b></p>		
<p><u>Role in the project:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Users of the tool</li> <li>▪ Took part in project activities to give their inputs</li> </ul>	<p><u>Involvement in the evaluation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of inputs during the data collection process</li> </ul>	<p><u>Use of the evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocacy for new projects and evidence-based contribution in their needs assessments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Civil Society (Academia, NGOs, etc.)</b></p>		
<p><u>Role in the project:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Took part in project activities) to give their inputs</li> </ul>	<p><u>Involvement in the evaluation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of inputs during the data collection process</li> </ul>	<p><u>Use of the evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocacy for new projects and evidence-based contribution in their needs assessments</li> </ul>

## 2.6 Resources

Table 2 - Financial information<sup>13</sup>

Description	Budget (USD)	Revisions (USD)	Explanations	Total Expenditure (USD)
<b>Other staff costs – General temporary assistance</b>	36,000.00	-36,000.00	The redeployment of funds was required to support a contractor instead of GTA, and these funds were needed at an earlier stage of the project (March 2019).	0.00
<b>Consultants</b>	266,500.00	103,580.91	i) Adjustment for rephasing B21/B23 (580.91) and (ii) adjustment to reflect increase in substantive activities for consultants in beneficiary countries.	347,183.00
<b>Travel of Staff</b>	212,000.00  (Return of funds) -17000	-108,659.56	(i) Redeployment from travel to workshop organization, to support ISAR Honors (October 2020) and (ii) Redeployment to reflect savings in travels due to context (pandemic) – 40,659.56 during rephasing from B21/B23 and 60,00 in March 22.	75,944.36
<b>Contractual services</b>	47,800.00	+76,591.93	(i) The type of work required an individual contractor instead of a GTA (March 2019). (ii) For an increased contingent to technical assistance on implementation of recommendations stemming from the action plan (40,591.93).	140,382.57
<b>General Operation Expenses</b>	18,100.00	+34,129.49	Adjustment during rephasing B21-B23	38,421.63
<b>Supplies and materials</b>	0			
<b>Furniture and equipment</b>	0			
<b>Workshops/Study tours (Grants and Contributions)</b>	159,600.00	-69,642.77	(i) Redeployment from travel to workshop organization, to support ISAR Honors (October 2020, for 8000), rephasing B21/B23 (34,642.77) and redeployment towards consultancy costs.	22,241.85

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from the Project's Final Report.

<b>Total</b>	<b>740,000.00</b>			<b>624,173.64</b>
	<b>(Return of funds) - 17,000.00</b>			
	<b>= 723,000.00</b>			

Table 3 - Project's expenditure

<b>Year</b>	<b>Planned expenditure (USD)</b>	<b>Actual expenditure (USD)</b>
<b>2018</b>	99 900	71 513.75
<b>2019</b>	155 900	116 184.27
<b>2020</b>	325 400	85 756.98
<b>2021</b>	158 800	129 298.5
<b>2022</b>		221 419.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>740 000</b>	<b>624 173.64</b>
<b>Revised budget</b>	<b>723 000</b>	

## 2.7 Link to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The project was expected to contribute directly to the 2030 Agenda by facilitating progress on implementation of SDG12 Target 12.6 “Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.” It was also designed to foster high-quality measurement and performance on indicator 12.6.1: “Data on the number of companies publishing sustainability reports.” Under this project, the metadata for SDG indicator 12.6.1 was developed based on the GCI approach and was approved by the IAEG-SDG. Further, data collection mechanisms have been established to report on 12.6.1. As a result, the indicator 12.6.1 was successfully reclassified to Tier-2 in 2019. Additionally, since 2020 UN co-custodians have been reporting on 12.6.1 and regularly submitting data to the SDG Global Database as well as storylines that have been incorporated to the SDG Glossary and SDG Reports.



By facilitating the sharing of best practices in accounting regulation and financial inclusion, in particular at the regional level in Latin America and Africa, this project was also designed to contribute to the attainment of the following SDG targets:

- Target 10<sup>14</sup>.5: *“Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and strengthen the implementation of such regulations.”*
- Target 17<sup>15</sup>.9: *“Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South and South-South and triangular cooperation.”*

## 2.8 Innovative elements

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The key innovative element identified in this project is the development of regional partnerships. These partnerships have proven to be successful in the context of sustainability and SDG reporting to increase awareness and to share lessons learned among the members. They have also been identified as a key element to ensure the sustainability of the results and beyond. As explained in the findings section, the project team developed a blueprint on how to develop a regional partnership. This blueprint will support the project’s replicability in other countries/regions. As a direct result, UNCTAD is developing an Asian Regional Partnership based on the lessons learned from this project.

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<sup>14</sup> SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries, retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/>

<sup>15</sup> SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/fr/goals/goal17>

## 3. Evaluation objectives, scope and questions

### 3.1 Purpose and objectives

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This UNDA 11<sup>th</sup> tranche project was selected for evaluation in line with UNDA requirements on project evaluations. For the 11<sup>th</sup> tranche, the projects to be evaluated were selected by each UNDA implementing entity in March 2021 based on: the strategic importance and relevance of each project to the entities' mandates; pressing knowledge gaps; and/or the application of an approach or element with the potential for replication or scaling-up to generate evaluative evidence for decision-making. This project was selected for evaluation by UNCTAD according to these criteria.

In line with UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy<sup>16</sup> and Development Account Project Evaluation Guidelines<sup>17</sup>, and following the UNEG Ethical guidelines<sup>18</sup> and UNEG norms and standards for evaluation<sup>19</sup>, the evaluator hereby undertook the final evaluation of the project, covering the duration of the project from February 2018 to June 2022. The main purpose of the evaluation was to support accountability for results and to enable learning. The independent evaluator has integrated human rights, gender equality and disability<sup>20</sup> perspectives in the evaluation to the extent possible<sup>21</sup>, and ensured a complete, fair, engaging, unreserved, and unbiased assessment.

The evaluation aimed at providing accountability to the management of UNCTAD, the Capacity Development Programme Management Office/UNDA DESA, project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's Member States with whom the final evaluation report will be shared.

The primary user of this DA project evaluation is UNCTAD management. In addition, the findings of the evaluation will feed into the planned programme-level evaluation of the DA's response to COVID-19, for which the primary users/audiences include the DA Steering Committee, the DA Programme Management Team and the management of the DA implementing entities.

On the basis of its assessments and findings, the evaluation delivered credible and useful assessments, drew conclusions and formulated practical and constructive recommendations to UNCTAD with a view towards optimizing results of future projects, including on operational and administrative aspects.

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<sup>16</sup> "Evaluation Policy" of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), December 2011. December 2011, [http://unctad.org/Sections/edm\\_dir/docs/osg\\_EvaluationPolicy2011\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/Sections/edm_dir/docs/osg_EvaluationPolicy2011_en.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> "[UN Development Account Project Evaluation Guidelines](#)" (October 2019)

<sup>18</sup> "[Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#)", UNEG (2020); "[UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System](#)", UNEG (2008)

<sup>19</sup> "[Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)", UNEG (2016)

<sup>20</sup> Disability criterion has recently been added as a cross-cutting issue in UNCTAD evaluations in line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the Administrative instruction on Evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat (ST/AI/2021/3). However, disability inclusion was not a main cross-cutting issue required by UNDA during the formulation of the project.

<sup>21</sup> "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2014): <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>. The UNEG Handbook on "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations: Towards UNEG Guidance" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2011): <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>. The UNEG Handbook on "Integrating disability inclusion in evaluations and reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator". <http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/3050>

## 3.2 Evaluation scope, criteria and questions

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This terminal evaluation covers the duration of the project from February 2018 to June 2022. The evaluation assessed the project performance against the following six criteria: relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; sustainability; gender, disability, human rights and environment; and responses to COVID-19.

The following key evaluation questions have been used by the evaluator and guided the overall assessment.

Each evaluation question was answered by way of specific methodological choices, proposed sources of data and data collection procedures. They are presented in the Evaluation Matrix in Annex 5.

### Relevance

R1. To what extent the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of participating countries and regions, taking into account the mandates of UNCTAD?

- R1.1. How does the project respond to the priorities of the participating countries' governments?
- R1.2. How does the project address the needs of local stakeholders?
- R1.3. How does the project address the priorities and needs of the participating regions?
- R1.4. How does the project integrate in the mandate of UNCTAD?

R2. To what extent has the work of the project been complementary to that of initiatives in SDG reporting by other UN and non-UN actors in the target countries?

R3. What adjustments are needed to make the project more relevant to the participating countries in supporting their efforts to achieve the target SDG 12.6, including responding to emerging challenges?

### Effectiveness

Effe1. Have the activities achieved, or are likely to achieve, planned objectives as enunciated in the project document and outcomes (intended or unintended), in particular against relevant SDG targets?

Effe2. To what extent have the project participants from each targeted country utilized the tools and knowledge and skills gained through the project's activities to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda?

Effe3. What are enabling and limiting factors that contribute to the achievement of results?

- Effe3.1. What enabling factors contributed to the achievement of results?
- Effe3.2. What limiting factors hindered the achievement of results?
- Effe3.3. To what extent did the partnerships (at the national and regional levels) contribute to, or hinder, the achievement of the results?

## **Efficiency**

Effi1. To what extent have the project resources been utilized to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner?

- Effi1.1. Has the project management been adequate?
- Effi1.2. How efficient was the project in utilizing financial resources?
- Effi1.3. Have the expected outcomes been achieved in a timely manner?
- Effi1.4. How efficient were the partnerships at the regional level?

Effi2. To what extent has the project been efficiently implemented in each country/region?

## **Sustainability**

S1. What is the likelihood that the project results and benefits will continue after the end of the project?

- S1.1. Is there evidence that beneficiary countries/ regions/ organizations are committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project?
- S1.2. What measures have been built in to promote the sustainability of the outcomes?
- S1.3. Have there been catalytic effects from the project both at the national and/ or regional levels?
- S1.4. What additional measures could be taken to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes over time? Especially, what adjustments could be made to increase the responsiveness of beneficiary countries/ regions to emerging challenges?

## **Gender, human rights, and disability**

GHRD1. To what extent an equity-focused approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention, and can results be identified in this regard? How could future similar projects consider disability mainstreaming?

## **Environment**

Env1. To what extent have environmental considerations been mainstreamed in the project?

- Env1.1. How have environmental considerations been integrated in the design and implementation of the project?
- Env1.2. What are the main results of the project from an environmental perspective?

## **Responses to COVID-19**

Co1. To what extent did the adjustments made in response to COVID-19 situation affect the project and its beneficiaries?

- Co1.1. To what extent did the project adjustments respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?
- Co1.2. How did the adjustments affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework.

## 4. Methodology

The evaluation of the project assessed the results of the project as specified in the Project Document, and their value to identified stakeholders at different levels. The evaluation systematically and objectively assessed the project design, project management, implementation, the extent of gender, disability<sup>Error!</sup> Bookmark not defined., and human rights mainstreaming, as well as the overall project performance.

The evaluation was utilization-focused to ensure that the assessment of the intervention was based on its usefulness to its intended users. Such an approach focuses on actual and specific users and uses, to enable decision making amongst the stakeholders that will make use of the findings of the evaluation.

To assess the intervention logic and effectively address the evaluation questions, the evaluation was framed by a theory-based approach, examining the project design and assessing how the project's ToC (Annex 5) was operationalized.

The evaluator's work was guided by a comparative approach, that allowed a better appreciation of the influence on the project results of different intervention contexts at the country level and in the two targeted regions.

The evaluator used a mixed-method design, utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to support his findings. Several lines of evidence that incorporated various sources of information and perspectives provided the foundation for rigorous triangulation, supporting the validity and reliability of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Both secondary and primary data were collected. Data was provided by the project team, extracted from available documentation, and was also collected from individual interviews and an online survey.

The evaluator undertook an extensive desk review in order to capture all relevant qualitative and quantitative data from relevant documentation, including but not limited to the project documentation (Project Document, progress reports, workshop reports, publications, communication products such as videos, website content and social media, meeting reports), the national strategies of the countries of intervention, Sustainable Development Goals documentation, and other relevant documentation (i.e. academic literature).

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were held with representatives from UNCTAD, as well as project focal points and other relevant stakeholders to ensure to the extent possible a representative and balanced sample of respondents. The evaluator conducted 16 online interviews in total. Table 2 below shows the gender-disaggregated breakdown by category of stakeholders. The evaluator developed tailor-made semi-structured questionnaires to guide KIIs. Protocols can be found in Annex 6.

Table 4 - Number of stakeholders contacted/participated in KIIs

Category of stakeholders	Total invited by Sex			Participated and %	Participation rate by Sex	
		F	M		F	M
UNCTAD Team	4	2	2	4 (100%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Focal Points Africa	4	1	3	4 (100%)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Focal Points Latin America	5	2	3	4 (80%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Additional stakeholders in Africa	5	4	1	1 (20%)	1 (100%)	
Additional stakeholders in Latin America	5	2	3	3 (60%)	1 (33%)	2 (66%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16 (70%)</b>	<b>7 (44%)</b>	<b>9 (56%)</b>

An online survey was developed using the online software Qualtrics<sup>22</sup>. The online survey was undertaken to gather perspectives from a larger sample than the one used for KIIs, given the number, diversity, and geographic dispersion of stakeholders in the project. The survey was launched 14 November 2022 and closed 4 December 2022. The survey was available in English and in Spanish. The English transcription of the survey can be found in Annex 6.

In total, 43 respondents out of the 218 that were invited took part in the survey (representing a response rate of 20%). 6 respondents were removed from as they completed less than 3% of the survey<sup>23</sup>; as a result the total response rate is 17%. Regarding demographics, the survey was completed by more respondents from Latin America (62%)<sup>24</sup> than respondents from Africa (38%)<sup>25</sup>. In terms of gender representation, the survey almost obtained an equal split with 49% of female respondents and 51% of male respondents.

In total, 3 respondents considered themselves as having a disability.

Lastly, regarding the organizations of respondents, as shown in Figure 3 below, there is an overrepresentation from government departments or agency (53%) followed by 'other' (24%) which was mainly selected by representatives from Professional Accountancy Organizations (PAOs).

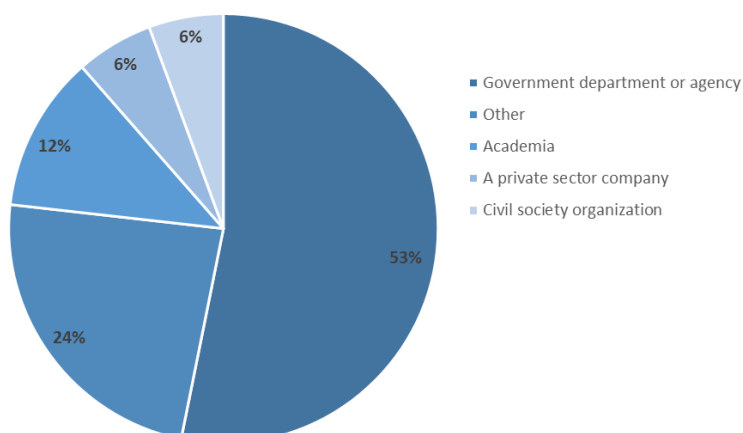
<sup>22</sup> See: <https://www.qualtrics.com>

<sup>23</sup> One respondent answered 84% of the survey, the other 36 respondents answered 100% of the survey.

<sup>24</sup> Respondents were from Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru.

<sup>25</sup> Respondents were from Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Zambia.

Figure 3 – What type of organization do you work in?<sup>26</sup>



## Evaluation limitations

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The evaluation encountered some limitations that are described below:

- **Difficulty engaging with stakeholders.** Two main reasons have been identified regarding this issue:
  - 1) some of the stakeholders only took part in a limited number of activities several years ago (back in 2019/2020) and do not recall and/or are not interested in taking part in the evaluation process as they might not be aware that the activity(ies) were carried out under a larger project;
  - 2) due to the time span of the project, some stakeholders have changed position within the same company or organization, or have left their position and are no longer involved in matters relevant to the project. This made it difficult to obtain their updated contact details.

The evaluator implemented the following mitigation measures: 1) regular contact with UNCTAD team members to seek their support to contact relevant stakeholders and send follow-ups; 2) for the survey, the evaluator sent one reminder and asked the UNCTAD team to send two additional reminders from their UNCTAD email account. Both mitigation measures helped to attain a decent number of respondents for the KIIs and the survey. In addition, the evaluation attempted to mitigate potential bias by triangulating data from the KIIs, by drawing on responses to the open-ended questions in the survey and documents provided by the UNCTAD team.

- **Impossibility to carry out group interviews:** As a direct result of the limitations mentioned above, the evaluator was unable to carry out group interviews. The evaluator tried to organize one group interview in Latin America with stakeholders that were involved in the regional partnership, yet due to delays in responses or no responses at all, the evaluator had to interview the people that responded separately. Additionally, the evaluator sent out invitations to stakeholders in the

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<sup>26</sup> Source: Data collected by the Evaluator



African region to organize two group interviews but only received one answer from a single respondent.

- **Lack of face-to-face interaction:** Considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international travel, the evaluator did not conduct field missions to have face-to-face interactions with the different stakeholders. As a result, the evaluator relied heavily on the interactions with the UNCTAD project team as well as the focal points.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Relevance

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**Relevance:** *The Relevance criterion examined the extent to which the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly addressed the development needs and priorities of participating countries and regions, the integration into the mandate of UNCTAD, and the complementarity with existing initiatives (UN and non-UN) in SDG reporting.*

#### 5.1.1 Participating countries and regions

Evidence collected during the data collection phase confirmed that the project responded to the needs and priorities of the participating countries and regions.

The selection of the four primary beneficiary countries was demand-driven based on their interest and willingness to develop sustainability and SDG reporting at the national level. The selection of these countries was based on whether the countries had SDG monitoring as a top national priority. For Kenya and South Africa, both countries had already taken part in a regional workshop on financial inclusion, as part of UNDA project 1415AX<sup>27</sup>. Additionally, both countries are part of the African Union. The African Union<sup>28</sup> published the Agenda 2063<sup>29</sup> which is Africa's blueprint and master plan for "transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future". The Agenda is pushing for sustainability and the attainment of the SDGs especially under Aspiration 1 "A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development". Kenya and South Africa both expressed their interest to receive further assistance from UNCTAD in the areas of corporate accounting and reporting, including for SMEs, and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In Latin America, Colombia expressed its interest to receive support from UNCTAD in the implementation of the ADT in 2017. As mentioned previously, the project had also identified Brazil as a potential beneficiary due to its strong interest in UNCTAD's work on sustainability and SDG reporting in the context of ISAR sessions. However, at the start of project implementation Brazil was not in a position to support activities at the national level. As a result, UNCTAD approached Guatemala, as its government also expressed high interest in the implementation of the GCI and ongoing activities in the area of sustainability and SDG reporting.

While the project selected four beneficiary countries that are considered to be relatively advanced in terms of sustainability reporting in their regions, the relevance of the project is strongly context-based. The country-level and regional-level analysis below shows how the project responded to the needs and priorities of each country/region.

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<sup>27</sup> Support developing country policymakers in the formulation of national entrepreneurship policies through the implementation of entrepreneurship policy frameworks

<sup>28</sup> African Union is a continental union consisting of 55 member states. It was launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organization of African Unity.

<sup>29</sup> African Union. 2015. Agenda 2063 – The Africa we want. [https://au.int/Agenda2063/popular\\_version](https://au.int/Agenda2063/popular_version)

## Country-level analysis

**Kenya** has the ambition to become a leader in the region on the promotion of sustainability and SDG reporting practices. Prior to the project, the government was already active in the field of sustainability reporting. SDG targets and indicators have been mainstreamed in the mandates of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, as well as in the Strategic Plan 2018/2019 – 2022/2023<sup>30</sup>. Additionally, in July 2020, the government published its second Voluntary National Review (VNR)<sup>31</sup> after integrating the views of all participants involved in the implementation of SDGs in Kenya.

In Kenya, based on the evidence collected by the evaluation, the project was relevant as it complemented existing knowledge and strengthened awareness around the topic of sustainability reporting. For example, before the project, all banks were required to produce periodic sustainability reporting, but they lacked the knowledge on how to do it. Focal points are now discussing with banking organizations the possibility to develop guidelines in the coming years. The project was geared towards improving capacities of professional bodies from a human capacity development perspective, as non-financial reporting is still quite recent, and no frameworks or basic guidelines are established at the national level.

In terms of synergies, the project involved the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK) as a key partner. ICPAK already plays an important role in sustainability reporting and conducts ongoing initiatives in this field. The project helped to formalize and strengthen existing collaborations between ICPAK and other players in the field. Additionally, based on the data collected during the KIIs, the focal points in Kenya are now pushing for the creation of a department within ICPAK that will be in charge of sustainability and SDG reporting. In this regard, the project helped to identify existing gaps in terms of capacities which will help authorities to design a proper institutional framework to support sustainability reporting. In the longer run, the government will be better positioned to inform policies in terms of sustainability reporting and support the setup of an enabling environment that will help to advance the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

**South Africa** is already at the forefront of sustainability reporting in Africa. The country has significant experience in the area and is known for the issuance of the King Reports on Corporate Governance, which are guidelines for governance structure and operation of companies in South Africa. The most recent King Report on Corporate Governance was published in 2016 (King IV)<sup>32</sup>. Additionally, South Africa requires International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)<sup>33</sup> for public companies that are listed on the

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<sup>30</sup> National Treasury and Planning. 2020. Strategic Plan 2018/2019 – 2022/2023. [https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/THE-NATIONAL-TREASURY-AND-PLANNING-STRATEGIC-PLAN-2018\\_19-2022\\_23.pdf](https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/THE-NATIONAL-TREASURY-AND-PLANNING-STRATEGIC-PLAN-2018_19-2022_23.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> National Treasury and Planning, State Department for Planning. 2020. Second Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26359VNR\\_2020\\_Kenya\\_Report.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26359VNR_2020_Kenya_Report.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> King Reports, retrieved from:

[https://www.iodsa.co.za/page/king\\_reports?&hhsearchterms=%22king+and+report%22&#rescol\\_868136](https://www.iodsa.co.za/page/king_reports?&hhsearchterms=%22king+and+report%22&#rescol_868136)

<sup>33</sup> IFRS South Africa, retrieved from: <https://www.ifrs.org/use-around-the-world/use-of-ifrs-standards-by-jurisdiction/view-jurisdiction/south-africa/#:~:text=Required.&text=IFRS%20Standards%20are%20required%20for,its%20ISE%20listing%20is%20secondary.>

Johannesburg Stock Exchange. However, many categories of organizations such as academia and MSMEs are unlisted and have not yet implemented company reporting.

Evidence from the evaluation showed that the project support was aligned with the country's needs and acted as a legitimizer. The project strengthened what has already been the position of South Africa in terms of integrated reporting, but with a stronger focus on sustainability and SDG targets. It was particularly useful in reassuring the government and stakeholders that South Africa is on the right path and that the country is working towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The support from an international organization like UNCTAD was important for stakeholders and companies to be more at ease with what is asked from them. In South Africa, the government is already encouraging companies to take part in sustainability reporting, but UNCTAD brought additional perspective and motivation. Overall, the project helped to strengthen the importance of sustainability reporting and how such reporting can be beneficial to shareholders, employees, and society as a whole.

In Latin America, **Colombia** is perceived as a champion in terms of SDG implementation. The government has incorporated SDGs in the National Development Plan (2018 – 2022)<sup>34</sup>. This plan has been designed to help fulfil commitments towards the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. The SDGs have been used in this plan to promote coherence within and among the different sections of the plan, as well as a reference for target setting. In terms of sustainability reporting, Colombia has made some important advancements. Full IFRS Standards are required in Colombia for all listed companies<sup>35</sup>. However, evidence found that these efforts run in parallel and are fragmented. Additionally, advancements in sustainability reporting focus primarily on listed or large companies and not on MSMEs. Hence, the project was important for Colombia to strengthen the existing work on sustainability reporting, to include more companies as well as to streamline the existing processes.

**Guatemala** also has been working towards SDG monitoring and realization. The government participated in the consultation around the GCI. In addition every two years, since 2017, they are publishing a VNR<sup>36</sup> on the implementation of the SDGs. However, the Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Presidency (SEGEPLAN), which oversees this exercise, realized that it was difficult to gather information on private sector contributions. This major issue is what encouraged Guatemala to take part in the project to fill in identified data collection gaps. Moreover, the private sector in Guatemala has also shown keen interest in knowing more about sustainability reporting and how it is practiced at the international level. The evidence showed that this project is relevant and aligned with both government and private sector priorities.

#### *Additional beneficiary countries*

On top of the four primary beneficiaries of the project, three additional countries expressed interest in receiving technical assistance from UNCTAD. The project adapted its approach and activities and was able

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<sup>34</sup> Departamento Nacional de Planeación, Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022, retrieved from <https://www.dnp.gov.co/DNPN/Paginas/Plan-Nacional-de-Desarrollo.aspx#:~:text=Pacto%20por%20Colombia%2C%20pacto%20por%20la%20equidad,-El%20Plan%20Nacional&text=Este%20PND%20busca%20alcanzar%20la,construir%20el%20futuro%20de%20Colombia.>

<sup>35</sup> Listed companies refer to public companies that are listed on stock exchanges

<sup>36</sup> Secretaria de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia, ODS en Guatemala III Revisión Nacional Voluntaria 2021, retrieved from [https://www.pnd.gt/Home/Revision\\_doc](https://www.pnd.gt/Home/Revision_doc)

to respond to the specific needs of these countries that are in the early stages of implementing sustainability reporting.

The government of **Uganda** designed a national project on sustainability reporting. As a result, it identified UNCTAD as a key technical partner to provide a global perspective, tools, and technical assistance. The first step of UNCTAD assistance was to perform an ADT assessment and present recommendations for advancing SMEs' reporting. Furthermore, UNCTAD delivered a training of trainers (ToT) workshop on SME accounting and developed an e-accounting platform to facilitate SME reporting in Uganda. The technical assistance provided under the project was relevant to the country's needs and constituted an important step for Uganda to move towards integrated SME sustainability reporting.

In **Cameroon**, the government only had limited awareness on how to integrate sustainability indicators in company reports. The government thus decided to start a sustainability reporting initiative. The first phase of this initiative was to request support from UNCTAD to conduct an ADT assessment to understand where Cameroon stood in terms of sustainability reporting. As a result, in the second quarter of 2022, UNCTAD conducted a quick ADT scan assessment of the national reporting infrastructure in the country. UNCTAD also conducted a capacity-building workshop in Cameroon on the GCI to help local stakeholders be better prepared for the regional workshop in Africa. Understanding where the country stood through the ADT assessment was an important step towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The Government of Cameroon is now planning the second phase of the initiative, which will focus on training small, medium, and larger companies to incorporate more sustainability indicators in their annual reports. This overall initiative is at the pilot phase, and its objective is to assess how to get more companies involved and to produce quality company reports on financial and non-financial aspects in the coming five years.

In terms of requirements and practices on SDGs and sustainability reporting, **Mexico** is quite advanced. Corporate sustainability reporting in Mexico has become more and more important as companies have gained awareness on the importance of their sustainability actions and impacts, and how important it is to communicate about them. In the past years, stakeholders such as investors and consumers have exerted pressure on companies to report on sustainability. As a result, the number of companies that publish corporate sustainability reports is on the rise<sup>37</sup>. While there is no nationally applicable regulation or legislation in place in Mexico that require mandatory sustainability reporting from entities, certain companies, such as those in the chemicals and automotive sectors, must report on specific indicators like greenhouse gas emissions and waste-water quality. Moreover, companies listed on the stock exchange must report on institutional dimensions of corporate governance. Although corporate sustainability reporting for other companies is still voluntary, the country is observing an increase in the number of non-mandatory initiatives and the number of guidelines produced for corporate sustainability reporting. Every two years, Mexico has been publishing a VNR, with the latest published in 2021<sup>38</sup>. The country also showed interest in the project to receive technical assistance and to develop regional partnerships. As a result, Mexico became an official member of ISAR and took the chairmanship of the regional partnership for the first year of implementation in 2021 with the support of UNCTAD and a regional consultant hired by UNCTAD. In terms of technical assistance, under the project, Mexico requested assistance to strengthen its sustainability reporting framework for MSMEs. UNCTAD provided a list of recommendations based on

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<sup>37</sup> UNCTAD. 2021. Note on the Status of SDG and Sustainability Reporting by Companies in Mexico.

<sup>38</sup> Secretaria de Economía. 2021. Informe Nacional Voluntario 2021 – Agenda 2030 en Mexico.  
[https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/654347/INV2021\\_web\\_1.pdf](https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/654347/INV2021_web_1.pdf)

current practices and common disclosure requirements for MSMEs in Mexico, a GCI case study of a Mexican company and a note on the status of sustainability reporting in Mexico.

### *Regional Partnerships*

One key output of the project was the creation of regional partnerships in Latin America -which currently has 29 members from 14 countries; and in Africa - which has 54 members from 28 countries. The regional partnerships help member countries gain a better understanding of how to implement sustainability and SDG reporting. They also foster discussions about challenges encountered and good practices to be replicated. While all countries are not at the same stage of implementation and do not have the same resources available, the regional partnerships are relevant as they provide important learning and sharing components for all stakeholders involved as well as a conducive environment for multi-stakeholder partnerships across countries.

Overall, based on the evidence collected, the evaluation found that the project was relevant to the four primary and three additional beneficiary countries, as well as to the regional partnership countries and their regions. The survey results also showed that 50% of the respondents found the activities “very relevant to respond to the priorities of their country/region”, and 38% found it somewhat relevant. While the project primarily focused on the four original beneficiary countries it also had the opportunity to develop tailor-made technical assistance through capacity building activities. It also raised awareness on recent international developments that are changing the sustainability and SDG reporting landscape, including the creation of the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)<sup>39</sup>, which is expected to issue global sustainability reporting standards in 2023. The application of these reporting standards will become mandatory for listed companies in many jurisdictions in the world. In this context, the project is more relevant than ever. While in the beneficiary countries, most of the companies will not fall under this category, the project is still relevant as the lessons learned and good practices contributed to the development of policy guidelines that will be published in 2023. These guidelines are expected to have recommendations for policy makers to reinforce the regulation, institutions and human capacity for sustainability reporting of all types of companies, including listed companies and public sector entities.

### 5.1.2 UNCTAD Mandate

The evidence found that the project is aligned with the overall goal of UNCTAD, which is “to support developing countries efforts to use trade, investment, finance, and technology as vehicles for inclusive and sustainable development”<sup>40</sup>. In addition, UNCTAD serves as the secretariat of ISAR, the United Nations focal point on issues of accounting and reporting at the global level.

During the first period of implementation, the project fell under UNCTAD XIV, namely the Nairobi Azimio and Nairobi Maafikiano<sup>41</sup> which are the outcome documents of 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference (2016). The Nairobi Maafikiano (or agreement in Swahili) was the basis for the work of UNCTAD until the next quadrennial session, which took place in 2021. The review of the outcome documents of UNCTAD XIV

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.ifrs.org/groups/international-sustainability-standards-board/>

<sup>40</sup> UNCTAD. UNCTAD at a glance. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/UNCTAD-at-a-glance\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/UNCTAD-at-a-glance_en.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> UNCTAD. 2016. UNCTAD XIV Outcome – Nairobi Maafikiano and Nairobi Azimio [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/iss2016d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/iss2016d1_en.pdf)

showed that this project was aligned with the expected work of UNCTAD for this period. The Azimio (or political declaration in Swahili) emphasized the importance of investment and enterprise development in enhancing productive capacities to transform economies, while the Maafikiano emphasized that a role of UNCTAD is to *“advance its work on international standards of accounting and reporting, and promote best practices in corporate transparency and accounting, including through the use of its Accounting Development Tool, in coordination with international efforts in the field of sustainability accounting as appropriate”*<sup>42</sup>.

The UN Strategic Framework for the period 2018-2019<sup>43</sup> reaffirmed the role of UNCTAD in supporting countries to implement development strategies aimed at better integration into the global trading system and economy, and achievement of sustainable growth and development. More specifically, the project is aligned with Subprogramme 2 of the Strategic Framework of which the objective is *“to ensure inclusive growth and sustainable development through investment and enterprise development for the enhancement of productive and technological capacity-building, industrialization, economic diversification, job creation and progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”*<sup>44</sup>. One of the indicators to measure progress in Subprogramme 2 is the *“number of countries using guidance, and tools developed by UNCTAD in the areas of accounting, enterprise development, business linkages, and corporate reporting”*<sup>45</sup>. The project was a direct input to Subprogramme 2 and was developed with the rationale to contribute to an enhanced understanding of enterprise development issues and the ability to boost productive and technological capacity through enterprise development policies. The project is also a direct contributor to sustainable investment<sup>46</sup> as enhanced corporate reporting on sustainability and contribution to the SDGs will help to attract sustainability-minded investors.

In 2021, UNCTAD’s 15<sup>th</sup> quadrennial session took place and adopted as outcome documents the Spirit of Speightstown and the Bridgetown Covenant<sup>47</sup>. The latter is the basis of the work of UNCTAD until 2024. In the Bridgetown Covenant, the importance of reporting and accounting tools to achieve the 2030 Agenda is clearly stated under *“transforming to a more sustainable and more resilient economy”* and *“transforming how development is financed”*. Also, the Covenant reiterates a role of UNCTAD which is to *“continue to advance work on international standards of accounting and reporting”*<sup>48</sup>.

The project had broad alignment with UNCTAD’s mandate, including with major intergovernmental activities delivered via this mandate. The recent 39<sup>th</sup> session of ISAR, which took place in November 2022, reaffirmed its relevance. As mentioned in the agreed conclusions document on item 3, the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on ISAR *“commends the UNCTAD secretariat for the extensive work conducted during the intersessional period to support regional efforts and build partnerships in Africa and Latin America aimed at promoting a common approach to sustainability*

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p.38

<sup>43</sup> United Nations. Proposed Strategic Framework for the period 2018-2019. Part 2, Biennial programme plan. Programme 10, Trade and development. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/826305>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p.7

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p.8

<sup>46</sup> Here sustainable investment is defined as a range of practices in which investors aim to achieve financial returns while promoting long-term environmental or social value.

<sup>47</sup> UNCTAD. 2022. UNCTAD 15 Outcome – The Spirit of Speightstown and The Bridgetown Covenant <https://unctad.org/webflyer/unctad-15-outcome-spirit-speightstown-and-bridgetown-covenant>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p.46

*reporting; in this context, welcomes the initiative by the secretariat to develop a brief guide to establishing such partnerships and maximizing their benefits; encourages other regions to form such partnerships; and calls upon the secretariat to provide the relevant support”<sup>49</sup>.*

The Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission took place in November 2022. Its agreed conclusion on item 6 referred to the work conducted by UNCTAD under the project. In the conclusions, the Commission *“commends the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting on its thirty-ninth session, underscores the pivotal role played by sustainability reporting in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and acknowledges the work of UNCTAD in supporting its members in promoting reliable and comparable disclosures on financial and sustainability performance, including through the establishment of regional partnerships”<sup>50</sup>.*

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<sup>49</sup> ISAR. 2022. 39<sup>th</sup> Session Agreed Conclusions Item 3.

<sup>50</sup> Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission. 2022. 13<sup>th</sup> Session Agreed Conclusions Item 6.



## 5.2. Effectiveness

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**Effectiveness:** *The effectiveness criterion looked at the achievement of the planned objectives and outcomes, the utilization of the tools and the knowledge and skills gained during the project. This criterion also looks at the enabling and limiting factors that contributed to the achievement of results.*

### 5.2.1 Achievement of planned objectives and outcomes

The project's objective was to "strengthen the capacities of governments in Africa and Latin America to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular indicator 12.6 on enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting". Based on the results framework (Annex 3), the planned outcomes were:

- EA1. Enhanced country-level multi-stakeholder capacity to assess their national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting;
- EA2. Improved technical and institutional capacity among authorities of selected countries to achieve an enabling national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting;
- EA3. Improved awareness and experience sharing among policy makers, private sector and civil society at national, regional, and global levels on achieving enabling policy framework for enterprise sustainability/SDG reporting.

The project measured the achievement of the above outcomes with a set of indicators presented in the results framework. Some of these indicators were monitored by means of surveys to the participants after some of the activities (i.e., workshops). Table 5 below is based on self-reported data<sup>51</sup> and shows that the project reached all the targets set per indicator. Indicators under EA1 have been fully achieved with between 90 and 100% of participants in all four countries rating the tools<sup>52</sup> as useful or very useful; the target was "at least 75%". Moreover, a national report on the assessment of sustainability reporting frameworks has been finalized and validated in all four primary beneficiary countries as per the planned outputs. Regarding EA2, the project planned the development of national action plans with at least three priority actions in a minimum of two of the beneficiary countries. Under the project, national action plans have been developed in all four primary beneficiary countries. To support the development of the national action plans, the project expected that at least ten companies in each beneficiary countries would take steps to pilot-test the sustainability and SDG reporting tools. In both countries in Latin America, over 10 companies took steps to implement the sustainability reporting tool. In Kenya and South Africa, more than 200 companies committed to implementing the reporting tools, although it is unclear whether these companies have actively been taking steps towards changing company reporting. Lastly, to measure the achievement of EA3, the first indicator looked at the implementation of the two new regional partnerships created as part of the project. The partnerships were successfully developed between 2021 and 2022. The second indicator looked at the improvement of participants' awareness of enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting: 99% of the regional partnerships' participants in both regions indicated improved awareness. Moreover, 100% of the participants evaluated the regional workshop to be very useful or useful. As mentioned previously, all targets for the indicators were reached or exceeded.

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<sup>51</sup> Project document, progress reports, and final report by UNCTAD.

<sup>52</sup> Tools refer to results of the comprehensive assessment with the ADT, the GCI case study and the note of status of sustainability reporting and presentations.

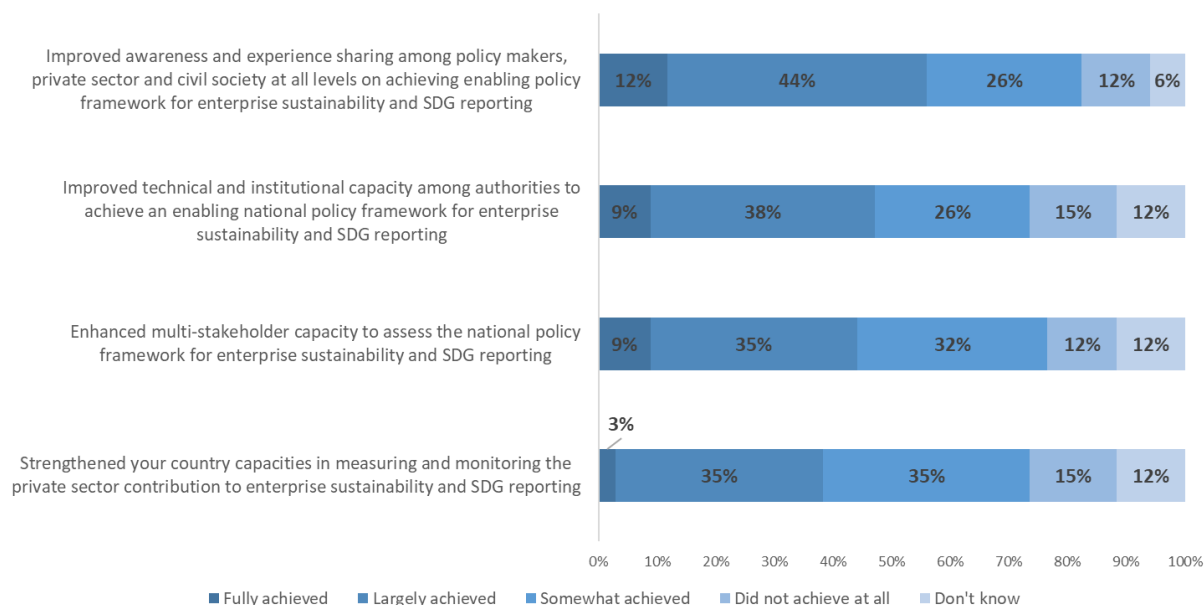
It should also be underlined that the project was able to assess the achievement of these indicators against baseline data.

At the beginning of the project, these indicators were designed to measure the achievement of the above-mentioned outcomes. Therefore, it is important to note that measuring the impact of a project on broader and long-term outcomes is challenging, especially because the evaluation was conducted directly after the end of the project’s activities.

The survey results show that when combining “fully achieved” and “largely achieved” responses, overall a relatively high number of respondents (between 38% the lowest and 56% the highest) consider that the activities achieved the expected outcomes as shown in Figure 4. It is important to note however that a low percentage (below 12%) of respondents thought the activities fully achieved the expected outcomes. This is especially the case for the outcome regarding strengthening the country capacities in measuring and monitoring the private sector contribution to enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting, where only 3% of the respondents answered “fully achieved”.

As a result, survey results and KIIs showed that the achievement of the indicators suggests that the project was successful in initiating the discussions at the different levels around the topic of sustainability and SDG reporting, as well as raising awareness and experience sharing. In the longer term, it seems likely that the project and its activities will result in the improvement of the technical and institutional capacity of the beneficiary countries which is important to ensure sustainability of project results.

Figure 4 - To what extent have the activities/planned activities...<sup>53</sup>



<sup>53</sup> Source: Data collected by the Evaluator

Overall, the project focused on capacity building and awareness raising among the key stakeholders in the field of sustainability and SDG reporting. The targeted stakeholders ranged from government to private sector actors. In the survey conducted by the evaluator, when asked if the project contributed to gaining knowledge and developing skills, respondents gave a positive rating of on average 4 out of 5.

Another outcome of the project is fostering collaboration and coordination at the national and regional levels. As a result of the regional partnerships, UNCTAD was able to create a blueprint on how to organize such partnerships that can be replicated in other regions. Regional partnerships were successful in providing a common understanding to their members on the steps needed to implement sustainability and SDG reporting. They also bring to their members a better understanding of the relevance of their effort linked with international good practices. Data collected in the context of the evaluation showed that the regional partnerships opened room for countries to acquire knowledge and experience from one another, encouraged collaboration as well as consistency in developing action plans. There was a clear (non-quantifiable) increase in efficiency for learning from each other. Furthermore, the regional partnerships are providing a voice to the countries in Latin America and Africa: the members of the regional partnerships were able to provide inputs on the first draft of the ISSB common standards.

Table 5 – Outcomes (or Expected Accomplishments) achievement<sup>54</sup>

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Achievement	Achievement (from 1 to 4 ) based on the data collected during the evaluation <sup>55</sup>
<b>EA1.</b>	IA 1.1 At least 75% of the participants in the capacity-building activities in beneficiary countries rated the Enterprise Sustainability/ SDGs Reporting Tool as useful or very useful for the assessment of the existing national framework.	<i>Beneficiary countries initially were not aware of the Enterprise Sustainability/ SDGs Reporting Tool and its implementation purposes.</i>	<p>100% of participants of the kick-off meeting in Colombia found the meeting, as well as the presentation and discussions on the sustainability/SDG reporting tools very useful or useful. At the multi-stakeholder consultative workshop in Colombia, 93% of participants found the workshop, the results of the comprehensive assessment with the ADT, the GCI case study and the note of status of sustainability reporting and presentations useful or very useful.</p> <p>92% of participants of the kick-off meeting in Guatemala found the meeting, as well as the presentation and discussions on the sustainability/SDG reporting tools very useful or useful. 100% of participants at the multi-stakeholder consultative workshop in Guatemala found the workshop useful or very useful. In addition, more than 92% of participants found the results of the comprehensive assessment with the ADT, the case studies</p>	<p><b>3</b> – the online survey asked respondents how useful are the sustainability reporting tools in relation to your work/role? The responses were the following for very useful and somewhat useful combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GCI: 65%</li> <li>- Training manual: 65%</li> <li>- ADT: 59%</li> <li>- Metadata guidance on the SDG 12.6.1: 53%</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, interviews conducted with focal points supported the fact that stakeholders involved in capacity-building activities found the GCI and ADT useful.</p>

<sup>54</sup> Source: Project document, progress reports, and final report by UNCTAD.

<sup>55</sup> 1: did not achieve at all, 2: somewhat achieved, 3: largely achieved, 4: fully achieved, DK: don't know

			<p>and the note of the status of sustainability reporting useful or very.</p> <p>On average, 90-100% of the meetings' participants in South Africa and Kenya found the meetings, visual aids, and discussions on the sustainability/SDG reporting tools i.e., ADT and GCI very useful or useful.</p>	
	IA1.2 A national report on the assessment of sustainability reporting framework is finalized and endorsed in each of the beneficiary countries.	<i>Beneficiary countries did not conduct assessment of sustainability reporting framework based on the Enterprise Sustainability/ SDGs Reporting Tool.</i>	A national report on the assessment of sustainability reporting framework has been finalized and validated in all four countries.	<b>4</b> – based on the project documents national report assessments have been conducted in all beneficiary countries.
<b>EA2.</b>	IA2.1 An action plan, with at least three priority actions, for high quality sustainability reporting is formulated and endorsed by national stakeholders in at least two out of the four beneficiary countries.	<i>National stakeholders of the beneficiary countries did not develop an action plan for high quality sustainability reporting.</i>	<p>A National Action Plan for Colombia with 3 strategic objectives was prepared, presented, and also validated at the virtual meeting on 15 July 2020.</p> <p>A National Action Plan for high-quality sustainability reporting was developed for Guatemala. The plan was presented and validated at the virtual meetings that took place on July 16 and 23 2021.</p> <p>A National Action Plan for high-quality sustainability reporting was developed for South Africa. The plan was presented and validated at the virtual meetings that took place on 14 July 2021.</p>	<b>4</b> - based on the project documents national action plans have been conducted in all beneficiary countries.

			A National Action Plan for high-quality sustainability reporting was developed for Kenya. The plan was presented and validated at the virtual meetings that took place on 26 November 2021.	
	IA2.2 In beneficiary countries where the action plans are endorsed, at least ten companies take steps to pilot-test through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool.	<i>Pilot testing through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool did not take place in the beneficiary countries.</i>	<p>Over 10 companies in Colombia took steps to implement the Sustainability reporting Tool.</p> <p>Over 10 companies in Guatemala took steps to implement the Sustainability reporting Tool.</p> <p>More than 200 companies in South Africa committed to implementing the Sustainability reporting Tool.</p> <p>More than 200 companies in Kenya committed to implement the Sustainability reporting Tool.</p>	Not assessed – the evaluation did not collect any data regarding IA2.2
<b>EA3.</b>	IA3.1 Two regional partnerships are achieved to collaborate on best practices to facilitate quality and comparability of data gathered through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool.	<i>Regional partnerships for collaboration on best practices to facilitate quality and comparability of Sustainability/SDGs Reporting were not established.</i>	<p>A Regional Partnership for the promotion of sustainability and SDG reporting in Latin America was created on October 8 2021. The first meeting of the partnership was held in November 2021.</p> <p>A Regional Partnership for the promotion of sustainability and SDG reporting in Africa was created on 28 January 2022. The first meeting of the partnership was held in 2022.</p>	<b>4</b> – Based on the project documents and interviews the two regional partnerships were achieved.
	IA3.2 95% of participants of regional workshops indicate improved awareness on enabling	<i>There was limited awareness on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting in the beneficiary countries.</i>	99% of participants of the Regional Workshop in Latin America indicated improved awareness on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting. In addition, 100% of	

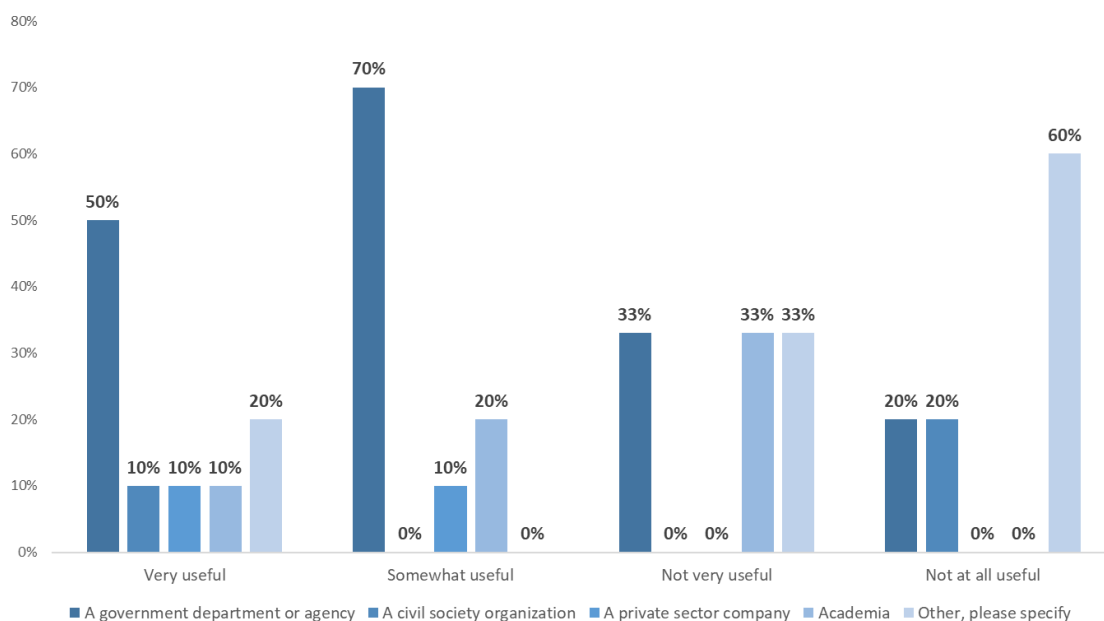
	<p>policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting.</p>		<p>participants evaluated the regional workshop in Latin America as very useful or useful.</p>	<p>achieving the expected outcomes. Additionally, interviews with key stakeholders supported that the creation of regional partnerships helped to increase awareness on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting among the participants.</p>
			<p>99% of participants of the Regional Workshop in Africa indicated improved awareness on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting. 100% of participants evaluated the regional workshop in Africa as very useful or useful.</p>	

## 5.2.2 Knowledge enhancement and capacity building

As the project’s activities were linked to capacity building and knowledge enhancement, the evaluation focused on the usefulness of the tools, knowledge and skills gained by the project participants.

When asked about the tools<sup>56</sup>, respondents mainly oriented their answers to the ADT and the GCI. The interviews conducted by the evaluator reveal that the ADT assessment is perceived as a useful tool that helped beneficiary countries better understand where they stand and what their gaps are in terms of SDG reporting, especially for stakeholders that took part in the assessment or were working for the government. This is also supported by the evaluation survey, in which overall 29% of the respondents found the ADT very useful. Yet, when disaggregating the data by type of organization, the results show that, amongst the respondents that find the ADT very useful, 50% are from a government department or agency. This is also true for the ones that find it somewhat useful, where 70% are from a government department or agency<sup>57</sup>. On the more negative responses, the percentage of government representatives versus the other types of respondents is lower. It is important to note that private companies were not among the stakeholders participating in the ADT assessment, and probably had limited knowledge about the tool.

Figure 5 - How useful are the sustainability reporting tools in relation to your work/role? (per organization type)<sup>58</sup>



The ADT is a key element to better grasp the needs of countries and to draw a problem tree which will help to design an action plan. Overall, the stakeholders involved in this process reported learning a lot and that it helped to break down some barriers. Some respondents interviewed mentioned that, at first glance, the ADT can appear to be overwhelming and rather complex, but once the workshops clarified the

<sup>56</sup> ADT, GCI, Metadata 12.6.1, Training Manual

<sup>57</sup> Note : 53% of the total respondents from the survey are from a government department or agency

<sup>58</sup> Source: Data collected by the Evaluator



role of each stakeholder in the assessment everything went smoothly. A recommendation from some stakeholders was to develop a very simple guide on how to use the ADT. It is important to note that a session during the project focused on explaining the tool and how to use it. The project team also provided the participants with an orientation package and a national consultant was available if needed to support the ADT assessment.

On the other hand, some stakeholders from the private sector were not in favor of such an assessment as they did not perceive its usefulness. The overall feedback received from evaluation respondents is that this tool is not widely known by non-government stakeholders.

When it comes to the GCI, this tool was defined as critical for smaller entities to be able to incorporate sustainability reporting requirements and develop a sustainability report. The evaluation survey shows that the GCI received the highest percentage in terms of usefulness amongst the other tools with 50% of the respondents finding it very useful, followed by the training manual (35%), the ADT and the Metadata guidance on the SDG 12.6.1 (both 29%). This tool is considered particularly useful as companies likely have some of the information in their databases already but are unaware how to use it. The tool helps to centralize non-financial information such as that referring to environmental and social and governance (ESG), or human rights. It also helps companies to understand that the information already exists and is accessible to them, and that it should not be a burden in terms of internal capacities required (time, resources, expertise) to develop such a report. The GCI tool has helped to bridge the gap between companies' knowledge and government's aspirations and requirements.

In conclusion, the project helped to build the capacity of the participants in terms of utilization of the tools and how to then develop a national plan. The project also increased their knowledge on the topic of sustainability and SDG reporting, in what exists at the international and regional levels, and what needs to be done in their own countries. On average, respondents from the evaluation survey gave a 4 out of 5 rating for knowledge gained and skills developed from the project.

### 5.2.3 Enabling factors

The evaluation identified five enabling factors that helped to achieve the results of the project. The first factor is the **selection of beneficiaries**. The project selected beneficiaries that already had interest in implementing sustainability reporting at the national level, thus this was an enabling factor to some extent. First, the selection was demand-driven, which means that the countries requested to take part in the project. This voluntary-based engagement facilitated the achievement of the planned outcomes. Second, having these four countries engaged in the project was beneficial to the regional partnerships, as each beneficiary was able to share knowledge with other countries. Some stakeholders interviewed mentioned that this was an important factor that motivated them to start the process in their own countries and to follow in the steps of their peers.

The second enabling factor identified is the **participatory approach**. The project adopted this in all activities, including workshops, assessments, and design of national plans. This aspect is crucial to develop buy-in amongst the stakeholders that will be the active actors in the implementation of the national plans. This aspect helped ensure that the project's activities were successful and sustainable in the long term.

The **selection of critical stakeholders** is considered to be an important enabling factor as well. The project was able to identify these relevant stakeholders through the help of its focal points. These stakeholders were key to the process as their priorities include implementation of sustainability reporting. Selecting the right stakeholders enabled better integration of the knowledge and capacities towards the realization of a common purpose. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that according to some respondents, the governments should be even more involved and take more ownership when it comes to sustainability and SDG reporting.

Once the critical stakeholders had been identified the project then created **partnerships at the national and regional level**. These partnerships have also been identified as an enabling factor. First, at the national level the project has been able to bring together key stakeholders in sustainability reporting from different levels ranging from governments to the private sector, including professional accountancy organizations as well as stakeholders from academia and civil society. Bringing together key stakeholders at the national level has been identified by respondents as very useful and important for kick-starting some of the discussions and follow-up activities. For some of the evaluation respondents, this aspect of “partnership” was missing prior to the project as some stakeholders would mainly work in silos. Respondents were also confident that now that all important actors are acquainted, the partnerships created at the national level will endure beyond the end of the project and ensure sustainability.

Second, as mentioned previously, the regional partnerships developed under the project were a key aspect of success. These partnerships have been praised by the respondents as key for countries to have a better understanding of company reporting and what is feasible based on lessons learned shared by other members. The creation of these partnerships helped to strengthen the work done throughout the project and to legitimize it at the regional level.

The last enabling factor is the project leveraging **UNCTAD’s long-standing contribution and recognition** to sustainability reporting. UNCTAD’s tools are perceived as a standard (voluntary) for sustainability and SDG reporting in companies and are recognized by the international community. The work produced by UNCTAD in this field is an important factor that attracted critical stakeholders to the project.

#### 5.2.4 Challenges

The evaluation also identified some key challenges. While some could be linked to the project’s implementation, others were linked to contextual factors such as COVID-19 or country-based factors.

The first two limiting factors identified is the slow **launch of the project in Kenya and the need to change a beneficiary country in Latin America**. In Kenya, issues due to the change in government and the challenge of compliance with local regulations for establishing an agreement on cooperation modalities in 2019 delayed the launch of the project in the country. After consultations with the national authorities, in November 2020, the project team decided to proceed with engaging UNDP Kenya as a supporting partner to provide logistical support for the delivery of project activities in Kenya. Negotiations and discussions took some time and the project activities started later than expected. In any case, the project team in partnership with the Kenyan National Treasury and Planning was able to launch and successfully conduct the planned activities of the project. In Latin America, as mentioned previously, the project initially identified Brazil as a beneficiary. This was later changed to Guatemala, and activities here started in 2020.

As the project started in February 2018 and ended in June 2022, the core of the activities took place in the midst of the **COVID-19 crisis**, leading to some challenging implications. The pandemic and resulting lockdowns and travel restrictions prevented the organization of face-to-face meetings. To some extent, it impacted the capacity of the project team and focal points to facilitate linkages between the different stakeholders at the national and regional levels through public gathering or face-to-face workshops. Nonetheless, the spread of the virus had an overall limited negative impact on the activities. The evaluation evidence found that the team's organization, by assigning two UNCTAD staff per region as well as focal points in each primary beneficiary, helped to mitigate COVID-19 impacts. The interviews conducted with focal points showed that UNCTAD's team were key here. They helped to organize activities in the field, in the context of lockdowns, and helped to facilitate the exchange of key information with focal points. At the activity level, the team was able to swiftly change face-to-face activities to online meetings, based on local COVID-19 restrictions between 2020 and 2021. This has also been reflected in the survey results where 54%<sup>59</sup> of the respondents said that they feel that the project's activities adapted well to COVID-19. In 2022, some of the activities were conducted in person or in a hybrid format, whilst some remained virtual.

At the country-level, some other contextual factors have been identified as challenges for the implementation and sustainability of the project. Countries in Africa and Latin America often have **limited human capacity** as well as limited regulations, infrastructure, and resources. Although compared to other countries in the regions, the participating ones were more advanced in the area of sustainability reporting, there still was an overall lack of knowledge and/or awareness. While the assistance provided by UNCTAD and the tools are relevant and important, these can only be fruitful if countries have the capacity as well as buy-in from the government and other key stakeholders to implement them. Furthermore, there is a mix in terms of financial and human resources available in these countries and it is important to consider this factor when assessing the success of the project. Some countries have more capacity while others are experiencing austerity measures with budget restrictions and cannot perform as well as they might like to. Finally, some countries lack **institutional, political or private sector buy-in** which might hinder the long-term outcomes of the project. This aspect is further developed in the section on sustainability.

Additionally, some other **contextual factors** were not fully integrated when designing the project. For example, the **prominence of the informal economy** was identified as an additional challenge for the implementation and sustainability of the project. In Latin America, the informal economy has shrunk in the last two decades, but it still accounts for slightly over half of total employment in the region (140 million workers)<sup>60</sup>. The situation is similar in Africa, where nearly 83% of employment is informal<sup>61</sup>. Prevalence of the informal economy means that a significant number of workers/companies are not registered, which by default means that they are not officially reporting on their finances and therefore either on their sustainability and contribution to the SDGs. In Uganda, this is particularly the case where the government is now facing the issue that companies do not want to be officially registered as they fear a taxation obligation. In this context, it is challenging for the country to achieve its objectives in terms of

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<sup>59</sup> 46% of the respondents responded "don't know"

<sup>60</sup> European Parliament. 2021. The informal economy and coronavirus in Latin America. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690587/EPRS\\_BRI\(2021\)690587\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690587/EPRS_BRI(2021)690587_EN.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> ILO. 2022. Informal Economy in Africa: Which way forward? Making policy responsive, inclusive and sustainable. [https://www.ilo.org/africa/events-and-meetings/WCMS\\_842674/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/africa/events-and-meetings/WCMS_842674/lang--en/index.htm)

sustainability reporting. In response to this challenge, Uganda and UNCTAD have developed mitigation measures (refer to the sustainability section).

### 5.3. Efficiency

**Efficiency:** *The efficiency criterion examined the extent to which project resources have been utilized to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner, as well as the overall efficiency of the implementation of the project in each beneficiary country/region.*

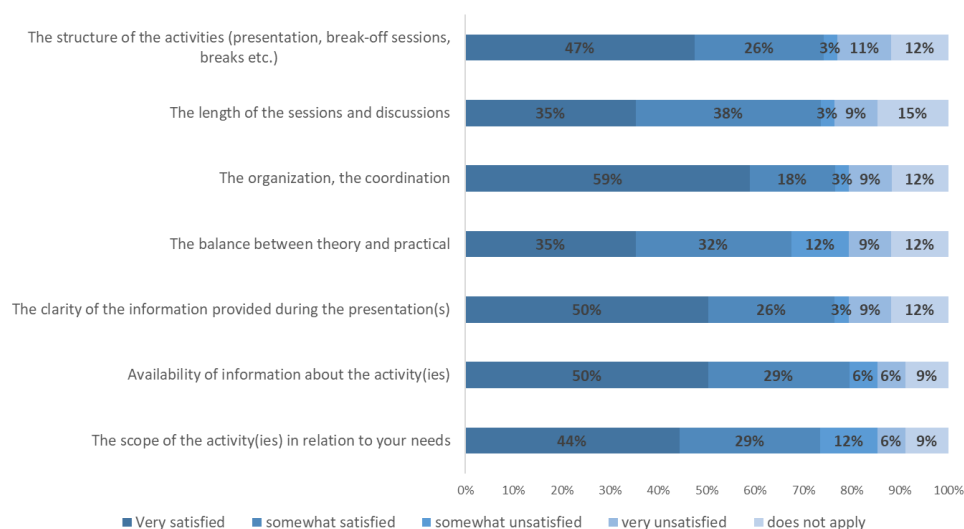
The assessment of the efficiency criteria focused on the following 1) the efficiency of management, 2) the efficiency of activities, 3) the efficiency of publications and communications, 3) the efficiency of the regional partnerships, 4) the duration of the project, and 5) the allocated budget.

#### 5.3.1 Efficiency of the project

In terms of overall efficiency, the key informants interviewed agreed that the project was efficiently managed. This was also reflected in the survey conducted by the evaluator, where 53%<sup>62</sup> of the respondents considered that the project was efficiently implemented in their country/region. Data collected through interviews showed that all focal points that were working directly with UNCTAD staff described the management as smooth, supportive, and collaborative.

Figure 6 below shows the level of satisfaction of the respondents on the efficiency of the activities. In general, the respondents were satisfied<sup>63</sup> with some slight differences between certain aspects. Some management aspects, including the organization and coordination, was considered well-managed, with 59% of the respondents being very satisfied. However, the balance between theoretical and practical support (i.e. application of the knowledge gained) as well as the length of the sessions and discussions appeared to be less efficient as only 35% of the respondents were very satisfied.

Figure 6 - For each of the following aspects of the activity(ies) in which you participated, please indicate your level of satisfaction<sup>64</sup>



The survey also asked respondents if they had access to or could read the studies and publications developed: 41% of the respondents did not and 58% did. It is important to note that documents had been

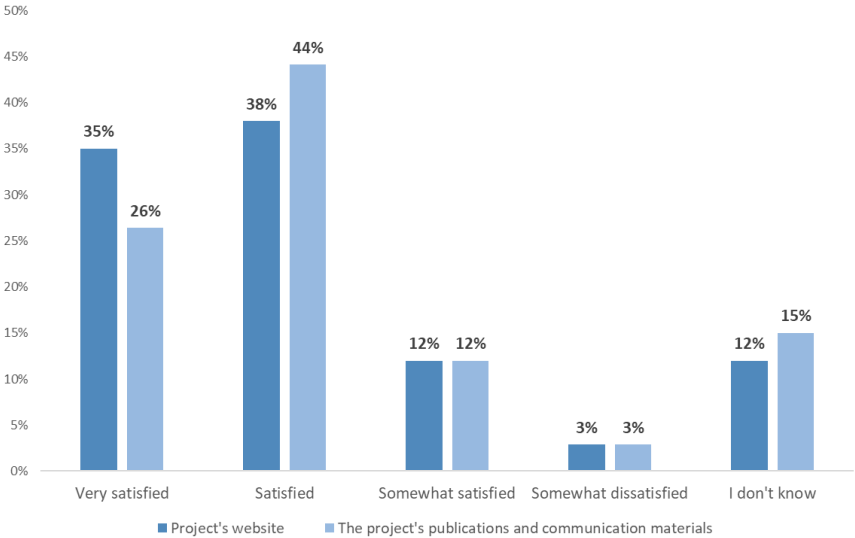
<sup>62</sup> Combination of very efficient (6%) and efficient (47%)

<sup>63</sup> Combination of very satisfied and somewhat satisfied

<sup>64</sup> Source: Data collected by the Evaluator

provided during the workshops and meetings, thus 41% can be understood as the percentage of respondents that did not read the studies/publications rather than did not have access. Amongst the 58%, the most mentioned publications were the GCI, the ADT, the IFRS documents, the National Action Plans, and lastly documents related to the regional partnerships. In addition, the survey asked respondents if they were satisfied with the project’s website and the project’s publications and communication materials. As shown in Figure 7 below, 73% of the respondents are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the project website and 70% of the respondents are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the project publications and communication materials. Moreover, an average of 13% of respondents replied “I don’t know” which might suggest that UNCTAD could do more to promote the project’s tools and documents.

Figure 7 - How satisfied are you with the following:<sup>65</sup>

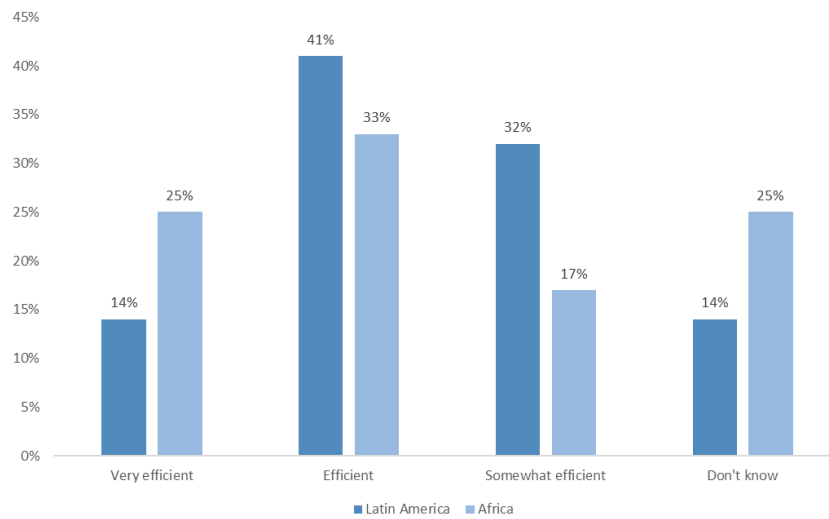


The survey asked respondents if the regional partnerships were efficient in achieving the expected outcomes. Overall, while the results are relatively positive, with 20% of the respondents finding the regional partnerships very efficient, 37% efficient and 25% somewhat efficient, a breakdown at the regional level is more informative (see below). Additionally, the percentage of “don’t know” responses was somewhat high (18%). This could be explained by the fact that some respondents were unable to measure at this stage tangible impacts of the regional partnerships and whether it was efficient in achieving the expected outcomes.

Figure 8 below shows a breakdown of the survey results per region. For example, the results show that there is a 11-percentage point difference between the respondents from Africa and from Latin America as to whether the regional partnerships were very efficient. Qualitative data from the survey and interviews with key informants in Latin America may explain this result. It was found that participants of the Latin American Partnership expected more achievements in the area of sustainability and SDG reporting and were eager to start the processes in their own countries. As a result, they perceived the regional partnership as a determining factor that should provide them with the relevant tools to kick-start the process at the national level.

<sup>65</sup> Source: Data collected by the Evaluator

Figure 8 - In your opinion, were the regional partnership efficient in achieving the expected outcomes? (per region of respondents)<sup>66</sup>



### 5.3.2 Duration and budget of the project

The project started in February 2018 and was initially planned to be completed by 31 December 2021. However due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the key activities and meetings took place online, which to some extent may have been less effective as face-to-face interactions (e.g. lack of ‘informal’ discussions, less interactions from the participants, technical issues etc.). Following the presentation of the actions plans, the beneficiary countries showed interest in having additional support to implement recommendations. As a result, the UNCTAD team requested an official extension from the UNDA management team to enhance the sustainability and long-term impact of the project activities, as well as to address the limitations of virtual meetings. The project was granted a six-month extension until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2022. Considering the challenges encountered at the beginning of the project with Brazil and the slow start in Kenya, as well as the complex scope of the project<sup>67</sup>, the tasks were accomplished in a reasonable timeframe, and the delays did not prevent achieving the expected results. Additionally, the overall duration still allowed the project to finish prior to key international events related to sustainability and SDG reporting such as the 39<sup>th</sup> ISAR session, the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission that took place in November 2022, and the launch of ISSB’s standards that is expected to take place in early 2023.

Regarding the budget, due to COVID-19, some of the initially planned allocations including towards staff travel and workshop organization were not used. These financial resources have been redistributed to other activities including the additional technical assistance provided to Cameroon, Uganda, and Mexico as well as the additional activities A.2.4 (results framework, Annex 2). Overall, a total of US\$624,173.64 was spent under the project and the project implementation rate was 86%, which takes into account the

<sup>66</sup> Source: Data collected by the Evaluator

<sup>67</sup> Covering four beneficiary countries, three additional technical assistance activities, and two regional partnerships

unutilized funds of US\$17,000 returned to the Development Account in 2021 (see Annex Resources section ). All the initial activities and additional ones were implemented under this budget.

As shown Table 2 in the resources section (2.6), the “consultants” budget line was the highest of the project (56%). Looking at the implementation structure, this seems logical. During the pandemic UNCTAD staff were unable to travel to the beneficiary countries and had to rely on local focal points and consultants. As a result, 12% of the total expenditure was spent for staff travel against the 29%<sup>68</sup> initially expected. The reduction in travel expenses also impacted the expenditure planned for “workshops/study tours” which was initially US\$159,600.00 (vs US\$ 22,241.85 actual expenditure). A share of the resources allocated to this budget line were redeployed to workshop organization, as well as ISAR Honors preparations, and consultancy costs which appear to be in line with the project’s needs.

Due to the pandemic, initial resources have been re-allocated. Table 3 in the resources section shows the planned expenditure vs the actual expenditure per year. The expenditures for year 2022 have been calculated by the evaluator based on the available data, as the progress report for 2022 was not available at the time of assessment. The table shows that in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis (2020 and 2021) the planned expenditures have not been reached, for example in 2020 the planned expenditure was US\$ 325 400, and the actual expenditure was US\$ 85,756.98. As a result, 35% of the total expenditure was spent between January and June 2022.

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<sup>68</sup> 212,000.00 out of 740 000.00 USD



## 5.4. Sustainability

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**Sustainability:** *The sustainability criterion assessed the extent to which the project's results are likely to sustain beyond the end of the project. More specifically, this criterion looked at the measures that were implemented during the project to ensure the sustainability, the unexpected outcomes that derived from the project that will ensure the sustainability of the results, and the challenges and mitigation measures identified.*

### 5.4.1 Sustainability measures in the design of the project

The evaluation found that there is a reasonable likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or remain after the project's end. This was particularly reflected in the survey conducted by the evaluator, where 82% of respondents agreed<sup>69</sup> with the following statement "the work done by the project will last beyond the end of the project".

Some of the factors supporting sustainability were embedded in the project's design and implementation approaches. This ensured that prerequisite conditions for sustainability were in place, and when put into practice, they can continue to be enhanced and strengthened. The four key factors identified are 1) the capacity, knowledge, and skills transferred to the project stakeholders, 2) the design of National Action Plans in the four initial beneficiary countries, 3) the regional partnerships, and 4) the participatory and iterative approach.

The evaluation found that the project enhanced key stakeholders' capacity and knowledge in terms of sustainability and SDG reporting. The project provided these stakeholders with a better understanding of how the key tools designed by UNCTAD worked. Additionally, one of the project's outcomes was the design, in consultation with local key stakeholders, of National Action Plans. These National Action Plans provided the beneficiary countries with actionable steps to take in the coming years. The National Action Plans were designed based on the outcomes of the problem tree analysis that derived directly from the ADT assessment and consultations with national stakeholders. Each of the problem trees was translated into strategic objectives in the Action Plans.

These strategic objectives were designed to guide the implementation of the Action Plan in legal and regulatory reporting infrastructure both at country and institutional levels. The whole process to design the Action Plans and the operability of them ensured that these Plans responded to the needs and priorities of the beneficiary countries. Further, having relevant support from national governments and key stakeholders leads to more sustainable results.

The creation of regional partnerships was also an important aspect of sustainability. These regional partnerships enabled continuous support and a dedicated space to share lessons learned and good practices. Under these regional partnerships, UNCTAD developed two online platforms which provide access to all relevant resources, information, meetings, and news.

Lastly, UNCTAD followed a participatory and iterative approach in this project. This approach is an important factor of sustainability as it ensures that relevant and up-to-date tools and guidelines are in line with the needs and priorities of potential users. The project had key stakeholders involved in consultations to give feedback on the existing tools, recommendations, and good practices. As a result of this project

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<sup>69</sup> Combination of strongly agree (47%) and agree (35%)

and other consultations (e.g. ISAR 39<sup>th</sup> session and participants from other regions) in 2022 UNCTAD published a revised version of the GCI<sup>70</sup> and is expected to publish in the coming year a Policy Guide to strengthen national sustainability reporting infrastructure, as well as a blueprint for regional partnerships, which will enhance the project's replicability in other countries/regions.

#### 5.4.2 Unexpected outcomes

While some of aspects of the project were already designed to ensure sustainability, the evaluation identified unexpected outcomes that will contribute to the sustainability of the results.

First, as a direct outcome of the project, KII data shows that UNCTAD received an expression of interest from the Asian region to implement a similar regional partnership. The two regional partnerships developed under the project helped put together a blueprint that will be used for future partnerships. UNCTAD is currently in the process of developing the Asian partnership with the help of the Indian Accounting Association. It is expected that the Asian Partnership for sustainability and SDG reporting will be launched at the 40<sup>th</sup> ISAR session in 2023.

Second, the project has been praised and recognized for its success at the 39<sup>th</sup> ISAR session as well as at the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission that both took place in November 2022.

The 39<sup>th</sup> session of ISAR reaffirmed the relevance of the project. As mentioned in the conclusion document on item 3, the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on ISAR *“commends the UNCTAD secretariat for the extensive work conducted during the intersessional period to support regional efforts and build partnerships in Africa and Latin America aimed at promoting a common approach to sustainability reporting; in this context, welcomes the initiative by the secretariat to develop a brief guide to establishing such partnerships and maximizing their benefits; encourages other regions to form such partnerships; and calls upon the secretariat to provide the relevant support”*<sup>71</sup>.

The Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission in its agreed conclusion on item 6 also referred to the work conducted by UNCTAD under the project. In the conclusions, the Commission *“commends the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting on its thirty-ninth session, underscores the pivotal role played by sustainability reporting in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and acknowledges the work of UNCTAD in supporting its members in promoting reliable and comparable disclosures on financial and sustainability performance, including through the establishment of regional partnerships”*<sup>72</sup>.

Such recognition at the international level is an important factor to ensure the sustainability of the results. This recognition is also acknowledged by the ISSB<sup>73</sup>, which will use the regional partnerships developed under the project as a platform to share the global sustainability reporting standards. While these

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<sup>70</sup> UNCTAD. 2022. Guidance on core indicators for Sustainability and SDG Impact Reporting. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2022d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2022d1_en.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> ISAR. 2022. 39<sup>th</sup> Session Agreed Conclusions Item 3.

<sup>72</sup> Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission. 2022. 13<sup>th</sup> Session Agreed Conclusions Item 6.

<sup>73</sup> UNCTAD is a partner of the partnership framework for capacity building launched by ISSB at COP 27 <https://www.ifrs.org/news-and-events/news/2022/11/issb-cop27-progress-implementation-climate-related-disclosure-standards-in-2023/>

standards will only apply to listed companies, it is an important step to ensure the continuity of the project and the use of the regional platforms. Lastly, the previous chair of the LATAM Partnership (CINIF-Mexico) was appointed to the ISSB Advisory Forum. They will be able to convey the concerns of the region to the ISSB through consultations with the regional partnerships.

In line with recognition of the project's results on the international scene, interviews with key informants found that UNCTAD has been receiving an increasing number of demands from countries to receive technical support in this domain. Additionally, UNCTAD is also receiving requests to provide technical support to help the public sector comply with sustainability and SDGs reporting. This can be also shown by the fact that reporting on SDG indicator 12.6.1 in 2022 had the largest growth rate in the African and LATAM regions, occurring since the regional partnerships were created. Additionally, the number of initiatives submitted from both regions to the ISAR Honors during this period increased significantly. It helped to raise visibility on best practices and to facilitate exchange of experience at the regional and international levels.

### 5.4.3 Challenges

The evaluation identified some key challenges that might hinder the sustainability of the project. Some of these are similar to the ones encountered during the implementation of the project. The first one is the **lack of human capacity**. Key informant respondents mentioned the lack of capacity as one of the most pressing challenges. Some of the beneficiary countries are already thinking of mitigating the lack of human capacity by integrating the new reporting standards into the existing training of accountants or other key stakeholders, which has been recommended in the action plans developed under the project.

Moreover, the evaluation found that **a lack of political buy-in** from some governments might hinder the continuity of the project. In Kenya for example, the project was driven by ICPAK and not by the government, which in the long run may be a problem, especially in the case where financial and institutional support (legislation) is needed. If there is political buy-in, it means that there is a possibility that the new approaches will be integrated in the relevant institutions and can potentially result in the development of legal and regulatory frameworks. On the contrary, a lack of political buy-in from the government can induce fragmentation risks in the decision-making process regarding sustainability and SDG reporting at the national and/or regional level. Such risks can especially materialize when there is a change of government and national priorities.

Responses from key informants also revealed that an **excessive burden on the private sector** or the perception of such a burden might compromise the sustainability of the results. The private sector needs to better understand the benefits of such reporting and should not see it as a chore that will only benefit the government. As such, it is important to show to the private sector that sustainability and SDG reporting is an important tool to attract investors (national and international). Furthermore, several key informants mentioned that the National Action Plans presented under the project appeared at first glance overwhelming for some of the private sector actors (e.g., that the national plan is imposing measures on them).

**Contextual factors** like the informal economy might be a challenge that have an impact on the mainstreaming of sustainability and SDG reporting. The evaluation found that mitigation measures have been taken to address this challenge. For example, UNCTAD offers a Business Facilitation Program which supports business registration. At the country-level, the Government of Uganda is currently rolling out a pilot program on sustainability reporting in two districts over the next two years. The program is managed by the Ministry of Finance. The main issue, as noted by interviewees, is that for the private sector, formal and informal, taking part in this project means that revenue authorities might request them to pay taxes. As a result, and to incentivize companies to understand the importance and benefits of such reporting, the government offered to exempt taxes for the next three years to companies that voluntarily take part in the program. This pilot program, if successful, could be adopted and replicated by other members of the regional partnership.

The last challenge identified in terms of sustainability is the **alignment issue**. Some of the respondents expressed the need to integrate the GCI indicators into their existing frameworks. While this would help to harmonize existing sustainability and SDG reporting at the national and international levels, they are concerned that aligning national accounting indicators with the GCI might be challenging. To mitigate this risk, the Government of Cameroon was convening a meeting with key stakeholders (accountancy, banks, insurance, academia etc.) to find solutions on how to move forward in aligning the national indicators with the GCI indicators.

## 5.5. Cross-cutting themes

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**Cross-cutting themes:** *This section examined whether the Project was able to mainstream gender equality, disability, and human rights into the design and implementation of the activities. This section also looks at the environmental aspect as well as the response to COVID-19.*

### 5.5.1 Gender, Disability, Human Rights, and Environment

When assessing to what extent the cross-cutting themes have been integrated in the project design, the evidence found that the aspects of gender, vulnerable groups such as MSMEs and disadvantaged populations have been considered.

Additionally, the evaluation found that in the progress reports as well as in the final report the project team reported the number of women vs men that took part in the activities. The final report also describes how the project aimed at leaving no one behind by addressing human rights and gender.

When asking respondents if cross-cutting themes were mainstreamed in the project, most of them mentioned the GCI. Indeed, most of the respondents during the interviews indicated that these themes were by default part of the project as the GCI is explicitly referring to gender and disability in some of its indicators. Further, the GCI is looking at the “environmental area” and specifically at sustainable use of water, waste management, greenhouse gas emissions, ozone-depleting substances and chemicals, and energy consumption. Moreover, the GCI is recommending users to incorporate some of the indicators to breakdown the results by gender and/or disability. The guide also encourages entities to “*take into consideration broader measures of diversity, in particular with regard to the inclusion of people with disabilities into the workplace*”<sup>74</sup>.

In terms of gender mainstreaming, the project was found to be gender-sensitive at different levels: 1) management, 2) activities, and 3) future deliverables. In terms of management, the UNCTAD team was gender balanced with two men and two women. Furthermore, based on the list of stakeholders provided by the project’s team, out of the six focal points in Latin America, three were female. In Africa, five out of the fifteen focal points were female.

At the activity level, the project team collected gender disaggregated data and monitored the number of women and men participating in each of the activities undertaken (cf. progress reports). Overall, in Latin America 57% of the participants in all activities were women and in Africa 46% of the participants were women. A high percentage of survey respondents (Figure 8) also confirmed that project activities and tools appropriately incorporated issues related to gender balance (85%) and gender mainstreaming (82%).

In terms of future deliverables, the policy guide that will be published in 2023 will look at good practices to be replicated, including the incorporation of gender aspects. For example, one of the recommendations

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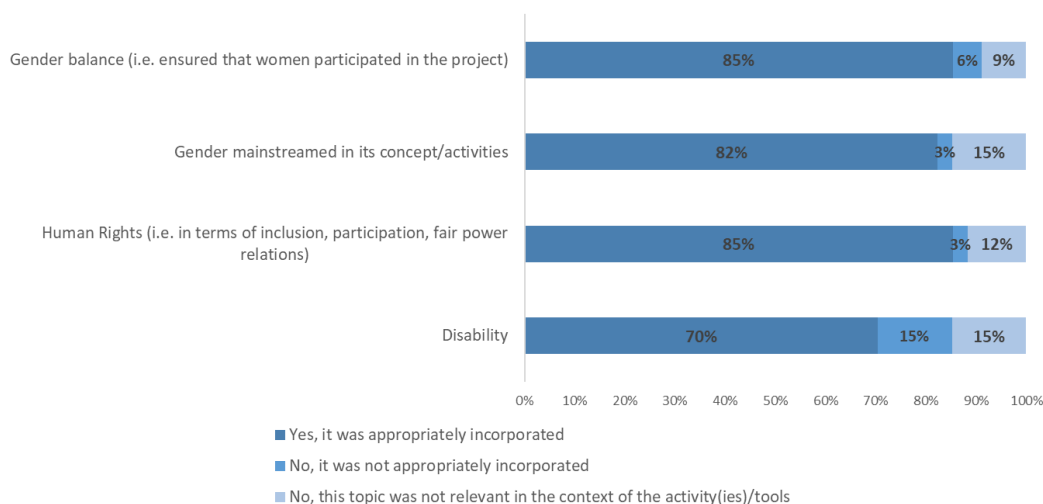
<sup>74</sup> UNCTAD. 2019. Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on contribution towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2019d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2019d1_en.pdf) . p.46

is to select a task force that “should be multisectoral, multidisciplinary, multi-competent and multi-institutional and have a *balanced gender* representation”<sup>75</sup>.

Regarding disability inclusion, 70% of survey respondents replied that disability inclusion was appropriately incorporated. While this percentage is slightly lower than the other cross-cutting topics (i.e. gender and human rights), it is still a satisfactory rate which again, might be explained by the integration of disability inclusion in the GCI.

Similarly, aspects of human rights are also part of the GCI, with indicators relating to labor rights, expenditures on employees’ health and safety, as well as the incidence rate of occupational injuries. To some extent the project addressed key issues such as the informal economy and the “missing middle”. Both of these issues relate to human rights matters. In Latin America and Africa, some countries have a large number of microenterprises (mostly informal) and some very large firms but there is a lack of midsized firms; this phenomenon is called the “missing middle”<sup>76</sup>. Workers in the informal economy are not recognized, registered, regulated or protected under labor and social protection legislation, which results in the denigration of workers’ rights and a lack of decent working conditions<sup>77</sup>. The project indirectly could to some extent contribute to increasing the number of companies that move from micro (informal) to small and medium sized enterprises (formal). Sustainability and SDG reporting could serve as an important tool for companies to grow and attract investors. Reporting can also help companies, especially small ones, to understand better their strengths and weaknesses and to act accordingly.

Figure 9 - In your opinion, did the activities in which you participated and the tools developed by UNCTAD appropriately incorporate issues related to:



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<sup>75</sup> UNCTAD. 2022. Good practices in and approaches to the practical implementation of sustainability reporting requirements. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ciisard101\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ciisard101_en.pdf) . p.10

<sup>76</sup> Developing Capital for Africa, Investing in Africa: defining the “missing middle”, retrieved from <http://www.dca-africa.com/saving-tips-from-scratch/>

<sup>77</sup> ILO. Informal Economy, retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/dw4sd/themes/informal-economy/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>78</sup> Source: Data collected by the Evaluator

As mentioned previously, the GCI is explicitly looking at environmental indicators, and which is the main reason why key informants and survey respondents agreed that the environmental considerations have been integrated (69% - greatly integrated) in the project. In addition, some respondents provided qualitative data regarding the main environmental results of the project (apart from the GCI). The most common answers received were the progress in meeting the SDGs and creating awareness among stakeholders regarding the environmental impact of companies. Respondents were also asked what could be potentially done to sustain and/or expand environmental results and the main response was to further deepen capacity building and awareness raising.

Overall, the above-mentioned cross-cutting themes were challenging to grasp when discussing with key stakeholders. There was a general lack of knowledge regarding the mainstreaming of these specific themes in the project's activities. Respondents were mostly referring to the GCI. However, it should be noted that some of these themes are also mentioned in the ADTs and the policy recommendations developed during the extended activities.

### 5.5.2 COVID-19

The evaluator aimed to the following question: 'Co1.1. To what extent did the project adjustments respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?' Unfortunately, no information was able to be gathered to assess this question.

## 6. Conclusions and Lessons learned

### 6.1 Conclusions

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Using mixed-methods of quantitative and qualitative sources and techniques, this evaluation has assessed the project against six criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, integration of Cross-Cutting themes, and responses to COVID-19.

The evaluation has reached a series of conclusions drawn on the various lines of evidence from the findings:

- **Relevance:** Evidence demonstrates that the project has been relevant and has responded to the needs and priorities of the beneficiary countries<sup>79</sup> as well as regions. At the country-level, the stakeholders strongly believed that the project was pertinent and aligned with their priorities and aspirations. While the primary beneficiary countries were already quite advanced in the field of sustainability and SDG reporting in their regions, the project managed to identify gaps and provide each of the countries with relevant skills and knowledge to overcome the gaps and to answer to their needs. Regarding the three additional countries that requested technical assistance, stakeholders agreed that the assistance provided by UNCTAD was crucial and highly important. The project in this regard adapted itself and was able to respond to the specific needs of these countries that are in the early stages of sustainability reporting.

The project also had a regional component: to create two partnerships (one in Latin America and one in Africa) to improve awareness and promote experience sharing at the regional level. The two regional partnerships were found to be relevant as they provide all participating countries, regardless of their stage of implementation and their resources available, an important learning and sharing platform as well as a conducive environment for multi-stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation all agreed that these regional partnerships were key to kick-starting sustainability and SDG reporting processes in countries that are lagging behind and to make further progress.

Stakeholders from different groups (primary beneficiary countries, additional beneficiaries of technical assistance from the project, regional partnerships) as well as UNCTAD's staff all considered the project's activities relevant and well aligned with UNCTAD's mandate. The review of strategic documents also supported this finding.

- **Effectiveness:** The project reached its planned indicator-related targets in alignment with the project's results framework. All activities were implemented as expected along with additional ones. The overall effectiveness of the project was evidenced by respondent's satisfaction with the project's outcomes in terms of knowledge gained, skills developed and overall capacity building. Yet, when assessing the achievement of the planned outcomes (EAs), it is important to note that the indicators measured were effective in initiating some of the processes to improve on the long

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<sup>79</sup> Four original beneficiaries and three additional ones



term: capacity (technical and institutional), awareness, and experience sharing. As a result, it is not feasible at this stage of the project to assess the impact of the planned outcomes. However, it is likely that the project and its activities will result in the improvement of the technical and institutional capacities of the selected countries, which is important to ensure sustainability.

Interviews with key informants as well as survey results identified enabling factors that played a key role in the success of the project. The first factor is the selection of beneficiaries. The selection was demand-driven, meaning that beneficiaries were interested and motivated to take part in the project. Other factors are the participatory approach and the selection of critical stakeholders. Both aspects were incorporated in the project and ensured the successful implementation of the activities. Additionally, the evaluation identified the creation of national and regional partnerships as key to enabling the success of the activities and project overall. The last factor identified is UNCTAD's long-standing contribution and recognition.

However, participating stakeholders also identified a few challenges and obstacles to tackle, including limited human capacity, regulations, infrastructure, and resources. In particular, stakeholders suggested that the lack of human capacity at the country level could be a major obstacle to ensure the continuity of the capacity developed under this project. The lack of human capacity in terms of staff and skills in each of the beneficiary countries could negatively impact the implementation of the national action plans developed under the project. In addition, some stakeholders identified the lack of institutional, political, or private sector buy-in as an important challenge that could impact the long-term perspectives of the project.

- **Efficiency:** In terms of efficiency, the project's implementation was commensurate to its scale, implemented at first in four countries and in two regions, and then in three additional countries with the collaboration of focal points in each country. Based on the evidence, the project's management and implementation were efficiently conducted. Focal points in the different countries of intervention praised the constructive contribution of UNCTAD's staff that led to smooth implementation of activities. The survey also asked respondents questions regarding the publications and communication: apart from the strong use of the specific tools (i.e., GCI, ADT), a high number of respondents did not read the studies and publications developed. Although stakeholders did not suggest any alternative to achieve better results in terms of communication efficiency, it is important to note that it could be improved.

The efficiency criteria also looked at the efficiency of the regional partnerships. As mentioned previously, regional partnerships have been praised by the majority of stakeholders and are considered key. Yet, the results show that some stakeholders, especially in Latin America, are in general expecting more out of these partnerships as they are very eager to start the processes in their own countries. This shows enthusiasm for the regional partnerships.

The project's duration was initially planned from 2018 until end of 2021, and later the UNCTAD team sought an extension until June 2022. This extension also helped to bridge some of the gaps

created by the crisis and the absence of face-to-face activities. In this regard, the extension helped to strengthen what has been learned/achieved.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, some of the activities could not take place face-to-face and were delivered online or in hybrid mode. As a result, the project was able to allocate the savings to other activities such as the technical assistance provided to Uganda, Cameroon, and Mexico, which was not initially planned in the scope of the project.

- Sustainability: The project promoted the principle of national ownership throughout its design and implementation by focusing on four key aspects: the capacities, knowledge and skills transferred to the project stakeholders; the design of National Action Plans; the regional partnerships; the participatory and iterative approach, by promoting collaboration among key stakeholders at the country and regional level; and creating steering committees

Additionally, the evaluation identified unexpected outcomes that derived from the project that will help to ensure the sustainability of the results. The first outcome is the development of an Asian regional partnerships based on the blueprint developed under the project in other regions. The second outcome is the recognition of the project's results at the 39<sup>th</sup> ISAR session and at the Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission. In line with the recognition of the project's results in international fora, UNCTAD has been receiving an increasing number of demands from countries to receive technical support in this domain.

However, the stakeholders also identified challenges that could impede the long-term outcomes of the project. Some of the challenges identified are similar to the ones encountered during the project's implementation, namely: the lack of capacity, the lack of political buy-in and the potential burden on the private sector.

- Cross-cutting issues: UNCTAD is committed to gender equality and has adopted measures to incorporate this aspect into its operations. In this project, management used a gender sensitive approach by monitoring the number of women involved in each activity. Nevertheless, the issues of gender, disability, and environment were mostly mentioned by stakeholders in regard to the GCI and its indicators that are explicitly looking at these issues. There was no information from evaluation respondents regarding the incorporation of these aspects in the project's activities apart from the GCI, the ADT, and the policy recommendations developed during the extended activities. For example, respondents were not able to specify whether environmental aspects were considered in implementing or organizing the activities. In terms of human rights, the evaluator found some link between the project's activities/goals and key issues that embed human rights issues. In conclusion more efforts may be needed to explicitly mainstream gender equality, disability, human rights, and environment throughout future activities.
- Response to COVID-19: The UNCTAD team has been able to adapt and mitigate COVID-19 impacts by adapting face-to-face activities to online meetings. Additionally, the responsiveness of the UNCTAD team and their capacity to organize activities in the field, in the context of lockdowns, as

well as facilitating exchange of key information with focal points, was crucial to the success of the project.

## 6.2 Lessons learned and good practices

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The following lessons learned and good practices have been identified:

1. **Flexibility with the original project document** is necessary in order to allow the activities to adapt to unpredicted changes, local conditions as well as interests of the key stakeholders. In this sense three good practices have been identified:
  - a. Originally, Brazil was expected to be one of the four beneficiary countries. However following issues in this country, the UNCTAD team instead identified and approached Guatemala.
  - b. In response to the unprecedented health crisis that occurred during the project, the team has been able to swiftly adapt by shifting the meetings and activities from face-to-face to online. A good responsiveness from the team helped to mitigate the potential issues that could have arisen from stopping the activities due to COVID-19.
  - c. The team has been flexible and responsive enough to adapt and expand activities to three new countries that requested technical assistance to support the strengthening of sustainability reporting infrastructure.
2. **Close cooperation and coordination with appointed focal points** in beneficiary countries is an important success factor.
3. **Identifying and involving key stakeholders** in processes such as the development of National Action Plans is important to ensure the relevance, buy-in to the plan and the sustainability of the results.
4. **Exchanging good practices and lessons learned** at the regional level has proven to be beneficial for the different stakeholders involved. In this regard the creation of regional partnerships is identified as a good practice that should be replicated in other projects.
5. **Lack of capacities** in the beneficiary countries have been identified as an important hindering factor to continue the work initiated by UNCTAD. It is a challenge that countries will have to work with and focus on in order to implement the national action plans developed under the project.

## 7. Recommendations

After a thorough analysis of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project, the evaluation formulated the following recommendations:

1. The results of this evaluation showed that the project was delivered successfully overall and able to expand its reach drawing on unused travel funds. UNCTAD should seek additional funding for the continuation and scaling-up of their work on sustainability and SDG reporting. The regional partnerships in particular should be further strengthened through capacity-building initiatives based on UNCTAD's policy guide on tackling the sustainability challenge and replicated in other regions.
2. Given the lack of capacity or high-level support in some countries to sustain the pathway to long-term outcomes, UNCTAD is encouraged to further assess possible sustainability measures and build these into future projects. This could include building on synergies with other entities such as regional organizations, CSOs and private sector organizations in order to promote benefits of SDG reporting and to help disseminate relevant UNCTAD resources.
3. UNCTAD should include a clear and detailed communication plan in its project documents (with dedicated time and resources and appropriate communication tools) to ensure key project outputs and outcomes, and ensuing responsibilities, are well understood by the project stakeholders. In particular, this could include updated and streamlined guidance on the ADT, as well as an emphasis on dissemination of key project outputs to ensure that beneficiaries are well-equipped to apply this knowledge.
4. UNCTAD should continue to work on indicators and guidelines for the systematic mainstreaming all cross-cutting issues including environmental concerns, human rights and disability inclusion. For example, by further emphasizing some of these aspects in company reporting.

## Annexes

### 1. Evaluation TORs

CONFÉRENCE DES NATIONS UNIES SUR  
LE COMMERCE ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT



UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Terms of Reference (TOR)

#### External Evaluation of Development Account Project 1819H Enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting in Africa and Latin America

##### Introduction and Purpose

This document outlines the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the independent final project evaluation for the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) funded project titled “Enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting in Africa and Latin America”.

The evaluation will provide accountability to the management of UNCTAD, the Capacity Development Programme Management Office/Development Account of DESA, project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's member States with whom the final evaluation report will be shared.

The evaluation will provide assessments that are credible and useful, and also include practical and constructive recommendations. In particular, the evaluation will systematically and objectively assess project design, project management, implementation, the extent of gender, human rights and disability mainstreaming and overall project performance.

On the basis of these assessments, the evaluation will formulate recommendations to project stakeholders, in particular to UNCTAD and/or the Capacity Development Programme Management Office/Development Account of DESA, with a view towards optimizing results of future projects, including on operational and administrative aspects.

##### Context of the evaluation

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) was established to develop a global indicator framework to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Target 12.6 explicitly

encourages enterprises, in particular large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle, and indicator 12.6.1 requires data on the number of companies publishing sustainability reports.

Such developments have a direct impact on the corporate reporting agenda. Information relevant to the SDG monitoring mechanism is partly provided by companies as part of their sustainability reporting<sup>80</sup>, which is progressively becoming a mainstream business practice worldwide. Several other indicators refer to data already available within large enterprises related to the use of energy and water, carbon dioxide emissions, waste generation, human resource management, gender equality and community development, among others.

A number of initiatives and frameworks for sustainability reporting have evolved and significantly contributed to raising awareness of sustainable development challenges and good company practices. In fact, company reporting might become a primary source of information for the Sustainable Development Goals monitoring framework by providing stakeholders with the means to assess the economic, environmental and social impact of the private sector. However, in order to achieve this objective, further efforts are needed towards harmonization, comparability and most importantly consistency between the areas of financial reporting and sustainability reporting.

UNCTAD has played a leading role in establishing inter-agency partnerships to conduct research and facilitate dialogue on the issue of corporate reporting and more recently on the topic of core SDG indicators for companies' reports. UNCTAD, through its Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR), developed the Accounting Development Tool (ADT), a capacity-building initiative that addresses requests from Member States for guidance on how to facilitate convergence towards international standards in accounting and reporting. Built around international consensus, the ADT has been designed and implemented in over 15 countries as a voluntary technical assistance tool to support countries' efforts towards building capacity in the domain of corporate reporting through a guided methodology for self-assessment and consensus-building among key stakeholders at the national level.

More recently, in close cooperation with UN Environment, UNCTAD has led research and facilitated dialogue in the area of enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting, with a focus on the environmental area of reporting. As co-custodians within the UN System of the SDG indicator 12.6.1, the above-mentioned cooperation aims at building consensus and facilitating the creation and development of an enterprise SDGs reporting mechanism incorporating financial, environmental and sustainability indicators. Such indicators will integrate financial and non-financial information into companies' reporting cycle, in line with SDG target 12.6. Furthermore, the indicators embed the overarching goal of achieving gender equality and women empowerment, by providing guidelines for gender disaggregated data related to company-level information.

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<sup>80</sup> There is no commonly accepted definition of sustainability reporting. The term is generally used with regard to information that is not part of the traditional financial statements in the annual reports of companies. Other frequently used terms include reporting on sustainable development, non-financial reporting, corporate social responsibility reporting, social reporting and environment and social and governance reporting. Integrated reporting argues that sustainability reporting should be built on the integration of financial and non-financial information. In this project, the term Enterprise Sustainability/SDG reporting is used for reporting on the economic, environmental, social and corporate governance performance of a reporting entity and its impact on sustainable development.

## Subject of the evaluation

The main objective of the project is to strengthen the capacities of governments in Africa and Latin America to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular indicator 12.6 on enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting.

In particular, this project aims at developing and implementing a tool that enables countries to coordinate efforts among different authorities and implement policies to enable a high-quality private sector reporting framework that is consistent with the SDGs monitoring mechanism. Such a tool would help companies prepare useful reports and support governments with the need to collect comparable and reliable information aligned with the SDGs global framework of indicators. Further, this tool would also aim at efficiently addressing (on a cost-benefit basis), reporting options for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Four countries have been selected from two different geographical regions (Africa and Latin America) with a view of maximizing the impact of the project in terms of geographical coverage. For both regions, countries that can serve as hubs to share the technical tools and lessons learned within their respective geographical regions were considered. Moreover, country selection priority was given to those countries that have shown interest in advancing their sustainability reporting systems, based on intergovernmental discussions held in the context of ISAR, as well as other initiatives, such as the Group of Friends of Paragraph 47. Colombia and Brazil are already beneficiary countries of project 16170, and their selection takes into consideration national capacity and stakeholder interest, with the aim of maximizing synergies. Similarly, the choice of Kenya and South Africa builds on a joint UNCTAD-UN Environment assessment of countries where the existing resources and initiatives provide a base for implementation of the Enterprise sustainability/SDG reporting tool and would enhance the impact of this project in the beneficiary countries.

During project implementation, Brazil was not in a position to support the start of activities at the national level. Accordingly, UNCTAD approached Guatemala as a potential beneficiary country due to Guatemala's high interest in the implementation of the GCI and ongoing activities in the area of sustainability reporting, including the preparation of a GCI case study with 3 Guatemalan companies and strong participation at the 36<sup>th</sup> session of ISAR. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020, Guatemala was only able to start the implementation of activities in June.

The expected results of the project are as presented in its logical framework below:

<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Means of verification</b>
<b>Objective</b> To strengthen the capacities of governments in Africa and Latin America to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular indicator 12.6 on enterprise sustainability and SDG		

<p><b>EA1</b></p> <p>Enhanced country-level multi-stakeholder capacity to assess their national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting</p>	<p><b>IA 1.1</b></p> <p>At least 75% of the participants in the capacity-building activities in beneficiary countries rated the Enterprise Sustainability/ SDGs Reporting Tool as useful or very useful for the assessment of the existing national framework.</p>	<p>Survey among stakeholders</p> <p>Online platforms on the SDG Reporting tool are functional</p> <p>IT solutions for the SDGs reporting tool are available and adequate to participants' needs</p>
	<p><b>IA 1.2</b></p> <p>A national report on the assessment of sustainability reporting framework is finalized and endorsed in each of the beneficiary countries.</p>	<p>Final report on the assessment of national sustainability reporting framework</p> <p>Report of the national consultative workshop</p>
<p><b>EA 2</b></p> <p>Improved technical and institutional capacity among authorities of selected countries to achieve an enabling national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting</p>	<p><b>IA 2.1</b></p> <p>An action plan, with at least three priority actions, for high quality sustainability reporting is formulated and endorsed by national stakeholders in at least <b>two out of the four beneficiary</b></p>	<p>Official documents on the design of the action plan</p> <p>Report of the advisory mission</p>
	<p><b>IA 2.2</b></p> <p>In beneficiary countries where the action plans are endorsed, at least ten companies take steps to pilot-test through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool.</p>	<p>Survey among companies on their sustainability reporting practices</p>
<p><b>EA 3</b></p> <p>Improved awareness and experience sharing among policy makers, private sector and civil society at national, regional and global levels on achieving enabling policy framework for enterprise sustainability/SDG reporting.</p>	<p><b>IA 3.1</b></p> <p>Two regional partnerships<sup>81</sup> are achieved to collaborate on best practices to facilitate quality and comparability of data gathered through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool.</p>	<p>Official documents of outlining the nature and terms of the regional partnerships</p>

<sup>81</sup> Partnerships could be those among corporate reporting government agencies, accounting professional bodies, etc.



	<p><b>IA 3.2</b></p> <p>95% of participants of regional workshops indicate improved awareness on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting.</p>	<p>Survey among participants, conducted by UNCTAD staff</p>
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The project was implemented in four phases:

**Phase 1:** The development of a sustainability reporting assessment tool supported by global consultations and inputs from international stakeholders in this field.

**Phase 2:** Roll-out at country level in each of the selected countries. Distance training will be delivered to relevant authorities in preparation of a set of country-based activities including a national assessment of the financial and sustainability reporting structure supported by multi-stakeholder dialogue, workshops, and consultations.

**Phase 3:** Improving the reporting infrastructure in the selected countries by assisting national stakeholders in developing an action plan and implementing priority actions for high-quality sustainability reporting. UNCTAD will also assist companies in pilot-testing on the SDG indicators arising from the endorsed national action plan, and also governments to report on the SDG agenda.

**Phase 4:** Regional collaboration and experience sharing of the lessons learned from the pilot countries through two regional workshops (one in Africa and one in Latin America).

The overall strategy of the project is to maximize synergies among established networks while avoiding duplications of activities. UNCTAD and UN Environment have built on their individual existing projects as well as methodological and technical tools: UNCTAD's ADT, and the experiences and tools resulting from UN Environment's work as the secretariat to the Group of Friends of Paragraph 47, including technical recommendations in environmental reporting, as provided in the report Raising the Bar – Advancing Environmental Disclosure in Sustainability Reporting. Furthermore, UNCTAD has been working with UN DESA's statistics division as part of the consultative group on sustainability reporting, as well as in tracking updates to the SDG's framework of indicators, through IAEG-SDGs meetings.

This project also builds on activities and lessons learned in the project "Enhancing capacities to manage information from corporate sustainability reporting in Latin American countries" (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia as beneficiary countries), financed under the 10th tranche of the Development Account (project number 16170) and completed by UN Environment in 2019. UNCTAD was part of the advisory bodies and technical partners providing support to the steering committee of the project.

This project contributes directly to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, this project will facilitate the progress on implementation of target 12.6, and in particular foster high-quality measurement and performance in indicator 12.6.1. Moreover, by facilitating the sharing of best practice in the area of accounting regulation and financial inclusion, in particular at the regional level in the Latin American and African regions, this project also contributes to the attainment of the following SDG targets:

10.5. Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and strengthen the implementation of such regulations; and

17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South and South-South and triangular cooperation.

The project started in February 2018 with an approved budget of \$740,000 and was scheduled for completion by 31 December 2021. Following challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project requested and was granted an extension to 30 June 2022. In addition, the project returned unutilized funds of \$17,000 to Development Account in 2021.

Targeted stakeholders in each country include government officials in charge of SDGs monitoring, national authorities on enterprise accounting and reporting, including financial reporting and non-financial reporting, environmental and labour authorities, national statistical offices, professional bodies in accounting, preparers and users of the reports among others.

### **Evaluation scope, objectives and questions**

This final evaluation of the project has the following specific objectives:

Assess the degree to which the desired project results have been realized, including the extent of environmental, gender, human rights and disability mainstreaming; and

Identify good practices and lessons learned from the project that could feed into and enhance the implementation of related interventions.

The evaluation will cover the duration of the project from February 2018 to June 2022.

The evaluation is expected to address the following questions under the below criteria (to be further developed in the inception report, as appropriate):

#### ***Relevance***

To what extent the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of participating countries, taking into account the mandates of UNCTAD?

What adjustments are needed to make the project more relevant to the participating countries in supporting their efforts to achieve the targets of SDG 12.6, including responding to emerging challenges?

#### ***Effectiveness***

Have the activities achieved, or are likely to achieve, planned objectives as enunciated in the project document and outcomes (intended or unintended), in particular against relevant SDG targets?

To what extent have the project participants from each targeted country utilized the tools and knowledge and skills gained through the project's activities to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda?

What are enabling and limiting factors that contribute to the achievement of results and what actions need to be taken to contribute towards sustainability of the results?

### ***Efficiency***

How efficient was the Project in utilizing project resources and has the project management been adequate to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner?

To what extent has the work of the project been complementary to that of initiatives in SDG reporting by other UN and non-UN actors in the target countries?

### ***Sustainability***

Is there evidence that beneficiary countries are committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project and/or have there been catalytic effects from the project?

What measures have been built in to promote the sustainability of the outcomes? What additional measures could be taken to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes over time?

### ***Gender, human rights and disability***

To what extent an equity-focused approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention, and can results be identified in this regard?

### ***Responses to Covid-19***

What adjustments, if any, were made to the project as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation, and to what extent did the adjustments allow the project to effectively respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?

How did the adjustments affect the achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework?

### ***Methodology***

The evaluation will adopt a utilization-focused<sup>82</sup> approach. It will be guided by the results framework of the project and ensure a gender, human rights and disability sensitive evaluation. The evaluator is required to use a mixed-method approach, including qualitative as well as quantitative data gathering and analysis as the basis for a triangulation exercise of all available data to draw conclusions and findings. Contribution analysis could be undertaken in particular to assess project results.

In view of the current global pandemic situation, innovative methods for data collection are required. Hence, methods for data gathering for this evaluation include, but is not limited to, the following:

Desk review of project documents and relevant materials;

Collect and analyze relevant web and social media metrics related to the outputs of the project;

Observe a sample of virtual meetings, webinars and other activities to be implemented by the project, as appropriate;

Telephone/online interviews with relevant UNCTAD and UN Environment staff, and with a balanced sample of project participants, project partners and other relevant stakeholders;

Online surveys (in English and Spanish) of beneficiaries of the project, and other stakeholders, as may be required; conduct follow-up interviews as may be necessary;

Virtual focus group discussions.

As part of the desk review, which will lead to an Inception Report, the evaluator will use the project document as well as additional documents such as mission reports; progress reports, financial reports, publications, studies - both produced under the project as well as received from national and regional counterparts. A list of project beneficiaries as well as other partners and counterparts involved in the project will be provided to the evaluator.

The evaluator will further elaborate on the evaluation methodology in the Inception Report, determining thereby the exact focus and approach for the exercise, including developing tailor-made questions that target different stakeholders (based on a stakeholder analysis), and developing the sampling strategy and identifying the sources and methods for data collection. The methodology should follow the UNCTAD Inception Report Guidelines.

The evaluator is required to submit a separate final list of those interviewed in the Annex of the evaluation report. The evaluator is to ensure a wide representation of stakeholders, bearing in mind the need to include those in a disadvantaged or minority position as appropriate.

## **Organization of the evaluation**

### **Deliverables and Expected Outputs**

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<sup>82</sup> Utilization-focused evaluation is a framework that evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance ([https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization\\_focused\\_evaluation](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation))

The evaluation, on the basis of its findings and assessments made on the above criteria, should draw conclusions, make recommendations and identify lessons learned from the implementation of the project.

More specifically, the evaluation should:

Highlight what has been successful and can be replicated elsewhere;

Highlight, as appropriate, any specific achievements that provide additional value for money and/or relevant multiplier effects;

Indicate shortcomings and constraints in the implementation of the project while, at the same time, identifying the remaining challenges, gaps and needs for future courses of action;

Make pragmatic recommendations to suggest how work in this area can be further strengthened in order to address beneficiaries' needs and create synergies through collaboration with other UNCTAD divisions, international organizations and development partners, and other international forums;

Draw lessons of wider application for the replication of the experience gained in this project in other projects/countries;

Three deliverables are expected out of this evaluation (following templates provided):

An inception report<sup>83</sup>;

A draft evaluation report; and

The final evaluation report<sup>84</sup>

The inception report should summarize the desk review and specify the evaluation methodology, determining thereby the exact focus and scope of the exercise, including the evaluation matrix, the sampling strategy, stakeholder mapping analysis and the data collection instruments.

The final report of the evaluation must use the template for Development Account project evaluation reports, which is composed of the following key elements:

Executive summary;

Introduction of the evaluation;

A brief description of the project, including project objectives, expected accomplishments, strategies and key activities;

A clear description of the evaluation objectives, scope, and questions as well as evaluation methodology used;

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<sup>83</sup> The quality of the inception report should meet those standards set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports: [http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc\\_id=608](http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=608)

<sup>84</sup> The quality of the evaluation report should meet those standards set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/607>

Findings and assessments according to the criteria listed in Section IV of this ToR, with a comparison table of planned and implemented project activities and outputs; and

Conclusions and recommendations drawn from the assessments.

Annexes including a list of documents consulted, interviewed stakeholders, evaluation matrix, data collection instruments and this TOR.

All the evaluation assessments must be supported by facts and findings, direct or indirect evidence, and well-substantiated logic. It follows that proposed recommendations must be supported by the findings and be relevant, specific, practical, actionable, and time-bound recommendations.

### **Description of Duties**

The UNCTAD Evaluation Unit, in close collaboration with the Project Team from UNCTAD, will facilitate the evaluation to be undertaken by an independent evaluator.

The evaluator reports to the Chief of the UNCTAD Evaluation Unit. S/he will undertake the evaluation exercise under the guidance of the Unit and in coordination with the project team from UNCTAD. The evaluator is responsible for the evaluation design, data collection, analysis and reporting as provided in this TOR.

The evaluator shall act independently, in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and in her/his private capacities and not as a representative of any government or organisation that may present a conflict of interest. S/he will have no previous experience of working with the project or of working in any capacity linked with it.

The evaluator should observe the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation<sup>85</sup> as well as UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy<sup>86</sup>, in the conduct of this assignment. The evaluator needs to integrate human rights, gender equality and disability perspectives in evaluations to the extent possible.<sup>87</sup> The evaluator needs to ensure a complete, fair, engaging, unreserved, and unbiased assessment. In case of difficulties, uncertainties or concerns in the conduct of the evaluation, the evaluator needs to report immediately to the Chief of Evaluation Unit to seek guidance or clarification.

The project team will support the evaluation, by providing desk review documents (following Evaluation Unit desk review documents guidelines), contact details of project stakeholders as well as any additional documents that the evaluator requests. It is the responsibility of the project managers to ensure senior management engagement throughout the evaluation and timely feedback in the quality assurance and factual clarification process coordinated by the Evaluation Unit. The project team will review and

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<sup>85</sup> "[Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)", UNEG(2016).

<sup>86</sup> "[Evaluation Policy](#)" of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), December 2011.

<sup>87</sup> "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2014): <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>. The UNEG Handbook on "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations: Towards UNEG Guidance" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2011): <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>.

provide comments on the inception, draft and final reports with a view on quality assurance and factual accuracies.

The UNCTAD Evaluation Unit acts as clearing entity during the main steps of this evaluation. It endorses the TOR and approves the selection of the proposed evaluator. The UNCTAD Evaluation Unit reviews the evaluation methodology, clears the draft report, performs quality assurance of the final report and participates in disseminating the final report. The UNCTAD Evaluation Unit engages the project team throughout the evaluation process in supporting the evaluation and validating the reports.

### **Timetable**

The evaluation will take place over the period 1 August to 15 November 2022.

### **Monitoring and Progress Control**

The evaluator must keep the Evaluation Unit informed of the progress made in the evaluation on a regular basis.

The evaluator will submit the first draft of inception report by 8 August 2022. The Report should include draft data collection instruments for review.

The first draft of the report should be presented to the Evaluation Unit by 30 September 2022 for quality assurance purposes (approximately 1 week). The revised draft report will then be shared with the project team for factual clarification and comments (approximately 2 weeks).

The deadline for submission of the final report will be 31 October 2022.

The contract concludes, and payment issued, upon satisfactory receipt of the final report.

### **Qualifications and Experience<sup>88</sup>**

**Education:** Advanced university degree in economics, statistics, development, public administration, accounting or related field.

**Experience:** At least 10 years of experience in conducting evaluations, preferably on interventions in the areas of SDG support and capacity building. Solid understanding of the UN context and the Sustainable Development Goals. Experience conducting development programme evaluations. Solid understanding of gender responsive and equity-focused evaluation design, data collection and analysis methods. Ability to develop clear, realistic, feasible recommendations.

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<sup>88</sup> The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.

**Language:** Fluency in oral and written English and Spanish.

### **Conditions of Service**

The evaluator will serve under a consultancy contract as detailed in the applicable United Nations rules and regulations. The evaluator will not be considered as staff member or official of the United Nations but shall abide by the relevant standards of conduct. The United Nations is entitled to all intellectual property and other proprietary rights deriving from this exercise.

### **Evaluation communication and dissemination plan**

The final evaluation report and key findings will be disseminated widely to all relevant stakeholders such as the funding partners, UNCTAD management, etc. through the following possible mediums:

A workshop (possibly online or face-to-face) with all relevant stakeholders to present the key findings, recommendations and lessons learned.

A copy of the final evaluation report will be made available publicly on UNCTAD website.

An Evaluation Brief will be produced that presents a brief summary of the key evaluation findings, highlighting the results of the project in particular, and lessons learned and

Other communication briefs and products will be produced as appropriate.

### **Annex 1. Requirements for the evaluation report**

Refer to the template for Development Account project evaluation reports.



## 2. Project results framework<sup>89</sup>

Intervention logic	Indicators	Means of verification
<b>Objective</b> <b>To strengthen the capacities of governments in Africa and Latin America to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular indicator 12.6 on enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting</b>		
<b>EA1</b> <b>Enhanced country-level multi-stakeholder capacity to assess their national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting</b>	<b>IA 1.1</b> At least 75% of the participants in the capacity-building activities in beneficiary countries rated the Enterprise Sustainability/ SDGs Reporting Tool as useful or very useful for the assessment of the existing national framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey among stakeholders</li> <li>• Online platforms on the SDG Reporting tool are functional</li> <li>• IT solutions for the SDGs reporting tool are available and adequate to participants' needs</li> </ul>
	<b>IA 1.2</b> A national report on the assessment of sustainability reporting framework is finalized and endorsed in each of the beneficiary countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final report on the assessment of national sustainability reporting framework</li> <li>• Report of the national consultative workshop</li> </ul>
<b>Activities under EA1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activity A1.1:</b> UNCTAD will develop a preliminary version of the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool, with substantive inputs from UN Environment in the area of environmental indicators, with a view to providing guidance to governments on how to assess their existing reporting framework, and develop enabling policies to collect reliable data on the private sector's contribution to SDGs, with specific provisions for SMEs.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A1.2:</b> Organize one expert meeting with the objective to consult external stakeholders and validate the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool prepared by UNCTAD.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A1.3:</b> Develop and deliver distance training to relevant stakeholders in beneficiary countries on the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A1.4:</b> Conduct a kick-off multi-stakeholder meeting to launch the tool implementation process, building on information shared and learned as part of activity A1.3.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A1.5:</b> As part of the tool implementation process, and building on the multi-stakeholder structure established through A1.4, activity A1.5 will consist of carrying out the interim national assessment of the sustainability reporting</li> </ul>	

<sup>89</sup> Activities in red were not originally planned.

	<p>infrastructure in each beneficiary country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activity A1.6:</b> Organize a three-day national consultative workshop in each selected country with all relevant stakeholders to validate the final report on the implementation of the Enterprise Sustainability/SDG reporting tool.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>EA2</b> Improved technical and institutional capacity among authorities of selected countries to achieve an enabling national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting</p>	<p><b>IA 2.1</b> An action plan, with at least three priority actions, for high quality sustainability reporting is formulated and endorsed by national stakeholders in at least two out of the four beneficiary countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official documents on the design of the action plan</li> <li>• Report of the advisory mission</li> </ul>
	<p><b>IA 2.2</b> In beneficiary countries where the action plans are endorsed, at least ten companies take steps to pilot-test through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey among companies on their sustainability reporting practices</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities under EA2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activity A2.1:</b> Based on the outcome of the implementation of the enterprise sustainability/SDG reporting tool, UNCTAD will support the national stakeholders to develop an action plan for high quality sustainability reporting.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A2.2:</b> Organize an advisory mission to ensure the endorsement of the action plan (developed in A2.1) by national authorities, and provide advice on the implementation of priority actions, building on international best practice and UNCTAD’s practical experience with accounting reform in both developed and developing countries.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A2.3:</b> In close consultation with national authorities and company stakeholders in the beneficiary countries, deliver one capacity building activity in each of the beneficiary countries to assist countries and companies in pilot-testing the reporting requirements arising from the endorsed national action plan.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A2.4:</b> Support the steering committees at national level and kick start the implementation of strategic activities – as deriving from the action plans produced as part of the project’s output.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>EA3</b></p>	<p><b>IA 3.1</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official documents of outlining the nature and</li> </ul>

<p><b>Improved awareness and experience sharing among policy makers, private sector and civil society at national, regional and global levels on achieving enabling policy framework for enterprise sustainability/SDG reporting.</b></p>	<p>Two regional partnerships<sup>90</sup> are achieved to collaborate on best practices to facilitate quality and comparability of data gathered through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool.</p>	<p>terms of the regional partnerships</p>
	<p><b>IA 3.2</b> 95% of participants of regional workshops indicate improved awareness on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey among participants, conducted by UNCTAD staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities under EA3</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activity A3.1:</b> Deliver two regional workshops (one in Africa and one in Latin America) to share lessons learned from the implementation of the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool and the development of national action plans for enabling sustainability reporting frameworks.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A3.2:</b> An expert meeting will be organized, bringing together stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Enterprise sustainability/SDG reporting tool at the national level, as well as other stakeholders who participated in developing the tool.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A3.3:</b> Building on the results of the regional workshops (A3.1) and the expert meeting (A3.2), this activity consists of enriching and updating the distance training tool used in EA1 and disseminating relevant information through social media and internet channels including on the website of UNCTAD and UN Environment. The information can be then used for further dissemination and awareness raising within beneficiary countries, thereby leading to fulfilment of EA3.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A3.4:</b> Provide additional support through regional partnerships to other countries in Latin America and Africa, building on lessons learned, UNCTAD tools, sharing experiences and knowledge with partnerships' members.</li> <li>• <b>Activity A3.5:</b> Develop preliminary accounting/sustainability reporting assessment.</li> </ul>	

<sup>90</sup> Partnerships could be those among corporate reporting government agencies, accounting professional bodies, etc.

### 3. Theory of Change

IMPACT

Sustainability reporting in corporate practices is increased in Africa and Latin America

ULTIMATE OUTCOME

Strengthen the capacities of governments in Africa and Latin America to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular indicator 12.6 on enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Private sector: Better engage stakeholders, enhance sustainable decision-making processes, strengthen their accountability, and become more attractive to receive private investments

Enhance country-level multi-stakeholder capacity to assess their national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting

Improve technical and institutional capacity among authorities of selected countries to achieve an enabling national policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting

Improve awareness and experience sharing among policy makers, private sector and civil society at national, regional and global levels on achieving enabling policy framework for enterprise sustainability/SDG reporting.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Capacity building

Knowledge enhancement

Establishment of a conducive environment for multistakeholder partnerships (national and regional)

OUTPUTS

**O1:** UNCTAD developed preliminary version of the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs reporting tool

**O2:** Validated the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs reporting tool

**O3:** Developed and delivered distance training on Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs reporting tool

**O4:** Launched tool implementation process

**O5:** Carried out interim national assessment of the sustainability reporting infrastructure in each beneficiary country

**O6:** Validation final report on the implementation of Enterprise Sustainability/SDG reporting

**O7:** Action plan developed in each beneficiary country

**O8:** Endorsement of action plan ensured

**O9:** Countries and companies assisted in pilot-testing the reporting requirements from the National Action Plan

**O10:** Start Implementation of strategic activities

**O11:** Lessons learned shared at the Regional level

**O12:** Endorsement of action plan ensured

**O13:** Tools revised/enriched and relevant information disseminated

**O14:** Additional support provided through regional partnerships to other countries in LA and Africa

**O15:** Developed preliminary accounting/sustainability reporting assessment

ACTIVITIES

**A1**

- Revision of ADT
- Development of GCI, training manual, tutorials, e-learning
- Development of metadata indicator 12.6.1 and pilot testing

**A2**

- Expert meetings
- Consultative groups
- High-level forums (ISAR etc.)

**A3**

- Development orientation package
- Training manual on GCI
- E-learning course developed

**A4**

- Kick-off meetings (onsite/online) in each beneficiary country

**A5**

- Comprehensive assessment of the Sustainability/SDG reporting infrastructure in each beneficiary country

**A6**

- 3 days National consultative workshops organized in each beneficiary country

**A7**

- UNCTAD supports national stakeholders to develop action plan for quality sustainability reporting in each beneficiary country

**A8**

- Virtual meeting in each beneficiary country to ensure the endorsement of action plan by national authorities and provide advice

**A9**

- Capacity building activity delivered in each of the beneficiary country to assist countries and companies in pilot-testing requirements from National Action Plan
- Regional LA workshop

**A10**

- List of strategic activities to start implementation
- Bilateral meetings
- Round tables

**A11**

- 1 Virtual Regional workshop in Latin America
- 1 Virtual Regional workshop in Africa

**A12**

- Virtual meeting in each beneficiary country to ensure the endorsement of action plan by national authorities and provide advice

**A13**

- Revision of tools used in A1
- Tools available on line
- GCI e-learning available online
- Promotion of ISAR Honours Initiative
- Video about ISAR Honours 2021 prepared

**A14**

- UNCTAD supports chairs of regional partnerships
- Bilateral meetings
- First regional partnership meetings in both regions

**A15**

- UNCTAD conducted targeted preliminary accounting and sustainability reporting infrastructure assessment in selected countries
- ADT assessment in Cameroon and Uganda
- Capacity building workshop in Cameroon on the GCI

**Assumptions:**

- Governments and key stakeholders are working together to implement the National Action Plan and continue the work initiated by the project.
- The private sector is cooperating and complying with the National Action Plan.
- The cooperation between the different stakeholders sustains and participates to increase awareness and experience sharing.

#### 4. Evaluation matrix

Relevance			
EQ 1: R1. To what extent the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of participating countries and regions, taking into account the mandates of UNCTAD?			
Sub-questions	Indicators	Source of Information <sup>9192</sup>	Data Collection Tools
R1.1. How does the project respond to the priorities of the participating countries governments?	Degree of alignment between the project results and national governments' priorities and/ or national programs	Project documents National strategies and programming	Documentation review
	Participating countries governments' opinion	National key informants	KIIs
R1.2. How does the project address the needs of local stakeholders?	Participation/ representativity in workshops	Project documents Project surveys National key informants Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	National stakeholders' opinion (private sector, civil society, local authorities)	National key informants	Surveys
R1.3. How does the project address the priorities and	Degree of alignment between the project results and regional programs	Project documents Regional key informants	Documentation review KIIs

<sup>91</sup> Project documents include: Project Document and addenda, progress narrative reports (annual and final reports), missions reports, concept notes, meeting minutes, workshop reports and surveys, publications, communication products such as videos, website content and social media, virtual meetings and webinars materials.

<sup>92</sup> Key informants refer to: (1) Project key informants: project team; (2) National key informants: all national stakeholders (e.g. governments, companies, civil society and academia); (3) Regional key informants: stakeholders that took part in the project at the regional level (e.g. Regional Partnership ARL, ARP); (4) Partner key informants: partner agencies.

needs of the participating regions?	Stakeholders' opinion	Regional key informants	KIIs Survey
R1.4. How does the project integrate in the mandate of the UNCTAD?	Degree of alignment between the project expected achievements and UNCTAD mandate	Project documents UNCTAD strategy documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
<b>EQ 2: R2. To what extent has the work of the project been complementary to that of initiatives in SDG reporting by other UN and non-UN actors in the target countries?</b>			
<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
	Evidence of similar and/ or linked interventions led by UN actors in the target countries	Project documents UN country and regional-levels programming reports and resources Partner key informants National key informants	Documentation review KIIs Online survey
	Evidence of similar and/ or linked interventions led by non-UN actors in the target countries	Project documents Other country and regional-levels programming reports and resources Partner key informants National key informants	Documentation review KIIs Online survey
	Examples of synergies created	Progress reports and publications Partner key informants Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Evidence of duplications observed	Partner key informants Project key informants	KIIs Online survey
	Stakeholders' opinion	Partner key informants National key informants	KIIs Online survey

**EQ 3: R3. What adjustments are needed to make the project more relevant to the participating countries in supporting their efforts to achieve the targets of SDG 12.6, including responding to emerging challenges?**

<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
	Project's activities and results against SDG 12.6 indicator(s)	Progress reports SDG indicators	Documentation review
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	Online survey KIIIs

**Effectiveness**

**EQ 4: Effe1. Have the activities achieved, or are likely to achieve, planned objectives as enunciated in the project document and outcomes (intended or unintended), in particular against relevant SDG targets?**

<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
	IA1.1 At least 75% of the participants in the capacity-building activities in beneficiary countries rated the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool as useful or very useful for the assessment of the existing national framework	Project documents Progress reports and publications SDG targets	Documentation review
	IA1.2 A national report on the assessment of sustainability reporting framework is finalized and endorsed in each of the beneficiary countries	Project documents Progress reports and publications SDG targets	Documentation review
	IA2.1 An action plan, with at least three priority actions, for high quality sustainability reporting is formulated and endorsed by national stakeholders in at least two out of the four beneficiary countries	Project documents Progress reports and publications SDG targets	Documentation review



	IA2.2 In beneficiary countries where the action plans are endorsed, at least ten companies take steps to pilot-test through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool	Project documents Progress reports and publications SDG targets	Documentation review
	IA3.1 Two regional partnerships are achieved to collaborate on best practices to facilitate quality and comparability of data gathered through the Enterprise Sustainability/SDGs Reporting Tool	Project documents Progress reports and publications SDG targets	Documentation review
	IA3.2 95% of participants of regional workshops indicate improved awareness on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting	Project documents Progress reports and publications SDG targets	Documentation review
	Evidence of unintended results/ outcomes	Project documents Project key informants National key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	Project key informants National key informants	KIIs
<b>EQ 5: Effe2. To what extent have the project participants from each targeted country utilized the tools and knowledge and skills gained through the project's activities to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda?</b>			
<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
	Evidence of utilization of the tool by the project participants	Project documents National key informants  Project key informants	Documentation review Online survey KIIs

	Level of knowledge acquired by the project participants	Progress reports Project surveys National key informants Project key informants	Documentation review Online survey KIIs
	Level of application of skills acquired by the project participants	Project documents National key informants Project key informants	Documentation review Online survey KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	Online survey KIIs

**EQ 6: Effe3. What are enabling and limiting factors that contribute to the achievement of results and what actions need to be taken to contribute towards sustainability of the results?**

<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
Effe3.1. What enabling factors contributed to the achievement of results?	Evidence of key factors that have enabled the achievement of the outcomes and outputs	Project documents	Documentation review
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants Project key informants	Online survey KIIs
Effe3.2. What limiting factors hindered the achievement of results?	Evidence of key factors that have hindered the achievement of the outcomes and outputs	Project documents	Documentation review
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants Project key informants	Online survey KIIs
Effe3.3 To what extent did the partnerships (at the national and regional level) contribute	Examples of results attributed to partnerships	Project documents	Documentation review
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	KII

to, or hinder, the achievement of the results?		Regional key informants Project key informants Partner key informants	Online survey
<b>Efficiency</b>			
<b>EQ 7: Effi1. To what extent have the project resources been utilized to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner?</b>			
<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
Effi1.1. Has the project management been adequate?	Evidence of adequate management	Project documents	Documentation review
	Quantity and quality of communication materials	Project documents and publications	Documentation review
	Availability and quality of M&E data	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	Online survey KIs
	Project team's opinion	Project key informants	KIs
Effi1.2. How efficient was the project in utilizing financial resources?	Planned VS actual expenditures, including incurred expenditures	Project documents and budget	Documentation review
	Evidence of activities not implemented/ revised due to a lack of financial resources	Project documents and budget Project key informants	Documentation review KIs
	Evidence of additional activities implemented within the project budget	Project documents and budget Project key informants	Documentation review KIs
	Evidence of additional beneficiaries reached within the project budget	Project documents and budget Project key informants	Documentation review KIs

	Project team's opinion	Project key informants	KIIs
Effi1.3. Have the expected outcomes been achieved in a timely manner?	Evidence and reasons of delays in activities' implementation	Project documents and budget Project extension request Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	KIIs
	Project team's opinion	Project key informants	KIIs
Effi1.4. How efficient were the partnerships at the regional level?	Evidence of successful/ unsuccessful partnerships (in terms of human and financial resources, management etc.)	Project documents and budget Regional key informants Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	Regional key informants	KIIs Survey
<b>EQ 8: Effi2. To what extent has the project been efficiently implemented in your country/region?</b>			
<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants Regional key informants	Online survey KIIs
<b>Sustainability</b>			
<b>EQ 9: S1. What is the likelihood that the project results and benefits will continue after the end of the project?</b>			
<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
S1.1. Is there evidence that beneficiary countries/ regions/ organizations are committed to continue working towards	Evidence of actions taken by the beneficiary countries/ regions/ organizations themselves to build on the project outcomes	National strategies and programming National key informants Project key informants	Documentation review Online survey KIIs

the project objectives beyond the end of the project?		Regional key informants	
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants Regional key informants	Online survey KIIs
	Project team's opinion	Project key informants	KIIs
S1.2. What measures have been built in to promote the sustainability of the outcomes?	Examples of measures taken by the project to sustain its outcomes	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	KIIs
S1.3. Have there been catalytic effects from the project both at the national and/ or regional levels?	Evidence of catalytic effects from the project at the national level	Project documents National key informants Partner key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Evidence of catalytic effects from the project at the regional level	Project documents National key informants Partner key informants Regional key informants	Documentation review KIIs
S1.4. What additional measures could be taken to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes over time? Especially, what adjustments could be made to increase the responsiveness of beneficiary countries/ regions to emerging challenges?	Examples/ recommendations of measures related to stakeholders' engagement	National key informants Partner key informants Project key informants	Online survey KIIs
	Examples/ recommendations of measures related to follow-up activities funding	National key informants Partner key informants Project key informants	Online survey KIIs
	Examples/ recommendations of other measures to ensure sustainability	National key informants Partner key informants Project key informants	Online survey KIIs

	Examples/ recommendations of emerging challenges beneficiary countries/regions are/ will be facing and related measures to strengthen the project outcomes	National key informants Partner key informants Project key informants Regional key informants	Online survey KIIs
<b>Gender, Human Rights, Disability</b>			
<b>EQ 10: GHRD1. To what extent an equity-focused approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention, and can results be identified in this regard? How could future similar projects consider disability mainstreaming?</b>			
<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
	Examples of equity-focused and/ or gender mainstreaming strategy in the design of the project	Project documents Project key informants	KIIs Surveys
	Examples of equity-focused and/ or gender mainstreaming strategy in the implementation of the project	Project documents Project key informants	KIIs Surveys
	Evidence of equity-focused and/ or gender mainstreaming strategy results	Project documents Project key informants	KIIs Surveys
	Evidence/recommendations of disability mainstreaming strategy/challenge	Project documents Project key informants	KIIs Surveys
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	KIIs
	Stakeholders' awareness	National key informants	Online survey KIIs
<b>Environment</b>			
<b>EQ 11: Env1. To what extent have environmental considerations been mainstreaming in the project?</b>			
<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>

Env1.1. How have environmental considerations been integrated in the design and implementation of the project?	Number/ratio of activities designed to integrate an environmental aspect	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Evidence of partnerships mainstreaming an environmental consideration	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	KIIs
Env1.2. What are the main results of the project from an environmental perspective?	Evidence of environmental results	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Example of measures taken to sustain environment mainstreaming	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	Online Survey KIIs
<b>COVID-19</b>			
<b>EQ 12: Co1. To what extent did the adjustments made in response to COVID-19 situation affect the project and its beneficiaries?</b>			
<i>Sub-question</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
Co1.1. To what extent did the project adjustments respond to the new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19?	Examples of new priorities of Member States that emerged in relation to COVID-19	Project documents National key informants Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Evidence of adjustments made to the project to address these priorities	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	Online Survey KIIs
Co1.2. How did the adjustments affect the	Examples of positive effects from these adjustments on the project's expected results	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs

achievement of the project's expected results as stated in its original results framework.	Examples of negative effects from these adjustments on the project's expected results	Project documents Project key informants	Documentation review KIIs
	Stakeholders' opinion	National key informants	Online Survey KIIs



## 5. Data collection instruments

### *Key Respondent Interview Protocol*

Evaluation of the of the project “Enabling Policy Frameworks for Enterprise Sustainability and SDG Reporting in Africa and Latin America”, 1819H by Baastel	
Interview notes by:	---
Organization interviewed:	---
Name and function:	---
Location:	---
Date:	

#### Interview Notes:

**Background:** Interviewee’s general background, nature and dates of interviewee’s involvement with the project.

**Topics:** Record responses by topic with clear headings – using the Eqs where possible, not necessarily in chronological sequence of discussion. Make clear when a direct quote is recorded. Add headings and sub-headings as needed and/or record against evaluation criteria.

*Eqs: Relevance*

*Eqs: Effectiveness*

*Eqs: Efficiency*

*Eqs: Sustainability*

*Eqs: Gender, Human Rights, and Disability*

*Eqs: Environment*

*Eqs: Response to COVID-19*

*Non-EQ specific notes*

**Data/documents provided/recommended:** Seek full reference for documents not already in evaluation library.

**Other proposed follow-up:** e.g. other interviewees recommended (obtain full contact details)/ proposals on consultation and dissemination etc.

Evaluation questions/Respondents	Project Key Informants	National Key Informants	Regional Key Informants
<b>Background of interviewee</b>			
Could you please briefly describe your area of work and your relationship to the project?	x	x	x
What was the nature of your involvement with the project? How long for?	x	x	x
What was the nature of your interactions with the program? How frequent were your interactions (or were they ongoing)?			
<b>1. Relevance</b>			
1.1 How does the project respond to the priorities of your country/organization?		x	
1.2 How does the project respond to the priorities/needs of the region?			x
1.3 How aligned is the project with the mandates of the UNCTAD?	x		
1.4 Could you provide examples of similar/linked interventions in your country and/or region?		x	x
1.5 According to you, to what extent has the work of the project been complementary to other initiatives on sustainability reporting? <i>1.5.1 Have synergies been created?</i> <i>1.5.2 Have duplications been observed?</i>	x	x	
1.6 According to you, what adjustments were needed to make the project more relevant in supporting your efforts to achieve target 12.6?		x	x
<b>2. Effectiveness</b>			
2.1 According to you, have the activities achieved or are likely to achieve the planned objectives and outcomes?	x	x	x
2.2 Could you provide examples of unintended results and/or outcomes of the project?	x		
2.3 Could you describe the sustainability reporting tools? How does it link with your activities? How effective/relevant are they?  <i>Tools =</i> - <i>Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on contribution towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (GCI)</i> - <i>Training Manual</i> - <i>Revised Accounting Development Tool (ADT)</i>		x	
2.4 According to you, what are enabling and limiting factors that contribute to/hinder the achievement of results?	x	x	
2.5 According to you, how did the partnerships (at the national and regional level) contribute to, or hinder, the achievement of the results?	x	x	x
<b>3. Efficiency</b>			

3.1 According to you, has the project management been adequate? <i>3.1.1 What do you think of the project M&amp;E system?</i> <i>3.1.2 What do you think of the project publications and communication materials?</i>	x	x	
3.2 According to you, how efficient was the project in utilizing financial resources? <i>3.2.1 Were some activities not implemented/revised due to a lack of funding?</i> <i>3.2.2 Were some additional activities implemented within the project budget?</i> <i>3.2.3 Were some additional beneficiaries reached within the project budget?</i>	x		
3.3 According to you, have the expected outcomes been achieved in a timely manner? <i>3.3.1 Were some activities delayed? Why?</i>	x	x	
3.4 How efficient were the partnerships at the regional level?	x		x
<b>4. Sustainability</b>			
4.1 Is the region/country/organization committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project? <i>4.1.1 What actions will/have already been taken to build on the project outcomes?</i>	x	x	x
4.2 What measures have been built in to promote the sustainability of the outcomes?	x	x	x
4.3 According to you, what additional measures could be taken to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes over time? <i>4.3.1 Related to stakeholders' engagement</i> <i>4.3.2 Related to follow-up activities funding</i> <i>4.3.3 Other</i>	x	x	x
4.6 What are the emerging challenges your country and/or region face? <i>4.6.1 What adjustments could have been made to the project to increase their responsiveness?</i>	x	x	x
<b>5. Gender, Human Rights, and Disability</b>			
5.1 According to you, to what extent an equity-focus approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention? <i>5.1.1 Examples in the design</i> <i>5.1.2 Examples in the implementation</i>	x	x	
5.2 Could you provide equity-focused and/or gender mainstreaming strategy results of the project?	x	x	
5.3 What do you think of equity-focused approaches and gender mainstreaming strategies?	x	x	
5.4 Has disability represented an aspect/challenge during the implementation of the project? How could it be mainstreamed in the future?	x	x	
<b>6. Environment</b>			
6.1 According to you, how has the environment been integrated in the project? <i>6.1.1 Examples in the design</i> <i>6.1.2 Examples in the implementation</i>	x	x	X

6.2 Do you consider the project as an environment-focus project?	x	x	X
6.3 Would you say that partners organizations are environmental-focused? How?	x	x	
6.4 According to you, what are the main environmental results of the project? <i>6.4.1 How these results will/can be sustain?</i>	x	x	X
<b>7. Response to COVID-19</b>			
7.1 According to you, to what extent did the project adjustments* respond to the new priorities of your country/organization that emerged in relation to COVID-19? <i>7.1.1 What are these priorities?</i> <i>7.1.2 What adjustments have been made by the project in response to these priorities?</i>  <i>*Examples of adjustments given</i>	x	x	X
7.2 According to you, how did the adjustments affect the achievement of the project's expected results? <i>7.2.1 Examples of positive effects?</i> <i>7.2.2 Examples of negative effects?</i>	x	x	x
<b>8. Future/Recommendations</b>			
8.1 Do you have any idea/recommendation on how this project will/should move forward?	x	x	X

## Survey Questions

Welcome to the online survey for the evaluation of the UNCTAD project: "**Enabling policy framework for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting in Africa and Latin America**", implemented between 2018 and 2022. Project's information can be found [here](#).

The e-survey is designed to provide useful information that will help improve future project design and provide constructive recommendations in order to strengthen UNCTAD's work in this area.

Your participation in this e-survey is important. The e-survey should take no more than **10 to 15 minutes** to complete. We also invite you to provide additional qualitative information to explain or detail your responses when you believe it to be relevant.

We kindly request you to respond to this survey by **30th November 2022**. Your insights and responses are greatly appreciated and are valuable to the success of the Project. Your individual feedback will be kept confidential to the evaluator.

This survey has been designed and is managed by the independent external evaluator Mr. Alexandre Daoust. You may contact Mr. Daoust via [alexandre.daoust@baastel.com](mailto:alexandre.daoust@baastel.com) if you have any questions on the survey.

We thank you in advance for your valuable contribution to this important evaluation exercise.

### A. Identification

Q1 What country do you work in? *Please select from the list below*

- Algeria
- Argentina
- Benin
- Brazil
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Chad

- Cameroon
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Guinea Bissau
- Honduras
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mali
- Mauritius
- Mexico
- Morocco
- Namibia
- Nigeria
- Panama

- Paraguay
- Peru
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- The Gambia
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- Uruguay
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q2 What type of organization do you work in? *Please select from the list*

- A government department or agency
- A civil society organization
- A private sector company

Academia

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Q3 What is your current position?

\_\_\_\_\_

Q4 Please specify your gender

Male

Female

Other

Prefer not to say

Q5 Do you consider yourself to have a disability? (The purpose of the questions on disability is to help understand the inclusiveness of project activities.)

*Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.*

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Q6 What events/activities organized under this project have you participated in? *Choose from the list below all the events/activities you took part in.*

Kick-off multi stakeholder meeting to present the project and the tools



- Comprehensive assessment of the sustainability/SDG reporting infrastructure
- Webinar on core indicators
- Progress meeting
- National consultative workshop to present the results of the SDG reporting tools
- National report on the assessment of sustainability/SDG reporting
- Elaboration of the National Action Plan
- Meeting to present the National Action Plan
- Utilization of the SDG reporting tools to prepare a sustainability report
- Case study(ies) on the application of the GCI
- Webinar co-organized with NBI South Africa for the local large companies and SMEs
- Capacity building activity on SDG indicators
- Latin America Regional Partnership workshop/meeting
- African Regional Partnership workshop/meeting
- Expert meeting
- Expert meeting as part of ISAR
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Q7 Have you read or had access to the studies and publications developed in the context of this project?

Yes, please specify below which publications

\_\_\_\_\_

No

**B. Project's participation**

Q8 Are you satisfied with your involvement in the project's activities in general?

Very satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Q9 For each of the following aspects of the activity(ies) in which you participated, please indicate your level of satisfaction.

	Very unsatisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Does not apply
The scope of the activity(ies) in relation to your needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of information about the activity(ies)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The clarity of the information provided during the presentation(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The balance between theory and practical activities during each activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization, the coordination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The length of the sessions and discussions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The structure of the activities (presentation, break-off sessions, breaks etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**C. Relevance**

Q10 To what extent were the activities in which you participated relevant to...

	Not relevant at all	Somewhat irrelevant	Somewhat relevant	Very relevant	Insufficient knowledge to respond
Respond to the priorities of your country/ region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Address your needs (as an organization)

Your effort to achieve target 12.6/indicator 12.6.1\* **\*Target**

**12.6:** "Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle." **\* Indicator 12.6.1:** Number of companies publishing sustainability reports

Q11 To the best of your knowledge, did/have the project activities complement(ed) other related programs or initiatives that were implemented in your country?

- Yes, synergies were leveraged with other programs from the United Nations organizations
- Yes, synergies were leveraged with other non-UN programs
- No, synergies were not leveraged with other programs (UN and non-UN)
- Insufficient knowledge to respond

#### D. Effectiveness

Q12 To what extent have the activities/ planned activities...

	Did not achieve at all	Somewhat Achieved	Largely achieved	Fully achieved	Don't know
Strengthened your country capacities in <b>measuring and monitoring the private sector</b> contribution to enterprise sustainability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

and SDG reporting

Enhanced **multi-stakeholder capacity to assess the national policy framework** for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting



Improved **technical and institutional capacity** among authorities **to achieve an enabling national policy framework** for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting



Improved **awareness and experience sharing** among policy makers, private sector and civil society **at all levels** on achieving enabling policy framework for enterprise sustainability



and SDG reporting

Q13 How useful are the sustainability reporting tools in relation to your work / role?

	Not at all useful	Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Don't know
Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on contribution towards implementation of the Sustainable Development (GCI)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training Manual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Revised Accounting Development Tool (ADT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Metadata guidance on the SDG 12.6.1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 To what extent did the project contribute to: (1 star = lowest contribution, 5 stars = highest contribution)

Utilizing tools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gaining knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Developing skills



Q15 Which factors enabled the achievement of the results?

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Q16 Which factors hindered the achievement of the results?

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### E. Efficiency

Q17 How satisfied are you with the support received by the project's team?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Not satisfied
- Don't know

Q18 How satisfied are you with the following:

	Not satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	I don't know
The project's website* * <a href="https://unctad.org/project/enabling-policy-frameworks-enterprise-sustainability-and-sdg-reporting-africa-and-latin">https://unctad.org/project/enabling-policy-frameworks-enterprise-sustainability-and-sdg-reporting-africa-and-latin</a>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The project's publications and communication materials

Q19 In your opinion, to what extent has the project been efficiently implemented in your country/region?

- Very efficient
- Efficient
- Somewhat efficient
- Not efficient at all
- Don't know

Q20 In your opinion, were the regional partnerships efficient in achieving the expected outcomes?

- Very efficient
- Efficient
- Somewhat efficient
- Not efficient at all
- Don't know

Q21 Can you elaborate on your previous answer?

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## **F. Sustainability**

Q22 To what extent do you agree with the following: *"The work done by the project will last beyond the end of the project"*



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q23 What could be, according to you, the challenges that could impact the sustainability of the project's results?

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Q2 = A private sector company selected to take part in the project*

Q24 What is the likelihood that you will use the sustainable reporting tools for future reports?

- Very likely (1)
- Likely (2)
- Unlikely (4)
- Very unlikely (5)

*Display This Question:*

*If Q24 = Unlikely*

*Or Q24 = Very unlikely*

Q25 Can you elaborate on the reasons why you would not use the tools?

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## **G. Human Rights, Gender, Disability**

Q26 In your opinion, did the activities in which you participated and the tools developed by UNCTAD appropriately incorporate issues related to:

	Yes, it was appropriately incorporated	No, it was not appropriately incorporated	No, this topic was not relevant in the context of the activity(ies)/tools
Gender balance (i.e. ensured that women participated in the project)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender mainstreamed in its concept/activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Human Rights (i.e. in terms of inclusion, participation, fair power relations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### H. Environment

Q27 According to you, to what extent have environmental considerations been integrated in the project?

- Greatly
- Somewhat
- Very little
- Not at all
- Don't know

Q28 According to you, what are the main environmental results of the project?

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Q29 What can be done to sustain/expand these environmental results?

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**I. Responses to COVID-19**

Q30 Did you feel that the project's activities adapted well to COVID-19?

Yes, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

No, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Don't know

**J. Final remarks**

Q31 Do you have any final thoughts/comments about the project?

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## 6. List of individuals interviewed online

Redacted for confidentiality purposes.

## 7. List of documents reviewed

- African Union. 2015. Agenda 2063 – The Africa we want. [https://au.int/Agenda2063/popular\\_version](https://au.int/Agenda2063/popular_version)
- European Parliament. 2021. The informal economy and coronavirus in Latin America. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690587/EPRS\\_BRI\(2021\)690587\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690587/EPRS_BRI(2021)690587_EN.pdf)
- ILO. 2022. Informal Economy in Africa: Which way forward? Making policy responsive, inclusive and sustainable. [https://www.ilo.org/africa/events-and-meetings/WCMS\\_842674/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/africa/events-and-meetings/WCMS_842674/lang--en/index.htm)
- ISAR. 2022. 39<sup>th</sup> Session Agreed Conclusions Item 3.
- Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission. 2022. 13<sup>th</sup> Session Agreed Conclusions Item 6.
- National Treasury and Planning, State Department for Planning. 2020. Second Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26359VNR\\_2020\\_Kenya\\_Report.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26359VNR_2020_Kenya_Report.pdf)
- National Treasury and Planning. 2020. Strategic Plan 2018/2019 – 2022/2023. [https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/THE-NATIONAL-TREASURY-AND-PLANNING-STRATEGIC-PLAN-2018\\_19-2022\\_23.pdf](https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/THE-NATIONAL-TREASURY-AND-PLANNING-STRATEGIC-PLAN-2018_19-2022_23.pdf)
- Secretaria de Economía. 2021. Informe Nacional Voluntario 2021 – Agenda 2030 en Mexico. [https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/654347/INV2021\\_web\\_1.pdf](https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/654347/INV2021_web_1.pdf)
- UNCTAD. 2022. Good practices in and approaches to the practical implementation of sustainability reporting requirements. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ciisard101\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ciisard101_en.pdf)
- UNCTAD. 2022. UNCTAD Outcome 15 – The Spirit of Speightstown and The Bridgetown Covenant <https://unctad.org/webflyer/unctad-15-outcome-spirit-speightstown-and-bridgetown-covenant>
- UNCTAD. 2022. Guidance on core indicators for Sustainability and SDG Impact Reporting. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2022d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2022d1_en.pdf)
- UNCTAD. 2021. Note on the Status of SDG and Sustainability Reporting by Companies in Mexico.
- UNCTAD. 2020. Core SDG Indicators for Entity Reporting – TRAINING MANUAL. <https://unctad.org/webflyer/core-sdg-indicators-entity-reporting-training-manual>
- UNCTAD. 2019. Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on contribution towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2019d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diae2019d1_en.pdf)
- UNCTAD. 2016. UNCTAD Outcome XIV – Nairobi Maafikiano and Nairobi Azimio [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/iss2016d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/iss2016d1_en.pdf)
- UNCTAD. 2015. UNCTAD – ISAR The Accounting Development Tool – Building Accounting for Development [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diaeed2013d7\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/diaeed2013d7_en.pdf)

UNCTAD. nd. UNCTAD at a glance. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/UNCTAD-at-a-glance\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/UNCTAD-at-a-glance_en.pdf)

United Nations. 2021. SDG Indicator Metadata. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-12-06-01.pdf>

United Nations. 2016. Proposed Strategic Framework for the period 2018-2019. Part 2, Biennial programme plan. Programme 10, Trade and development. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/826305>

Additionally, the evaluator reviewed the following internal documents provided by UNCTAD:

- Prodoc 1819H
- Progress Reports (2019 until 2022)
- Final Report (19 Sept 2022)
- Reports from workshops, meetings, and presentations in Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon, Uganda, Colombia, Mexico, and Guatemala
- Action Plan documents in all four beneficiary countries
- African Regional Partnership documents
- Latin America Regional Partnership documents
- Project Extension Request
- Online platforms (regional partnerships)
- ISAR Honours documents
- Draft Blueprint Regional Partnership