

Independent Terminal Evaluation

ARAB REGION

ARAB FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE FOR TRADE FACILITATION (SAFE INITIATIVE) “ENHANCEMENT OF REGIONAL TRADE CAPACITIES IN FOOD THROUGH HARMONIZED REGIONAL CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT AND FOOD SAFETY SYSTEMS”

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The evaluation team hopes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will contribute to the successful completion of the Food Safety Initiative and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other regions.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
AB	Accreditation Body
ABA	Arab Beverages Association
AFFI	Arab Federation of Food Industries
AFFS	Arab Food Safety Scientists
AARU	Association of Arab Universities
AIDMO	Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization
AOAD	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
ARAC	Arab Accreditation
ATF	Arab Task Force on Food Safety
CAWTAR	Center of Arab Women for Training and Research
CSA	Conflict Sensitivity Analysis
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the (OECD)
ESC	Economic and Social Council (of the League of Arab States)
EID	Economic Integration Department (of the League of Arab States)
EWG	Expert Working Groups
GAFTA	Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (former name of PAFTA)
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
ITC	International Trade Center
LAS	League of Arab States
MLA	Multilateral Recognition Arrangement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-term Review
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PAFTA	Pan Arabic Free Trade Agreement
PTGA	Participatory and Transformative Gender Audit report(s)
RBM	Results-based management
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SPS	(Agreement on the Application of) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (Measures)
TBT	(Agreement on) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement)
ToR	Terms of Reference

Abbreviation	Meaning
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UAC	Union of Arab Chambers

Glossary of evaluation-related terms

Term	Definition
Baseline	The situation, prior to an intervention, against which progress can be assessed.
Coherence	<p>Coherence assesses the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions and policies under two angles:</p> <p>Internal coherence assesses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government (UNIDO), as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres.</p> <p>External coherence looks at the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonization and coordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.</p>
Effect	Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development objectives of an intervention were or are expected to be achieved.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically inputs (through activities) are converted into outputs.
Impact	Positive and negative, intended, and non-intended, directly and indirectly, long term effects produced by a development intervention.
Indicator	Quantitative or qualitative factors that provide a means to measure the changes caused by an intervention.
Intervention	An external action to assist a national effort to achieve specific development goals.
Lessons learned	Generalizations based on evaluation experiences that abstract from specific to broader circumstances.
Log frame (logical framework approach)	Management tool used to guide the planning, implementation, and evaluation of an intervention. System based on MBO (management by objectives) also called RBM (results-based management) principles.
Outcomes	The achieved or likely effects of an intervention's outputs.
Outputs	The products in terms of physical and human capacities that result from an intervention.

Term	Definition
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with the requirements of the end-users, government, and donor's policies.
Risks	Factors, normally outside the scope of an intervention, which may affect the achievement of an intervention's objectives.
Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from an intervention, after the development assistance has been completed.
Target groups	The specific individuals or organizations for whose benefit an intervention is undertaken.

Executive summary

Background, purpose, methodology, and limitations of this Terminal Evaluation

This independent final evaluation (“the Evaluation”) covers the project “Enhancement of regional trade capacities in food through harmonized regional conformity assessment and food safety systems” (Project ID: 120541, “the SAFE Initiative”).

The Evaluation was commissioned by UNIDO and guided by the Terms of Reference (ToR) dated 11 September 2019. Work was undertaken between 22 January 2020 (kick-off meeting by Skype) and 30 April 2020 by an external evaluation team, (“the Evaluators”). UNIDO’s Independent Evaluation Division (ODG/EIO/IED) managed the Evaluation and was responsible for quality assurance. The interviews of most key stakeholders (regional level, national level, SIDA project manager, UNIDO project manager and project team) took place during a retreat in Amman (Jordan) between 22 and 27 February. UNIDO’s support to the National Food Safety Authority (NFSA) was assessed through an adjacent field mission.

UNIDO’s project team and SIDA were de-briefed separately on 27 February 2020 in Amman. Due to the ongoing health crisis, the physical de-briefing in Vienna was replaced by de-briefings by video call.

This final version of the report includes all factual corrections provided by the Project Manager on 6 May 2020 to a draft report circulated on 30 April 2020.

Purpose and scope of the Evaluation

Rather than looking at individual activities in detail, the Evaluators were expected to assess whether the SAFE Initiative provided the right type of support to achieve its objectives in the right way. UNIDO was interested in a critical review of the approach, especially the different steps used in establishing a regional food safety management system and their sequencing. Moreover, UNIDO asked the Evaluators to validate the intervention logic (theory of change). While also serving accountability purposes, the Evaluation was meant to generate input to UNIDO and all partners in optimizing the approach on regional harmonization of conformity assessment and food safety systems. The Evaluation covered the implementation of the SAFE Initiative from January 2014 until the end of the field mission on 2 March 2020. Prior and subsequent events (except the Corona pandemic, which only developed into a major crisis after data collection was completed) were treated as contextual information where relevant.

Methodology and limitations

The methodological framework is provided by UNIDO’s Evaluation Manual (2018), which provides comprehensive guidance on evaluations.

Accordingly, the project quality was assessed against the criteria of project design, project performance (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of results) and the cross-cutting performance criteria of gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, and Results-Based Management (RBM). In addition to the standard evaluation criteria, the Evaluation assessed the criterion of “coherence”, which is also used as a new evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

While maintaining independence in compliance with UNIDO’s evaluation standards, the Evaluators applied a participatory approach, taking the views of all stakeholders into account and seeking alignment on main conclusions and recommendations. The methodological mix included an in-depth document review (see list in [Annex 1](#)), semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (see list in [Annex 2](#)) and personal observation.

Key limitations: It would be premature to assess broader outcomes or even impact. Translating institutional strengthening (national level, regional level) into direct benefits (e.g. standard harmonization) or even into longer-term broader economic benefits typically takes significantly beyond a single project phase. It is unrealistic to assume that initial harmonization, awareness building and training would already have generated broader outcomes or impact. Nevertheless, the Evaluation attempted to identify wider effects to the degree it was possible to establish a causal relationship (attribution or contribution) between them and the SAFE Initiative. The Evaluators also assessed and validated the theory of change, including the link of regional work to national outcomes. Despite these limitations, findings were comprehensive, consistent and clear.

Project description

The SAFE Initiative links into the regional standard harmonization efforts coordinated by the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), which were UNIDO's main counterparts. It followed upon earlier UNIDO/SIDA-support to AIDMO (ARAC Phase I) in establishing a regional accreditation body (Arab Accreditation, ARAC) and was planned to be implemented in parallel to follow-up support to ARAC (ARAC Phase 2), which however only started in late 2018. ARAC Phase 2 and the SAFE Initiative shared their governance structure. At the regional level, the SAFE Initiative was expected to strengthen AIDMO's and AOAD's technical and regional coordination capacities for the planning, implementation, and management of a harmonized regional food control system.

At the level of AIDMO Member Countries, the aim was to improve national food safety control systems following regionally harmonized policies and protocols and according to international best practices. Expected wider outcomes were a reduction in overall regulatory complexity and associated compliance costs, the creation of a level playing field for all economic actors and the facilitation of intra-regional and external trade. Main type of support provided included advocacy, expert advice, and capacity building. UNIDO also funded participants in the meetings of the Arab Task Force (ATF) and its Expert Working Groups (EWG). Since early 2018, support was extended to selected stakeholders of the private sector, consumers, and academia. The SAFE Initiative further produced a gender- and a conflict sensitivity analysis.

The SAFE Initiative was originally expected to end in June 2018. The main reason for the delay seems to have been the challenge of securing full political ownership by AIDMO, AOAD and the League of Arab States (LAS) to obtain the formal decisions needed, which took significantly more time than expected. In consideration of the recommendations the independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 2018, SIDA and UNIDO agreed on an extension until 31 December 2019. According to the latest financial report as per 31 January 2020, US\$6,872,862 or 97.7% of the overall budget of US\$7,033,793 (excluding support costs) have been committed or spent. At the end of 2019, the SAFE Initiative was further extended until September 2020 to bridge the gap for a possible follow-up. This extension phase will include additional budget and activities.

Main findings and conclusions:

1. Relevance: Strengthening food safety is of high relevance to the objective of fostering agro-trade, but other benefits of food safety are even more relevant

Agro-trade was selected because of its potential socio-economic impact. The need to comply with different standards is often a major barrier to trade. Harmonizing national standards with those of export markets is thus an important element of a conducive business environment, including aspects of domestic/international trade. An enabling commercial environment is expected to spur economic development and contribute to poverty reduction. For most ATF and EWG members, the most urgent and important reason to improve food safety is the protection of consumers. Food safety is part of food security, thus the need to provide people with enough safe food. It is well-known that food safety is a key determinant of human health and wellbeing. Unsafe food has a direct negative impact on consumers, especially the poorer segments of the population who rely on cheap food alternatives: medical costs and loss of time for revenue generating/education activities due to food-related illnesses and waste of money spent for spoiled food. The relevance of food safety goes beyond trade and has a potentially much more direct development impact.

Relevant but only marginally addressed has been the strengthening the demand for food safety. The most important next step is now the practical application of the policies and systems created.

2. Project identification and design: UNIDO prioritized the key challenges relating to food and an innovative approach to address them through the appropriate partners

UNIDO identified the right challenges to address food safety issues as a barrier to trade. Food safety connects health, agriculture, and trade policy agendas. In the absence of a single regional authority responsible for food safety, UNIDO identified and worked with the right partners (AIDMO responsible for industrial development and standard setting, AOAD responsible for agriculture, the PAFTA secretariat).

3. Overall, the SAFE Initiative was effectively and efficiently implemented. While support at the regional level (outcome 1) partially exceeded the planned objectives, achievements under outcome 2 (except in Egypt) were below expectations.

At the regional level, UNIDO delivered most of the outputs as planned and in good quality. The integration of SPS and TBT provisions into the PAFTA was an unplanned positive outcome. At the country level, only two of the four planned country projects were implemented. Accordingly, only approximately US\$350,000 was allocated for country-specific support to Egypt and around US\$ 200,000 for Palestine, around 7% of the budget in total. In Palestine, the delivery of some small testing equipment is pending. UNIDO's support was instrumental to operationalize the Egyptian Food Safety Agency (NFSA). While a significant amount of the budget was allocated to communication, including the recruitment of a part-time communication officer, activities were not based on a clear strategy (what message to convey to whom and through which channels). Also, the value added of the conflict sensitivity analysis conducted by UNIDO was limited. The Evaluators positively noted UNIDO's efforts to reduce overhead costs after 2018, which enhanced the cost-benefit relationship substantially.

4. While the SAFE Initiative was operationally well managed, governance was suboptimal

The SAFE Initiative benefitted from a highly experienced and motivated team led by a seasoned Project Manager. Familiarity with the regional context and the hands-on approach used to address the various challenges the SAFE Initiative faced were essential. Not a good example of good governance was the joint-steering mechanism established with ARAC Phase 2 through two different committees (Executive Committee, Steering Committee). The tasks

and competences of these two committees partially overlapped. Strategic and operational decision making were not clearly separated. Members of the Steering Committee participated in decisions that concerned a project, in which they did not participate, and for which they were not accountable. The ATF, which was formally not part of the management and governance took strategic decisions on the project, for example which countries should benefit from country support programmes.

5. Gender mainstreaming

While a non-discriminatory participation of women and men in the SAFE Initiative was ensured, including as UNIDO experts, UNIDO did not apply a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming. No gender-related objectives were defined. Gender Mainstreaming was unsatisfactory. It should be noted that UNIDO's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy has been enacted after the project was designed. The two reports produced did not explore gender-related aspects of food safety policies and their implementation.

6. Sustainability

Overall, there is cautious optimism that the structure of ATF will be maintained and will continue to contribute to the strengthening of the regional trade cooperation framework in the field of food safety. The ECS' decision to include the ATF under the implementation and follow up committee of PAFTA contributes to the sustainability of the ATF. The challenge will be to fund the current level of meetings without UNIDO support. If budget allocations to the NFSA are maintained, outcomes generated in Egypt are sustainable.

7. Activities were monitored in detail, but without assessing their quality. But monitoring did not include an assessment achieved against planned results.

Significant weaknesses in the logical framework, which remained unchanged despite significant strategic shifts during implementation. While activity reporting is comprehensive, standard M&E tools were not properly applied. Reporting is activity- rather than results based. The application of RBM principles both at planning and implementation stage leaves significant room for improvement.

Recommendations

Project-specific recommendations to UNIDO (Department)

1. Finalize activities as per current annual workplan, with emphasis on support to ensure sustainability of the regional coordination structure (ATF, Expert Working Groups, and other key deliverables).

Recommendations to UNIDO (Department) on a possible follow-up phase

2. Consider proposing a new Food Trade Initiative to strengthen country level value chains comprehensively.
3. Selection of countries and value chains to be based on relevant and verifiable criteria and approved by the parties of the project agreement or the Steering Committee.
4. In preparation, map all relevant projects in the region to avoid overlaps and identify possible synergies.
5. Provide selective support to transforming the ATF into a permanent structure.
6. Ensure engagement of all stakeholders, including the private sector and consumer associations.

7. Ensure cost-contributions from beneficiaries to contribute to ownership and sustainability.
8. Establish a monitoring system that allows for tracking of outcomes generated by project outputs. That will require budgeting specific resources. In addition, consider using periodic Strategic External Monitoring as partially applied within the UNIDO Programmes.
9. Define clear objectives and activities for gender-mainstreaming and conflict sensitivity analysis rather than generic awareness raising and monitoring.
10. In designing capacity building activities, prioritize in-depth training of specialists in selected fields relevant to food safety instead of generic awareness raising.
11. In close consultation with all partners, clarify the governance structures at strategic and operational levels ensuring the following principles:
 - (a) Decision making power and decision mechanisms must be clearly defined.
 - (b) Strategic level decision making should be separated from operational decision making
 - (c) Competences to decide must match responsibilities and accountabilities.
 - (d) Consider establishing an advisory committee for networking and consultation purposes or to invite stakeholder representatives with no decision-making power as observer.

Recommendations to SIDA

Consider funding a proposal for a project along the lines described in recommendations 2 – 10 above.

Lessons learned

The Evaluation confirms emerging evidence from the Mid-Term Review, which identified the following good practices in strengthening regional trade cooperation frameworks:

- Identify and enroll all related government stakeholders (country level, regional level) from an early stage.
- If a functioning coordination mechanism at the regional level is not yet in place, use formalized joint committee work on specific technical issues of common interest to gradually foster a culture of cooperation among participating countries.
- Provide support to the establishment of a conducive legislative and regulatory framework and corresponding capacity building at national and regional level.
- Provide capacity building and support advocacy activities at both the level of member countries and regional bodies.
- Include consumer and private sector organizations to lobby for the necessary policy changes.
- Implement an exit strategy whereas the temporary structure (joint working committees) is gradually transformed into a permanent structure and subsequently further strengthened.

Table 1: Ratings of the project (summary)

Evaluation criteria	Rating by Evaluators
1. Project design	Satisfactory
2. Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
3. Effectiveness to date	Satisfactory
4. Efficiency to date	Moderately Satisfactory
5. Prospects of sustainability	Satisfactory
6. Gender mainstreaming	Unsatisfactory
7. M&E, RBM	Moderately unsatisfactory
Overall conclusion	Moderately satisfactory

Explanations:

- Highly satisfactory (HS = 6): The project had no shortcomings
- Satisfactory (S = 5): The project had minor shortcomings
- Moderately satisfactory (MS = 4): The project had moderate shortcomings
- Moderately unsatisfactory (MU = 3): The project had significant shortcomings
- Unsatisfactory (U = 2) The project had major shortcomings
- Highly unsatisfactory (HU = 1): The project had severe shortcomings

1. Background, objectives, and methodology

This independent terminal evaluation (“the Evaluation”) covers the project “Enhancement of regional trade capacities in food through harmonized regional conformity assessment and food safety systems” (Project ID: 120541), subsequently referred to as “the SAFE Initiative”.

1.1 Project background

With its focus on the establishment of a regional, harmonized food safety system in the Arab Region, the SAFE Initiative was designed to complement earlier UNIDO/SIDA technical assistance to the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) since 2010 (ARAC Project, Phase I). ARAC Phase I linked into the Regional Standardization Strategy, targeting regional accreditation cooperation by establishing and strengthening the Arab Accreditation (ARAC) as a core element of an Arab Quality Infrastructure.

Phase II of this project (ARAC Phase II), which has a budget of US\$ 3 million, was originally expected to be implemented in parallel with the SAFE initiative (2014 – 2018) and to share parts of its project implementation- and governance structure. ARAC Phase II mainly aimed at ensuring that ARAC is legally incorporated, technically, and financially sustainable and internationally recognized. ARAC Phase II also supports up to four ARAC members to become signatories of an ARAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA). ARAC Phase II will be subject to a separate terminal evaluation in June 2020.

As ARAC Phase II only started in 2018 instead of 2014, the SAFE initiative “advanced” US\$860,000 (excluding costs) for “bridging” two phases of the ARAC project. That allowed to implement some activities of ARAC Phase II with funding from the SAFE Initiative.

The SAFE Initiative also complemented SIDA-funded support to the PAFTA secretariat within the LAS implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

1.2 Project description

The SAFE Initiative, which covers all AIDMO member countries plus Mauretania as an observer, is primarily guided by a project document dated 13 May 2014 and an inception report (1st October 2014). Official counterpart is AIDMO. The project agreement was signed between UNIDO and AIDMO, as AIDMO was as an existing partner of UNIDO and SIDA partner and there no other regional organization was responsible for food safety

Its original budget was US\$ 6,643,835, fully funded by SIDA. UNIDO’s support under the SAFE Initiative links into the regional efforts coordinated by AIDMO and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), reflected in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2009 on cooperating on food safety standards between these organizations. Accordingly, the SAFE Initiative aimed at facilitating regional trade with food- and agro-based products through achieving regional integration, harmonization, and effective coordination in food safety, while ensuring compliance with international trade rules and regulations (TBT and SPS agreements). Compliance with standards and technical regulations as well as mutual recognition of conformity assessment procedures (i.e. testing, inspection, and certification) was assumed to be major contributor to the international competitiveness of local enterprises and products. The SAFE Initiative only marginally worked with companies and other users (e.g. consumers) of food safety control systems.

At the regional level, the SAFE Initiative was expected to strengthen AIDMO's and AOAD's technical and regional coordination capacities for the planning, implementation, and management of a harmonized regional food control system.

Objective at the level of AIDMO member countries was an improvement of national food safety control systems following regionally harmonized policies and protocols and according to international best practices. Expected wider outcomes are a reduction in overall regulatory complexity and associated compliance costs, the creation of a level playing field for all economic actors and the facilitation of intra-regional and external trade.

Main type assistance provided by UNIDO included advocacy, expert advice, and capacity building. UNIDO also funded participants in the meetings of the Arab Task Force (ATF) on Food Safety and its five Expert Working Groups (EWG), which worked on different topics relating to the regional harmonization of food safety systems. Since early 2018, the SAFE Initiative has extended food-safety related support through the following additional activities:

- Support to the private sector core group (Union of Arab Chambers, UAC) and the Arab Federation of Food Industries (AFFI) and its Expert Working Group in implementing their private sector engagement roadmap and its integration with the ATF.
- Facilitate the dialogue and integration of ATF with the Arab Consumer Protection Initiative established by the LAS.
- Support dissemination of the Arab Food Safety Scientists (AFSS) platform established under SAFE in partnership with Association of Arab Universities (AARU) and expand its use within the ATF community.
- A gender analysis and a conflict sensitivity analysis required by SIDA.
- Extensive awareness raising and promotional activities.

AIDMO acted as coordinating agency and is UNIDO's official counterpart. Other stakeholders were mainly involved through their participation in the ATF and as members of the Executive and Steering Committees.

At the level of AIDMO Member States, the SAFE Initiative worked with national standards bodies, national food control authorities, relevant ministries (responsible for health, industry, trade, agriculture) and national institutions involved in food standards and food safety.

The Food Safety Initiative was originally expected to end in June 2018 but was delayed due to the challenges of securing political ownership by the three relevant regional bodies (obtain the formal decisions needed), which took significantly more time than expected.

In consideration of the recommendations the independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 2018¹, SIDA and UNIDO agreed on an extension until 31 December 2019². According to the latest financial report as per 31 January 2020, US\$6,872,862 or 97.7% of the overall budget of US\$7,033,793 (excluding support costs) have been committed or spent. The ongoing extension phase was guided by a workplan that was established in 2018 and approved by SIDA. A further extension until 30 September 2020 with additional funding of US\$000,000 has been granted in 2019. The purpose of this second extension is to bridge the time until planned further SIDA support, which is currently under discussion.

¹ See Daniel Keller, Mid-Term Review, "Enhancement of regional trade capacities in food through harmonized regional conformity assessment and food safety systems" (SAFE), 30 October 2018.

² As ARAC Phase II only started in 2018 instead of 2014, the SAFE initiative "advanced" US\$860,000 (excluding costs) for "bridging" two phases of the ARAC project. That allowed to implement some activities of ARAC Phase II with funding from the SAFE Initiative.

The last official implementation report covers the year 2018. In preparation of the evaluation, UNIDO shared an overview on project outputs until December 2019. A comprehensive update until the end of January 2020 was provided during in-depth interviews on 24 February 2020.

1.3 Regional context

This chapter summarizes the regional political and economic context of the SAFE Initiative.

(a) Political and economic context

The Arab region covered by the SAFE Initiative encompasses 22 nations (as of 2020), which are all members of the LAS³. The LAS is a regional organization of Arab countries in and around North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Southwest Asia. The Arab region spans over 13 million km² and counts an estimated 350 million inhabitants.

Economic development and size of economies measured by their Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and the GDP per capita differ significantly.

(b) Trade integration within the Arab region

Efforts to trade integration among Arab countries started with the establishment of the Arab League in 1945. Within this framework, several attempts were made to promote regional political and economic integration: the 1950 Treaty for Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, the 1953 Convention for Facilitating and Regulating Transit Trade, the 1957 Arab Economic Unity Agreement, the 1964 Arab Common Market, the 1981 Gulf Cooperation Council, the 1989 Arab Cooperation Council and also in 1989 the Arab Maghreb Union. The regional Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA⁴) was signed in 1997, whereas Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia concluded the Agadir Agreement in 2004.⁵

Implementation of these agreements remained rather weak and trade barriers high. Regional trade integration accelerated when many Arab countries embarked on trade liberalization, both at multilateral, bilateral and regional level. So far, only 12 LAS Member States have joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). In parallel, the number of bilateral free trade agreements has increased. The GAFTA aims at multiple objectives. Firstly, reducing trade barriers aims at increasing intra-regional trade. Secondly, exploiting comparative advantages and economies of scale among the member countries is expected to lead to higher productivity. Thirdly, promoting increased competition within domestic markets aims at enhancing product variety and quality and lowering prices for consumers. Fourthly, due to the decrease of import prices, terms of trade are expected to improve. The GAFTA Agreement currently includes 18 members, generating 95% of the trade among Arab League members and 96% of the Arab trade with the outside world.⁶

The GAFTA Agreement is governed by the Economic and Social Council (ESC) of the LAS. It has so far primarily covered rules of origin, customs, and tariffs. The most recent development was a decision by ESC in 2019 to upgrade the GAFTA Agreement into a comprehensive trade agreement by including SPS and TBT.

The Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) is responsible for industrial development in the Arab region. One of AIDMO's core mandates is to work towards a harmonized and integrated support quality infrastructure (QI), with the aim to enable the

³ As per end of 2019, the memberships of Libya and Syria are still suspended.

⁴ Now: Pan Arabic Free Trade Agreement (PAFTA)

⁵ Agreement on Establishing a Free Trade Area between the Arab Mediterranean Countries.

⁶ Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

22 AIDMO Member Countries to comply with international trade rules and regulations, while reducing costs of proving product conformity of products and enterprises with international standards. Enhancing the QI at regional and national levels is an integral part of AIDMO's trade facilitation and economic integration objectives. The Arab Standardization Strategy (2009 - 2013) outlines specific actions aiming at ensuring a well-functioning regional quality system.

As AIDMO, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) is one of the specialized Arab organizations, functioning under the umbrella of the LAS. AOAD's goals at the national level are to assist member countries in developing and enhancing their respective agricultural sectors. At the regional level, AOAD aims at facilitating coordination among member states in the agricultural sector, with the aim of achieving a fully integrated Arab economy union, and food self-sufficiency⁷.

The Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC)⁸ is an association of national accreditation bodies (ABs). The accreditation bodies are officially recognized by their national governments to assess organizations that carry out conformity assessment services against international standards. ARAC is therefore one of the main pillars of the Pan Arab quality infrastructure (QI) system in supporting intra-regional trade and the Arab Customs Union requirements. Established through a Ministerial Decree of AIDMO in June 2008 with substantial support through UNIDO/SIDA, ARAC's current membership includes 14 Arab Accreditation Bodies⁹. Since its launch on 12 June 2011 in Cairo, ARAC has acted as the Arab planning and coordination agency on QI. Its main goal is to improve the competitiveness and trust in Arab goods and services and protect health and safety of the public and the environment. In October 2017, ARAC has been officially recognized as a regional accreditation cooperation body by ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and IAF (International Accreditation Forum).¹⁰

1.4 Evaluation scope, objectives, and methodology

The Evaluation was commissioned by UNIDO and undertaken two external Evaluators (the Evaluators)¹¹. The work was guided by the Terms of Reference (ToR) dated 11 September 2019 (Annex 3), which were operationalized through an inception report dated 19 February 2020 endorsed by UNIDO. UNIDO's Independent Evaluation Division (ODG/EIO/IED)¹² managed the evaluation and ensured quality control. The Evaluators were recruited by UNIDO following a transparent selection process; they are impartial and independent¹³.

(e) Evaluation scope

The Evaluation covers the implementation of the Food Safety Initiative from January 2014 until end of February 2020. Prior and subsequent developments until the end of the field

⁷ Summarized from <http://www.aoad.org/Eabout.htm>.

⁸ See www.linkedin.com/company/arab-accreditation-cooperation-arac, retrieved on 15 April 2020

⁹ See www.arac-accreditation.org, retrieved on 15 April 2020; it seems that the site has been hacked.

¹⁰ The recognition of the ARAC MLA to the ILAC MRA was granted for calibration and testing (ISO/IEC 17025), medical testing (ISO 15189) and laboratory and inspection body accreditation programs (ISO/IEC 17020), and the recognition of the ARAC MLA to the IAF MLA for the main scope of Management system certification (ISO/IEC 17021-1)

¹¹ Daniel P. Keller, Evillard, Switzerland, Team Leader; Mohammed Saad, Regional Evaluator, Cairo, Egypt.

¹² UNIDO's Independent Evaluation Division is responsible for the independent evaluation function. It supports learning, continuous improvement and accountability, and provides information about result and practices that feed into UNIDO's programmatic and strategic decision-making processes.

¹³ See paragraph 48 of UNIDO's Evaluation Policy: Evaluators must not have been involved in the design and/or implementation, supervision, and coordination of and/or have benefited from the programme/project (or theme). under evaluation. Moreover, Evaluators are not to seek assignments with the manager(s) in charge of the project before the completion of their contract with the Office for Independent Evaluation.

mission on 2 March 2020 have been considered as contextual information where relevant. Data collection was finalized before the crisis relating to COVID-19 pandemic, which is a significant subsequent event.¹⁴

(f) Evaluation objectives

Evaluations support learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, and provide fact-based information about result and practices that feed into the programmatic and strategic decision-making processes. Independent evaluations provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons learned into the decision-making processes. The ToR define clear evaluation objectives and detailed evaluative questions. Rather than focusing on individual activities in detail, the Evaluation is expected to assess whether the SAFE Initiative (as a whole) provided the right type of support to achieve its objectives in the right way.

UNIDO is particularly interested in the assessment of the approach (different steps used in establishing a regional food safety management system and their sequencing). Within this organizational learning purpose, the Evaluators identified lessons learned that might help to optimize the approach on regional harmonization of conformity assessment and food safety systems. SIDA also expressed the desire to receive strategic input to the conceptualization of a possible follow-up intervention that is currently being prepared.

(g) Evaluation framework and methodology

The methodological framework is provided by UNIDO's Evaluation Manual, which provides comprehensive guidance on evaluations.

Accordingly, the project quality was assessed against the following main criteria:

- Project design
- Project performance (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of results)
- Cross-cutting performance criteria (gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation and Results-Based Management).

A Theory of Change (ToC) analysis was used to assess how realistic the pathways between outputs and outcomes and between outcomes and impact are, including the identification of major external factors.

In addition to the standard evaluation criteria, the SAFE Initiative was assessed based on the criterion of "coherence"¹⁵, which is also reflected in the new evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Before, aspects of coherence were often assessed as a sub-criteria of relevance (alignment). Coherence assesses the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions and policies under two angles:

- Internal coherence assesses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government (SIDA, UNIDO), as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres.
- External coherence looks at the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonization and coordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

¹⁴ The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have changed the factual basis of the Evaluation significantly, but it is not yet possible to analyze how.

¹⁵ As proposed in the Inception Report and agreed by UNIDO.

Progress towards achieving impact (criteria A of evaluation manual) was assessed as a part of effectiveness. “Performance of Partners” (criteria D of the evaluation manual) will not be assessed separately, but as a contributing factor to project results (where appropriate).

The 6-point rating system in Table 4 presented in Chapter 3.3 of UNIDO’s Evaluation Guidelines contained in the ToR was applied to each of the above-mentioned criteria (ranking from highly unsatisfactory to highly satisfactory). The Evaluation balanced the needs for organizational learning with the purpose of ensuring accountability of UNIDO towards the donor and counterparts. While maintaining their independence, the Evaluators applied a participatory learning approach, seeking the views of all groups of project stakeholders. Enrolling key stakeholders in the evaluation process and seeking alignment on key findings, conclusions and recommendations will facilitate organizational learning. The evaluation process itself was expected to contribute to continuous improvement. Furthermore, to make the evaluation useful, the Evaluators formulated targeted, actionable recommendations and derive lessons learned from them. Stakeholder feed-back to the evaluation results was obtained as follows:

- Through a presentation of preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations on 24 February 2020 in Amman (to SIDA and UNIDO’s Project Team together)
- Factual verification of the draft report submitted to the UNIDO Project Manager on 24 April 2020 (written input), debriefings (Evaluation Division, project team and donor (28/29 April 2020)
- Submission of a revised version of the report (30 April 2020), taking factual corrections into account. This version was also be shared with SIDA.
- Quality check by the Evaluation Division and submission of final report.

This final version of the report takes all factual corrections and comments received from UNIDO into account.

(h) Data collection

In line with the specific evaluative questions, fact finding, and the analysis of contextual factors were limited to desk study (project documents, progress reports, project outputs, beneficiary surveys conducted by the Project) and on interviewing key stakeholders who were directly involved into the Project.

The decision not to undertake field visits beyond Jordan and Egypt is also justified by the fact that except for support to the NFSA of Egypt, no direct technical support, equipment etc. (except some training) that would require validation through personal observation was provided. Country needs assessments (Sudan, Tunisia) and trainings (various countries) were validated through interviews of stakeholder representatives at the ATF meeting in Amman.

A list of key stakeholders interviewed is included in [Annex 2](#).

A list of documents consulted is included in [Annex 1](#).

The intervention logic given by the logical framework included into the ToR, further clarified in the inception report (presented in Chapter I above) is reasonably clear (although not spelled out in detail). It does not need to be reconstituted but amended. Missing are however the expected specific direct outcomes thus the level between what would be considered as outputs (capacities strengthened) and the expected wider socio-economic benefits (resulting from the EWG’s and ATF’s work, if any). The Evaluation explored and validated these benefits (against those reported in the progress reports and informed through other sources).

To ensure organizational learning, interviews were structured as open as possible. Rather than structuring discussions through a pre-defined “agenda”, guiding questions were used to conduct a free exchange of opinions. This allowed for an iterative approach, whereas new findings were integrated into evaluative questions and subsequently validated.

Different evaluation tools were combined to ensure an evidence-based qualitative and quantitative assessment. Data collected through different sources was triangulated and the plausibility of evaluation results obtained assessed. The methodological mix included document reviews, semi-structured individual interviews, semi-structured interviews of focal groups and direct observation at meetings (EWG, ATF). Face-to-face interviews were complemented by semi-structured phone interviews immediately after the mission.

Conclusions and recommendations were based on evaluation findings (deductive reasoning). Inductive reasoning was used where evaluation findings were insufficient for drawing conclusions and deductive reasoning was not possible. The reasons of using inductive reasoning is explained.

1.5 Limitations

It is premature to assess broader outcomes or even impact. It is not plausible to assume that initial and still ongoing harmonization efforts, the awareness raising, and training would already have generated results at the wider outcome or even at the impact level. Instead, an attempt was made to validate the theory of change, including the link of regional work to national outcomes and the assumptions that need to be fulfilled.

Translating institutional strengthening (national level, regional level) into direct benefits (e.g. standard harmonization) or even into longer-term broader economic benefits will take significantly more than five years. The exception is the support to the National Food Safety Authority (NAFTA) of Egypt, where it was possible to observe initial outcomes, as direct capacity building was conducted and immediately applied. Instead, the Evaluators will assess and validate the theory of change presented in [Chapter 2.3](#), including the link of regional work to national outcomes and the assumptions that need to be fulfilled.

It should also be noted that while reporting of outcomes at country level highlights some success stories, it remains incomplete and is not updated. Evaluations cannot replace data collection through periodic monitoring and reporting. Nevertheless, the Evaluators also attempted to identify wider effects to the degree it is possible to establish a causal relationship (attribution or contribution) between them and the SAFE Initiative.

2. Findings and assessment

2.1 Project preparation and design

This chapter assesses the quality of project preparation reflected in the original project document, including its identification and design.

UNIDO identified the right challenges to address food safety issues as a barrier to trade. Food safety connects health, agriculture, and trade policy agendas. In the absence of a single regional authority responsible for food safety, UNIDO cooperated with the right partners (AIDMO, AOAD, PAFTA Secretariat). The SAFE-Programme essentially support the LAS in its efforts to “regionalize” the multilateral trade system. As this part of the work has been at the core of the SAFE Initiative, the LAS (hosting the PAFTA Secretariat) would have been the logical counterpart. This option was discussed with SIDA, but subsequently dismissed, because SIDA already committed funds to another project benefitting the LAS through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The choice of AIDMO as the formal partner had historic reasons. For the only significant country support programme (Egypt), NFSA, the Egyptian agency responsible for food safety, was the appropriate counterpart.

Both in terms of its objectives and approach, the SAFE Initiative is innovative for UNIDO. Lessons learned from prior efforts of regional trade capacity building seem to have been carefully studied, including the needs of:

- Setting up and strengthening a regional coordination structure
- Strengthening the regional level and the national level of quality systems (or food safety system) in parallel
- Combining capacity building with policy advice
- Decentralizing day-to-day project management to a local team that is based in the region and familiar with the regional context
- Accompanying technical capacity building and policy advocacy/advise through communication measures
- Mobilizing key stakeholders (companies, consumers) to lobby for policy changes (from 2018 onwards, following a request of SIDA)
- Enrolling academia to ensure the availability of highly specialized technical expertise.

Outputs that are expected to be generated by UNIDO’s inputs and their intended wider benefits are broadly described, but not translated into a results framework with specific direct outcomes linked to specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound indicators. Some assumptions (key external factors that need to be in place to achieve outcomes and impacts), particularly those to the upgrading of quality infrastructure and the translation of regional into national policies, are unrealistic.

For the extension phase (2018/2019), the logical framework has not been adjusted. The original logframe is outdated and does not reflect important changes made, including support to additional stakeholders (private sector, academia), the refocus of the project to support at the regional level and efforts towards institutionalizing the ATF and EWGs. The “action plan” shared with the Evaluators is insufficient to guide the implementation of a project, even during an extension phase.

The governance structure (who will be responsible for strategic decision making and how decisions will be taken) is not clearly defined (including in the new Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee and the Steering Committee approved by UNIDO and SIDA in 2018).

In conclusion: Overall, the SAFE Initiative was well prepared. The project design innovative and capitalized on lessons learned from other regional UNIDO programmes. Overall, project preparation was satisfactory (5).

2.2 Relevance

The assessment of relevance looks at the extent to which project objectives were consistent with the requirements of key beneficiaries, international priorities, donor policies and UNIDO's mandate.

A. Relevance to regional priorities

As described in Chapter 1 above, UNIDO's support responds well to the regional standards harmonization efforts coordinated by AIDMO and AOAD¹⁶. Expected benefits of harmonizing national with international standards are:

- A reduction in overall regulatory complexity and associated compliance costs
- Creation of a level playing field for all economic actors; and
- The facilitation of intra-regional and external trade.

The need to comply with different standards is often a major barrier to trade. Harmonizing national standards with those of export markets is thus an important element of a conducive business environment, including aspects of domestic/international trade. An enabling commercial environment is expected to spur economic development and contribute to poverty reduction.

The food sector was selected based on an assessment of its future trade potential and an analysis of existing TBT/SPS constraints conducted by the International Trade Center (ITC).¹⁷

Private sector representatives confirmed that support responded well to their needs and that objectives of the SAFE Initiative respond well to commercial priorities. Alleviating standard-related trade barriers is however only one of many factors that are needed to enhance industry competitiveness. Other factors (trade facilitation issues, conducive domestic regulatory environment, promoting innovation, etc.) are equally important. Within the limited scope of the Evaluation, it was not possible to assess the contribution of each of these factors to domestic, regional, and international trade.

Spurring trade is not the most important political motivation for enhancing the food safety system in the Arab region. Increasing intra-regional trade is only one of the expected benefits of standard harmonization and effective coordination in food safety. For most ATF and Expert Group members the most urgent and important reason to improve food safety is the protection of consumers. Food safety is part of food security, the need to provide people with enough safe food.

It is well-known that food safety is a key determinant of human health and wellbeing. Unsafe food has a direct negative impact on consumers, especially the poorer segments of the population who rely on cheap food alternatives: medical costs and loss of time for revenue generating/education activities due to food-related illnesses and waste of money spent for spoiled food.¹⁸

¹⁶ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two organizations in 2009.

¹⁷ See Project Document "Enhancement of regional trade capacities in food through harmonized regional conformity assessment and food safety systems", UNIDO, May 2014, page 11.

¹⁸ UNIDO, Food Safety Approach, Safer Food for Sustainable and Resilient businesses, Vienna 2018, see also: <https://www.unido.org/food-safety-driver-human-and-economic-development>

Most recently, relevance of strengthening food safety systems to intra-regional trade has increased, as efforts to upgrade the PAFTA to a comprehensive trade agreement, reflecting all areas regulated under WTO (tariffs, rules of origin, TBT, SPS, intellectual property, and trade facilitation) gained momentum. The relevance of the SAFE Initiative for the further development of the PAFTA has been underpinned by the ECS's recent decision to include SPS and TBT annexes into the PAFTA. Some of the interviewees rightly highlighted that international commitments may assist them to advocate for reforms (and the necessary budgetary contributions) domestically. International agreements will enroll governments to upgrade their internal laws and practices, because contractual obligations require them to do so.

UNIDO's support is chiefly related to issues that need to be addressed in a SPS annex to the PAFTA Agreement. Those are essentially the core elements needed for facilitating trade of food products that are safe for human consumption across borders, thus:

- Risk assessment system
- Inspection and certification systems
- Arab Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (ARASFF)
- Country needs assessments
- Codex Alimentarius Coordination.

The five priority areas were identified by the ATF based on the priority needs of the region.

All partners interviewed confirmed that the SAFE Programme fully met their needs. Considering that food safety characterizes as a transversal theme, the SAFE Programme ensured the enrolment of all key stakeholders: government agencies responsible for health, trade and agriculture, companies, and academia. Involving the academia was important to build the know-how that enables Arab countries to actively contribute to standard setting (Codex Alimentarius). The approach to choose the five "joint initiatives" each of them attributed to an EWG led by a country with strong expertise/experience in the field was wisely chosen and relevant beyond the field of SPS.

An additional value added of the SAFE Programme is to foster a culture of cooperation, know-how transfer and a network among Arab countries to address issues of common concerns. Evidenced by interviews, the ATF might evolve into a model for future cooperation within the LAS in other fields if it proves effective. Jointly dealing with food safety matters might thus be a launching path for further cooperation in other areas of trade or even beyond. For all these reasons, the SAFE Programme has been of high ongoing relevance for the LAS.

More generally, the SAFE Initiative was well adapted to the context of the Arab region. The Project team's knowledge of, and presence in the region has been a significant advantage.

B. Relevance for the donor and UNIDO

The SAFE Initiative obviously matches UNIDO's operational mandate, core competencies, expertise, and experience. Objectives are fully aligned to UNIDO's core objective and mandate to promote sustainable industrial development.

The SAFE Initiative also contributes to SIDA's aim to strengthen regional economic integration¹⁹ and trade in the post-spring era, international priorities, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 1 (poverty reduction), SDG 2 (no hunger), SDG 3 (health and

¹⁹ Although limited to the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA Region) and not all AIDMO member states, see also: www.Sida.se/English/where-we-work/Asia/the-Middle-East/Our-work-in (retrieved on 18 April 2020).

wellbeing)²⁰. It should be noted that SIDA's regional focus is limited to MENA countries and does not include the Gulf region.

In conclusion, relevance is exceeding initial expectations and thus highly satisfactory.

In conclusion: The Project was fully aligned with national and international priorities, the needs of all beneficiaries, SIDA's strategies, and UNIDO's core mandate. Relevance was increased as the efforts of the LAS to regionalize the multi-lateral trade system gained momentum, which is reflected through a decision to upgrade the PAFTA into a comprehensive free-trade agreement. Relevance was *highly satisfactory* (6).

2.3 Coherence and synergies

In terms of internal coherence (UNIDO), UNIDO's food safety-related capacity development initiatives are aimed at in a cohesive and holistic manner, to achieving inclusive and environmentally sustainable industrial development. Inclusiveness and environmental aspects are included into UNIDO's new Food Safety Policy. The SAFE Initiative, which was designed earlier, has not defined specific objectives and a strategy to address inclusiveness and sustainability in its work.

The SAFE Initiative and the ARAC Project (Phase II) are complementary. The division of work is clear. SAFE Initiative covers regional food safety comprehensively, while the ARAC Project (Phase II) works on the strengthening of the regional accreditation system that had been established with prior SIDA/UNIDO assistance (ARAC Phase I). As described above, the projects shared parts of their management structure (offices, staff), which resulted in some efficiency gains, but little other synergies. As the work of the two projects are clearly delimited, the need for operational coordination beyond periodic exchange of experience remains limited. There are no obvious synergies, except maybe the opportunity for ARAC to use the ATF to lobby for support.

Other UN Agencies: UNIDO concluded a subcontract with the FAO to adapt the FAO's newly-developed FAO-WHO joint country assessment tool in the Arab region with the aim of building capacity in the region for scaling up the use of the tool through pilot implementations in two countries. Cooperation with the FAO also extended to the Codex work. It was not possible to verify the synergies reported with the FAO's intervention in Palestine, as parts of the delivery of UNIDO's support is pending. According to UNIDO, the FAO did not share their intervention logic and workplan, although UNIDO had requested for it to avoid overlaps.

SIDA: The value added for SIDA to support LAS through two different projects funded through two UN Agencies (UNIDO, UNDP) on trade-related issues is unclear. The informal coordination between the two project teams (both based in Cairo) seems to have been rather limited. The risk of overlaps, inconsistencies and efficiency losses remain. The scope of the Evaluation was not to assess coherence among all the different SIDA-funded interventions. This would have required significant additional research to gain a comprehensive overview. For the design of possible follow on support a mapping of different SIDA interventions in the region is however a must. The scope and resources of the Evaluation did also not allow for an assessment of coherence with other UNIDO and/or SIDA projects in the Arab region. There is no obvious link to the current UNIDO portfolio in Egypt the Evaluators looked at.

The degree of coherence was satisfactory.²¹

²⁰ See detailed analysis in UNIDO's Food Safety Approach.

²¹ Not to be included into the official overall rating

2.4 Effectiveness

Effectiveness looks at the extent to which the development objectives of an intervention were or are expected to be achieved.

This section validates the ToC and assesses the planned against the achieved outputs and outcomes, within the limitations described in chapter 1.4 above to assess broader outcomes and impact.

A. Theory of change

The main elements of the theory of change are presented in Table 2 below.

Development objective was to contribute to trade facilitation for food/agro-based products, resulting in increased intra-regional trade volumes and value for these products. Other expected potential benefits resulting from an improved food safety system, such as for example health or poverty reduction, were not defined as objectives, but mentioned as potential benefits (both in the project document and in stakeholder interviews).

Expected broader outcomes that were expected to contribute to the development objective were:

- A reduction in overall regulatory complexity and associated compliance costs
- Creation of a level playing field for all economic actors; and
- The facilitation of intra-regional and external trade.

Expected direct outcomes and related **key outputs** were:

- **Outcome 1²²**: AIDMO and AOAD's technical and regional coordination capacities strengthened for the planning, implementation, and management of a harmonized regional food control system within the framework of the Regional Standardization Strategy.

Outputs related to outcome 1: Under this outcome, UNIDO was expected to support to the establishment and the operationalization of the ATF and its EWGs (outputs 1.1 – output 1.3).

- **Outcome 2**: AIDMO member countries improve their national food safety control systems following regionally harmonized policies and protocols and according to international best practices and agreements (SPS).

Outputs related to outcome 2: under this outcome UNIDO was expected to support country needs assessments and assist member countries in the implementation of the regional harmonized standards & protocols (planned support: Libya, Palestine, Egypt, and Yemen).

According to the work plan²³, the extension phase aimed to consolidate and complement earlier support that has been provided. Moreover, food-safety related support was expanded to additional target groups, specifically: the private sector, the consumer lobby, and the academia. The logical framework was not adapted.

Key assumptions relating to the achievement impact and outcomes are:

Impact level: Increased trade in food products:

- Competitive products with market demand available
- Trade logistics at affordable prices (transportation, storage)

²² Which would rather be an output, as directly linked to UNIDO's support

²³ Annex 2 to the Annual Progress Report 2018, pages 57 – 62

- Conducive conditions for trade in place (other than those related to food safety) – mainly in terms trade facilitation (customs, border control, tariffs)

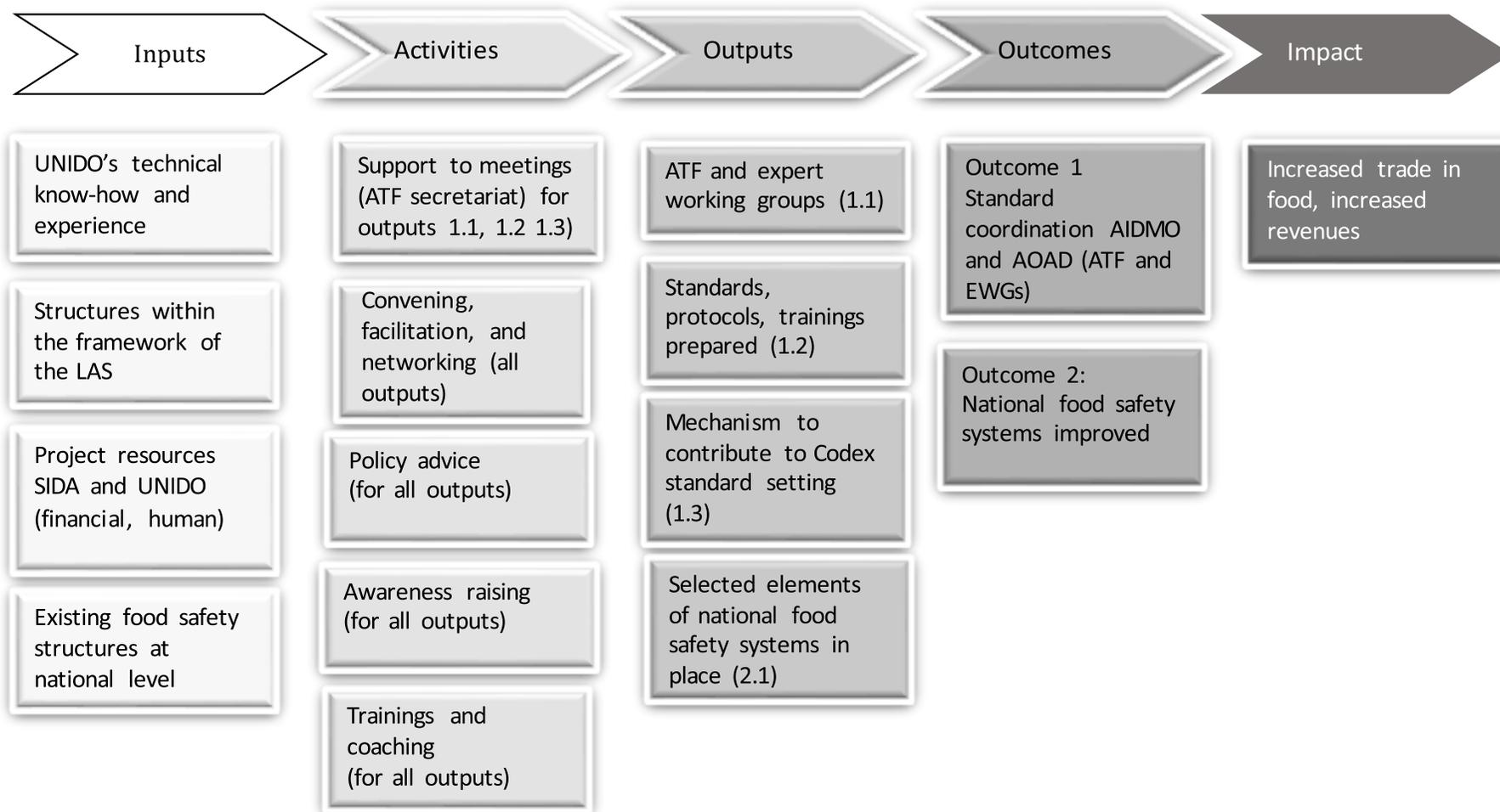
For outcome 1: Regional coordination mechanism

- Political will of LAS to establish and maintain coordination mechanism
- Member states have budgets and human resources to contribute (participate in LAS meetings).

For outcome 2: Improved food safety systems at country level:

- Political will to translate regional policies into national laws and to apply them
- Budgets to upgrade national food safety systems available
- Food safety awareness of consumers, demand for safe food.

Table 2: Theory of change



Source: Logical framework, analysis of Evaluators

B. Assessment of results

This section assesses main outputs delivered, and outcomes observed. Based on a validation of desk study with interviews of project stakeholders, the following outputs have been delivered:

Outcome 1: Establishment and operationalization of the ATF and the EWGs

Main set of activities was the facilitation and operational support to the ATF including its secretariat and of five EWGs since 2016. Although fully funded by the SAFE Initiative (including travel of the delegates, per diems, etc.), the ATF has been operating as an intergovernmental advisory committee to the LAS, mainly on the enhancement of coordination and harmonization of food safety interventions in the Arab region. The EWGs are the technical arm of the ATF and consist of 45 representatives from national food safety authorities in the Arab region. Five groups work on different topics relating to food safety: Inspection and Certification Systems, Country Needs Assessment, Codex Coordination, ARASSF, risk assessment.

- **Risk assessment:** The training on risk assessment (12 participants), which replaced the planned Master course for risk assessors (see below), was of excellent quality. The change was made because implementation started later than planned, and it would not have been possible to complete an entire Master course cycle (2 years) within the remaining project duration. It combined practical and theoretical capacity building, exposure to the work of other agencies responsible for risk assessment. The right participants were selected (qualification and relevance to their work). Participants confirmed that they directly applied what they learned e.g. establishment of risk assessment units and upgrading of risk assessment systems with their agencies.
- **Country needs assessment:** Under a subcontract with the FAO, an in-depth assessment of the national food control systems of Tunisia and Sudan applying the FAO/WHO needs assessment tool was conducted. The report was not made available to the Evaluators. According to stakeholders interviewed, the methodology only assesses the food safety system at central government level, not in state and province level, which is a problem for countries with a federal structure like Sudan. Recommendations might thus not fully reflect the situation in the country. In Sudan, a report was delivered to Under Secretary. High authorities were not invited to closing workshop, there was no visibility, and little political support. At this time, Sudan faced a political crisis and food safety was not a political priority. In Tunisia, a follow-up action plan has been endorsed at the Director General level of relevant government stakeholders (ministries of Industry, Trade, Health, etc.). The Project Manager confirmed that he was in discussion with the FAO for a possible follow-up.
- **Arab Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed:** It was planned to prepare a full-fledged proposal for the system, which has been completed. The Project established the system itself but pending a decision on who will host the ARASFF, the system has not been launched. The legal basis (regional level) to operate the system is not yet in place. Moreover, some software and hardware are missing.
- **Certification/inspection system for import and export:** A detailed guideline was developed and shared through the EWG members with the national authorities. Extensive training was provided. Some beneficiary confirmed that they applied the training in their work and that the guideline translated into changes of some import and export inspections systems at the national level.
- **Codex Coordination:** UNIDO provided capacity building of staff who participates in Codex meetings. Codex guidelines were prepared. Several interviewees confirmed that the guidelines had been used. Participants coordinated in preparing input to the Codex meetings, but there was no joint input of the Arab region as reported.

- Comprehensive awareness raising and training events targeted to specialists (technical and political level, including company and consumer lobbies) at the country level aimed at mobilizing support for institutional changes at the national and regional level.
- The establishment of an Arab common mechanism of food standards
- The establishment of the Arab Food Safety Scientists Platform (AFSS Platform)
- Capacity building for the Economic Integration Department (EID) of the League of Arab States (LAS), for AIDMO, and for AOAD
- Several regional conformity assessment and food safety standards, protocols, schemes, training programs and guidelines prepared and endorsed at regional level
- Initial steps for a coordinated approach for the participation of the Arab States in the Codex food standards setting process has been established and operational. Unlike reported, no common position of Arab countries was prepared, but positions of individual countries were coordinated
- Benchmarking of the import and export inspection and certification systems of Jordan, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Participation of selected representatives of the public and private sector from various countries in relevant international conferences.

In terms of outcomes observed, key stakeholders interviewed confirmed a significantly increased general awareness, political commitment, and know-how in the field of food safety, specifically:

- The institutional linkages between AIDMO and AOAD have been strengthened, which is also reflected by a revised MoU covering the involvement of both organizations in standard setting. The reinforced political commitment is reflected in the decision of the LAS to include SPS into the PAFTA mandate.
- Some institutional changes to existing regional bodies were made, such as the decision to set-up an SPS unit within AOAD.
- The SAFE Programme further contributed to the convergence of the three key players (AIDMO, AOAS and the EID), reflected in the approach to establish multi-disciplinary expert working groups. The last ATF and EWG meetings, which the Evaluator partially attended, are the nucleus of a functioning decision-making mechanism that is independent from the SAFE Programme.
- In some countries, specific actions were taken (e.g. establishment of a High Committee for Food Safety in Libya, risks analysis department in Qatar, codex committees in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq, Libya). Oman and Iraq enacted a new food safety law and food safety authority. Tunisia established new food safety agency.
- Technical discussion within the ATF Forum and Expert Groups brought experts from countries to the table who would otherwise not have the opportunity to exchange views. Especially remarkable in the context of the Arab Region.
- Work of EWG also allowed specialists in different fields to establish a network and to contact each other directly to resolve specific issues (rather than using official channels). Participants also became aware of best practices/expertise within the region.
- While these outcomes are promising signs, significant obstacles towards implementation of SPS provision within the PAFTA Agreement remain.

Beneficiary interviews confirmed that all these outputs have been delivered timely and generally in good quality, except the following planned outputs, which were not delivered up to expectations:

- (a) **Master Programme for risk assessors:** In 2018, UNIDO stopped the planned Masters' Programme pending SIDA's approval of the no-cost extension. The Master Programme was eventually replaced by the in-depth training programme (see above). Some beneficiaries highlighted that an in-depth academic education in the field of risk assessment remains important to enable participants to make scientifically founded contributions to the risk assessment system.
- (b) **Conflict sensitivity analysis:** According to the essence SIDA's guidelines²⁴, the purpose of a conflict sensitivity analysis is to understand the context in which a project operates, including the interaction between the context and its intervention with the purpose of minimizing negative impacts and maximize positive ones on a conflict. Conflict sensitivity analysis is expected to ensure that interventions do not cause unintended negative impacts on the context within which they are working. Described from an angle of conflict prevention, conflict sensitivity analysis intends to identify measures that could help to mitigate a conflict and to strengthen social cohesion. Conflicts generated or aggravated by development interventions are essentially implementation risks that need to be looked at in the same way as any other risk that jeopardizes the achievement of objectives or even worse – generates negative outcomes.
- The UNIDO conflict sensitivity expert essentially facilitated an institutional self-assessment of the ATF and the EWG with the objective to encourage the members of these bodies to fulfill their functions in a conflict sensitive manner. According to UNIDO, this was not meant to be a full-fledged conflict sensitivity assessment based on SIDA's guidelines. The expert did not explore the question whether the SAFE Programme negatively affects existing conflicts, potentially fosters new conflicts or whether there is any potential for the SAFE Programme to contribute to prevent future conflicts. In this context, it would have been interesting to explore the benefits of strengthening a regional trade cooperation framework for the Arab region for conflict mitigation.
- (c) **An analysis of communication material shows that communication** seems to have served two purposes: Firstly, showcasing the achievement of the SAFE-Project and generating visibility for SIDA and UNIDO. Secondly, promoting food safety in general. The SAFE Initiative communicated actively and through various channels, including social media. It remained unclear, which messages were communicated to whom (target audience) through which media channels and for what purpose. Accordingly, there was also no systematic monitoring of whether communication activities (except the number of hits and responses on social media) have achieved their objectives.
- (d) Outputs relating to **gender mainstreaming** are discussed in Chapter III.6 below.

Outcome 2: Country support programmes

Only one of four planned programmes (Egypt, Libya, Palestine, and Yemen) is currently implemented (Egypt). The limited intervention for Palestine (small inspection equipment, training) is further delayed due to time consuming security procedures relating to the import of high-tech equipment into Palestine. The projects for Libya and Yemen were not approved by the ATF, mainly for security reasons. In the light of the already precarious situation in these countries, it became not clear why these project proposals were elaborated.

The National support programme contributed significantly towards the enhancement of the operations and programs of the newly created food safety agency, the National Food Safety Agency

²⁴ See SIDA, Conflict Sensitivity Analysis, 2018, retrieved from <https://www.sida.se/contentassets/69bb013c27e64cfc8b6c6e05aeb71ab/conflict-sensitivity.pdf> on 18 April 2020

of Egypt (NFSA). According to the management of NFSA, support was instrumental for operationalizing NFSA. Support fully met the needs and was of high quality.

Main support to Egypt included:

- NFSA was provided with a legal expert to develop the executive regulation for the law, technical regulations.
- NFSA also received support in training of inspectors, including on soft skills and on transparency issues.
- NFSA started establishing a national food monitoring system (pesticide, report) and is in the process of establishing a third-party inspection system. Courses/exams to filter officials, financial/management systems HR.

In conclusion: With some exceptions, outputs were generally implemented as planned. The most important achievement, to which the SAFE Initiative contributed significantly, was to achieve the inclusion of an SPS Annex into the PAFTA Agreement. If approved by PAFTA signatories, this would be a break-through in upgrading the PAFTA into a comprehensive trade agreement. Overall, effectiveness was satisfactory (5).

2.5 Efficiency

A. Approach

The SAFE Programme is a good example of a regional approach to trade capacity building.

Core elements of UNIDO's approach were:

- The enrolment of all regional and national government actors involved in food safety issues
- Using consumer and industry representatives²⁵ to lobby for trade facilitation and food safety
- The combination of advocacy and capacity building to facilitate political decision making (i.e. ATF and EWG work to pave the way for the ESC decision)
- The strengthening of the national/regional capacities in parallel
- Fostering specific cooperation among countries at the expert level through small, specific technical joint projects as a groundwork for future cooperation

More specifically, UNIDO engaged all organizations under the LAS that are responsible for trade-related aspects of food safety: the Economic Integration Department (EID) responsible for administrating the PAFTA Agreement, AIDMO (responsible for TBT issues) and the AOAD (responsible to deal with SPS matters). The key challenge to overcome was that AIDMO and AOAD had never jointly worked in technical matters. The SAFE Initiative facilitated the establishment of a working relationship, reflected in the participation of all three organizations in the Steering Committee. The success of ARAC, which was established with SIDA/UNIDO support under the ARAC Project Phase I, served as a model for a joint Arab initiative to which SIDA/UNIDO contributed. That helped building the necessary confidence and relationship of trust.

UNIDO also understood that enrolling stakeholders at the national level was pivotal to mobilize political support at the regional level. This was challenging due to the use of a variety of food safety management structures within the Arab Region. UNIDO actively ensured that the right

²⁵ See detailed Private Sector Engagement Roadmap (August 2018). Main partners include: The Union of Arab Chambers (UAC), the Arab Federation of Food Industries (AFFI), the Arab Beverages Association (ABA) and industry representatives from multi-nationals operating in the Arab region.

government agencies at the national level were correctly identified directly invited, rather than using the usual diplomatic channels via the LAS Secretariat and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

The SAFE Programme was sequenced into three main stages:

- Preparatory stage: Getting the right representative of countries on the table (18 months)
- Implementation, getting committee up and running (advocacy, training joint-work on specific issues within the framework of the ATF and EWGs, country support in parallel), which is ongoing and about to be complemented and consolidated
- Exit strategy and sustainability, which started in the second half of 2018 and will be the focus for the remaining duration of the SAFE Programme.

Thanks to its neutrality and impartiality as a specialized UN organization, UNIDO's played a crucial facilitation and coaching role to the ATF.

B. Analysis of financial implementation

This section looks at how economically inputs were converted into outputs.

According to the latest financial report as per 31 January 2020, US\$6,872,862 or 97.7% of the overall budget of US\$7,033,793 (excluding support costs) have been committed or spent. This budget includes additional funding of US\$860,000 provided for the extension phase. This amount is equivalent to the US\$ 860,000 (excluding support costs) that were "advanced" by the SAFE Initiative to the ARAC Project to bridge the gap between the end of the ARAC Project Phase (in 2015) and the beginning of the ARAC Project Phase II in 2018 (see Chapter 1.1).²⁶

What UNIDO considered as a reimbursement of an advance was thus provided as additional funding for the Food Safety Initiative, which also means that the planned budget of ARAC II remained unchanged. The allocation of the shared staff resources and office costs among the two projects (see above) are not disaggregated in the official reporting. It is thus not clear to what degree staff costs of ARAC II (before the official start) are included into the expenditures of the Food Safety Initiative.

An analysis of financial data provided by UNIDO in Table 3 below shows that as of 31 January 2020, US\$6,872,862 or 97.7% of the overall budget of US\$7,033,793 (excluding support costs) have been committed or spent. This leaves a remaining budget of US\$ 160,931. The additional funding for the bridging phase until September 2020, which is not within the scope of this evaluation, is not included.

²⁶ The practice to use funds granted for one project for activities of another project is not in line with SIDA's regulations. It was thus also not possible to "reimburse" the advance granted.

Table 3: Expenditures according to budget lines and outcomes in USD (cumulative per 31 January 2020)

BL	Details	Output 1.1	Output 1.2	Output 1.3	Output 2.1	Inception phase	Programme management	Gender +anti-corruption	MTR and final evaluation	Total	Percent of Total
1100	International Experts	886 655.40	424 206.01	98 474.49	218 862.89	17 273.64	404 915.63	9 367.75	40 969.61	2 100 725.42	30%
1500	Local travel	267 325.80	245 459.50	72 679.35	69 879.33	9 855.44	24 685.39	7 235.71	3 718.81	700 839.33	10%
1600	Travel of project staff	72 143.98	26 567.59	1 642.06	21 932.34	14 019.99	7 324.44	0	0	143630.4	2%
1700	Nat. Consult. /Staff	142 958.43	29 390.10	2 850.01	131 695.34	0	588 538.17	0	0	895 432.05	13%
2100	Subcontracts	437 458.26	238 996.55	301 251.89	76 771.53	0	941.13	0	0	1 055 419.36	15%
4300	Premises	0	0	0	0	0	94 648.84	0	0	94648.84	1%
3000	Train/Fellowship/Study	142 012.65	5 122.39	411.52	18 563.33	0	0	0	0	166 109.89	2%
3500	International meetings	780 671.31	398 232.01	125 182.45	42 549.68	3 725.93	0	11 456.97	0	1 361 818.35	20%
4500	Equipment	15 764.50	0	0	194 902.24	0	21 928.49	0	0	232 595.23	3%
5100	Other direct costs	51 801.33	28 302.69	10 487.17	36 816.14	13 865.55	43 756.39	2 886.37	524.96	188 440.60	3%
Total without Support cost		2 796 791.66	1 396 276.84	612 978.94	811 972.82	58 740.55	1 186 738.48	30 946.80	45 213.38	6 939 659.47	
Support cost		279 146.26	139 627.95	61 298.03	81 197.98	5 874.09	118 674.43	3 094.71	4 521.34	693 434.79	
Total including support cost		3 075 937.92	1 535 904.79	674 276.97	893 170.80	64 614.64	1 305 412.91	34 041.51	49 734.72	7 633 094.26	

Source: as reported by UNIDO on 22 May 2020 (analysis checked by Evaluators)

Analysis:

- Segregating expenditures according to cost centers (purpose of fund use), 69.25% of the budget (US\$ 5,286,119.68) was spent on outcome 1 (regional level) and only US\$893,170.80 or 11.7% on outcome 2 (support at the national level). This is mainly because only one of the four planned country support programmes has so far been implemented.
- The remaining US\$1,453,803.78 or 19.04% of the total budget for other costs includes: US\$ 64,614 (0.85%) for the inception phase, US\$49,734.72 or 0.65% for evaluation (incl. MTR), US\$ 34,041.51 (0.45%) for gender and anti-corruption activities and US\$1,305,412.01 (17.1%) for general programmemanagement²⁷.
- Analyzing the category of fund use, most of the funds spent were used for international experts (BL 1100:US\$2,100,725.42 or, 30%), international meetings (BL 3500: US\$1,361,818.35 or 20%), contractual services (BL 2100: US\$ 1,055,419.36 or 15%), travel (BL 1500 and 1600: US\$844,469.73 or 12%) and project staff in Cairo (BL 1700: 835,492.05 or 13%).

At the onset of the extension phase in 2018, several costs saving measures were implemented, including relocating the project office from an expensive office building to the UNIDO Office at the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Cairo and replacing some face-to-face meetings through video conferencing to reduce travel costs. Moreover, staffing needs for the remaining programme duration were re-assessed in discussion with SIDA. One of the conclusions was that for the implementation of current and planned activities the Chief Technical Adviser – who had played an important role to represent the programme towards stakeholders in the region - was no longer needed. This led to adjustments in the field and at UNIDO headquarters.

C. Management

The performance of the UNIDO team led by a very experienced, well-connected project manager with in-depth knowledge of the region. UNIDO also recruited a technically highly qualified, motivated experienced field-based project team. The team has the right mix of technical and management expertise.

Although the Vienna-based Project Manager remained the only operational decision maker, the “de-facto” decentralization of project management, thus the delegation of most of the day-to-day management responsibilities to the project team contributed to the overall efficient service delivery. Important was the empowerment of the local team.

UNIDO also selected the right internal and external experts, most of whom were from the region and fluent in Arabic. This included a very experienced Senior International Food Safety Expert to advise the implementation of the project activities who facilitates the access of the project beneficiaries to several international organization in the area of food safety.

Management was generally flexible in identifying and responding to emerging needs. Beneficiaries highly praised UNIDO’s flexibility, responsiveness and the relatively simple and fast administrative procedures compared with other development actors.

Delays caused by both internal and external reasons also negatively affected efficiency. External factors were the security situation and cumbersome visa requirements, which negatively affected the implementation of activities.

Strategic governance leaves significant room for improvement, which was partially due to a confusing steering mechanism, which mixed decision making on two different projects (SAFE

²⁷ 10% UNIDO support costs already included.

Initiative, ARAC Phase 2) through two different bodies (Executive Committee, Joint-Steering Committee) with decision making on political issues (ATF).

An “Executive Committee”, consisting of representatives from LAS, AIDMO, AOAD, the Swedish Government and the UNIDO Project Managers is responsible for “strategic management, monitoring, evaluation, of the Programme, activities based on adopted work-plan and progress reports for each project, ensuring suitability through institutional ownership of the project outcomes, and providing links, establishing synergies with other initiatives, similar projects implemented at regional and national level.”

There is also a Joint-Steering Committee, which includes members of both projects (AIDMO, AOAD, LAS, UNIDO and UAC). Some members participate in decision that do not relate to the projects they are part of. Some do not have a real involvement (UAC). On the other side, ARAC, which is the main beneficiary of ARAC Phase 2, is not represented. Not all Steering Committee members interviewed were aware that they were members of the Steering Committee. It seems that the Steering Committee had primarily the function of information exchange rather than governance. The limited information shared with the non-UNIDO Steering Committee Members, including financial information, was insufficient for a well-educated decision making. Strategic leadership within both projects was weak.

Moreover, strategic, and operational decision making (day-to-day management) were not clearly separated. Some typically strategic decisions were taken by UNIDO, while some operational decisions by the Executive Committee or even by ATF (e.g. the decision not to continue with country programmes). UNIDO is both in an operational and supervisory role.

While the SAFE Initiative and ARAC Phase II were managed by two different UNIDO project managers (since 2018), the project implementation unit was shared with ARAC II, which allowed for some cost savings.

For UNIDO as a neutral body and for SIDA, participating in the decision making of a regional body, even if only informally, is not in line with official protocols. The former SIDA representative in Cairo participated very actively in project activities and day-to-day decision making. This is problematic, as it blurs the segregation of responsibilities and accountabilities between UNIDO (contractor, responsible for delivery of outputs) and SIDA. SIDA rightly decided to withdraw from the Steering Committee in 2018 and the new regional representative is also no longer involved into the implementation of activities.

In conclusion: While the project was operationally well managed, strategic governance leaves significant room for improvement. Based on the evidence presented in table 3 above, efficiency of financial implementation at the output level was satisfactory (. It was too early to assess efficiency at the outcome or even impact level too early to be assessed. Cost saving measures initiated with SIDA in 2018 contributed significantly to reduced overhead. Overall, efficiency was moderately satisfactory (4).

2.6 Sustainability

This section looks at the likelihood of continued benefits beyond the Project’s duration.

(a) Outcome 1 (ATF and EWGs)

Sustainability concerns the main stakeholders had already expressed in the MTR remain and reflect a high degree of ownership. The concerns around the institutionalization of the ATF are evidence of the high importance stakeholders attribute to the ATF and their priority to maintain it. With the ATF and the EWGs, the SAFE Initiative left a functioning regional cooperation

machinery in the field of food safety (SPS). Participating countries elect their chair, decide on the agenda and coordinate working groups. As also confirmed through personal observation, UNIDO is no longer driving the process, although UNIDO still funds the meeting infrastructure (secretariat, venues, lunches) and the travel of some participants. UNIDO also continues to fulfill a pivotal coaching and facilitation role. UNIDO assumes that the meeting costs will be covered out of the regular budget of the LAS, but the LAS has not formally committed to that.

This coordination mechanism will facilitate regional cooperation in the field of food safety, including within the framework of the envisaged SPS Annex to PAFTA. Enrolling the PAFTA Secretariat into sustainability discussion is obviously crucial. The new EID team within the PAFTA Secretariat shows the increasing priority the LAS gives to developing PAFTA into a comprehensive trade agreement in line with international best practices and WTO requirements.

Prior to the ECS' decision to include the ATF under the implementation and follow up committee of PAFTA, several options for institutionalizing the ATF had been tabled: The most ambitious was to transform the ATF into a regional food safety body that would initially be governed by those countries that have already a functioning food safety agency. This option was not further pursued, mainly because there was no consensus and a new body under the LAS would require time-consuming negotiations.

It is also clear that further technical support will be needed to (a) transform the ATF into a permanent structure, (b) maintain the ATF's technical sustainability, and (c) to upgrade less advanced countries to a level that allows them to benefit from participation in regional trade.

(b) Outcome 2 (limited to Egypt)

NFSA is fully operational and working. As mentioned above, UNIDO's support had the characteristics of a start-up funding and is not essential for the ongoing operations of NFSA. NFSA is fully funded by the Egyptian government and is in addition calling for don or support in selected areas. Benefits are expected to continue at the end of UNIDO's support.

Overall, there is cautious optimism that the structure of ATF will be maintained and continue to contribute to the strengthening of the regional trade cooperation framework in the field of food safety. If budget allocations to the NFSA are maintained, outcomes generated in Egypt are sustainable. Potential sustainability of results for outcomes 1 and 2 is satisfactory (5).

2.7 Gender mainstreaming

For UNIDO, gender equality and the empowerment of women has a significant positive impact on sustained economic growth and sustainable industrial development, which are drivers of poverty reduction and social integration²⁸.

Under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development UNIDO pledged to attain gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030. It is the vision of UNIDO that women and men equally lead, participate in, and benefit from inclusive and sustainable industrial development. The interlinkages between gender and industry are also recognized in SDG 9 and the Lima Declaration on ISID, which both emphasize the role industry can play in promoting decent employment, opportunities for social inclusion and gender equality, and the empowerment of women. Gender mainstreaming is not about ensuring that an equal number of female participants participate in seminars or about a statistic on the ratio of

²⁸ See also Annex 6 to the ToR

female and male experts. UNIDO's strategy on gender equality and empowerment of women²⁹ calls for and provides the overall guidelines for establishing a gender mainstreaming strategy for each intervention. Gender mainstreaming is the concept of assessing the different implications for women and men of any planned policy action, including legislation and programmes, in all areas and levels. For a programme strengthening a regional trade framework such as PAFTA, this would mean an analysis of implications the envisaged trade framework could have on both women and men. Gender mainstreaming is indeed important to ensure that women and men, boys and girls benefit equally from interventions in a non-discriminatory manner. Specifically, it is good practice to identify unintended negative outcomes (including negative effects on either women and men) as risks and to define mitigation measures.

Instead of assessing gender implications of the SAFE Programme comprehensively, the UNIDO gender expert initially conducted a gender pre-audit of three core project partners.³⁰ Despite UNIDO's clarification that this exercise was meant to "benchmark" existing with good practices, the beneficiary organizations perceived the audits as imposed by UNIDO and SIDA rather than responding to their expressed demands. The link between the gender audits (outputs) and the expected trade-related outcomes is not evident.

The next report (by the same expert) provides a generic assessment of discrimination against women in the Arab Region. According to the report, progress is far insufficient to ensure full enjoyment of women's legal and human rights. The gender expert concluded that the political, social, and economic statuses of women in the region were still low and that gender equality remains an elusive goal in many parts of the world and even more in the Arab States: the region occupies the lowest rank of men-women equality. The report suggests that Arab women spend most of their time in the kitchen, in the fields or on the market.

It was not within the evaluation to produce a report on gender mainstreaming. But a anecdotic evidence, including the percentage of women appointed by their governments to serve on the ATF, suggests that women play an important especially in the field of food safety management. There are no indications of discriminatory practices within the SAFE Initiative. The stereotypes pictured in the report disregard the important role women play in the food safety systems of the Arab region.³¹

Generating outputs that are not contributing to expected project results for the sake of "checking boxes" is ineffective and reflect an inefficient fund use.

What could be useful is an assessment of the socio-political and economic context under the angle of gender mainstreaming, with clear, evidence-based, and actionable recommendations. SIDA offered once again to share its comprehensive expertise and experience. The UNIDO Project Manager expressed his interest in using possible follow-on assistance to establish a framework for gender mainstreaming in similar programmes.

It should be noted that SIDA provided funding to the CAWTAR³² to work to perform some work on trade-related gender topics. Some exchanges between CAWTAR and UNIDO took place. But CAWTAR's work was not specifically on the gender aspects of strengthening food safety.

In conclusion: While non-discriminatory participation of women and men, including as experts was ensured, UNIDO did not apply a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming.

²⁹ UNIDO, Strategy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (2020–2023), Vienna 2019

³⁰ Report Rula Zuhier Al-Sadi, Gender Mainstreaming Specialist, December 2016/September 2017

³¹ Mainstreaming Gender Policy in the Arab Region with a focus on Food safety, trade, and development, Rula Zuhier Al-Sadi, International Expert and Gender Mainstreaming Specialist (undated).

³² CAWTAR: Center of Arab Women for Training and Research, www.cawtar.org

Gender mainstreaming was unsatisfactory. It should be noted that UNIDO's Gender Mainstreaming strategy has been enacted after the project was designed.

2.8 Results-Based Management (including M&E system)

A. Application of logical framework tool (at design)

An inception phase of six months allowed to fine-tune the project implementation approach, including adjusting the logical framework that was included in original project document.

During the inception phase, UNIDO engaged into intensive consultation with relevant stakeholders as to ensure their commitment. The updated logical framework remained unchanged until the end of the Food Safety Initiative. The current logical framework does no longer fully reflect the actual intervention logic of the extension phase, which is the institutionalization/institutionalization of the existing regional coordination structure (ATF, EWG) into the PAFTA Secretariat and on the preparation of an SPS annex to the PAFTA.

The M&E framework at design could be improved in the following areas:

- Intervention logic and results chain could have been sharpened: The logframe does not reflect how outputs generated by the Food Safety Initiative (e.g. expertise, assessments, technical capacities strengthened, draft policies developed through UNIDO's inputs) will lead to the expected direct outcomes/benefits (such as performance of government agencies enhanced, policy framework conditions improved, standards harmonized) and those to broader outcomes (improved food safety) and impact (wider socio-economic benefits, e.g. poverty reduction, health). Outcome 3 defined in the original project document (M&E) is an activity, not an output and even less an outcome.
- Assumptions and risks: Which external factors that need to be in place that outputs will translate into direct outcomes and direct outcomes into broader outcomes and impact remains unclear. The most important assumptions for improving the food safety systems at national level would be that funding is available to fund the necessary infrastructure investments.
- Risks look at external threats that could disrupt the results chain, the degree of their negative impact on the achievement of results and the likelihood they occur. Good practice is to assess key risks and to define a mitigation strategy for each of them. The focus should be on risks that have a particularly high impact and a high likelihood to materialize. For each of the risks, a mitigation strategy should be defined: how to reduce the likelihood that the threat occurs and/or how to reduce the possible impact of the threat on achievement of results. Risks defined in the logical framework are rather generic. There is no mitigation strategy.
- Link objectives at all levels to Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) indicators. Most indicators defined in the logframe do not fulfill these conditions.
- Define the means of verification for these indicators (taking the resources that are available into account, e.g. large-scale surveys to measure improvements of food safety systems involve significant costs, which need to be budgeted). Also, the cost-benefit relationship of data collection should be considered (what does data collection cost, how are data used, and what are the benefits for the specific project or organization).

B. Monitoring and reporting

Good practice of project monitoring is a periodic assessment of whether outputs and (direct) outcomes have been achieved and if not, why. This assessment should be done by using the indicators and the means of verification defined in the logical framework. Moreover, unintended negative and positive effects generated by the project should be monitored as well. Monitoring allows for adjustment to ensure that the intervention continues to generate the expected benefits in the most appropriate, economic approach.

The reports generated by the Food Safety Initiative report until 2017 are exhaustive in terms of meticulously listing every single activity. In 2018, SIDA required changes of the reporting format, which were reiterated by the MTR in 2018. The implementation report for 2018 (Draft version 1, 31 March 2019) became more concise, but continued using a narrative approach to describe what has been done rather than what has been achieved (e.g. “the overall progress of this component was satisfactory, and in line with the work plans endorsed by the ATF.”). The underlying issue of the activity-based monitoring is the lack of a proper results framework as a basis for results-based monitoring. While activities (e.g. trainings) are reported in detail, their quality (based on satisfaction of users) is not assessed. Informal feedback the Project Manager might receive does not allow for systematically identify shortcomings and use the information for continuous improvement.

Despite some improvements over time, weaknesses in progress reporting (application of RBM principles) raised by SIDA remained in the progress report of 2018 (2019 is not yet available).

In conclusion: While activity reporting is comprehensive, standard M&E tools were not properly applied. Reporting is activity- rather than results based. The application of RBM principles both at planning and implementation stage leaves significant room for improvement and is thus moderately unsatisfactory (3).

3. Conclusions and overall rating

3.1 Conclusions

- i. **Relevance: Strengthening food safety is of high relevance to the objective of fostering agro-trade, but other benefits of food safety are even more relevant**

Agro-trade was selected because of its potential socio-economic impact. The need to comply with different standards is often a major barrier to trade. Harmonizing national standards with those of export markets is thus an important element of a conducive business environment, including aspects of domestic/international trade. An enabling commercial environment is expected to spur economic development and contribute to poverty reduction. For most ATF and EWG members, the most urgent and important reason to improve food safety is the protection of consumers. Food safety is part of food security, thus the need to provide people with enough safe food. It is well-known that food safety is a key determinant of human health and wellbeing. Unsafe food has a direct negative impact on consumers, especially the poorer segments of the population who rely on cheap food alternatives: medical costs and loss of time for revenue generating/education activities due to food-related illnesses and waste of money spent for spoiled food. The relevance of food safety goes beyond trade and has a potentially much more direct development impact.

Relevant but only marginally addressed has been the strengthening the demand for food safety. The most important next step is now the practical application of the policies and systems created.

- ii. **Project identification and design: UNIDO prioritized the key challenges relating to food and an innovative approach to address them through the appropriate partners**

UNIDO identified the right challenges to address food safety issues as a barrier to trade. Food safety connects health, agriculture, and trade policy agendas. In the absence of a single regional authority responsible for food safety, UNIDO identified and worked with the right partners (AIDMO responsible for industrial development and standard setting, AOAD responsible for agriculture, the PAFTA secretariat).

- iii. **Overall, the SAFE Initiative was effectively and efficiently implemented. While support at the regional level (outcome 1) partially exceeded the planned objectives, achievements under outcome 2 (except in Egypt) were below expectations.**

At the regional level, UNIDO delivered most of the outputs as planned and in good quality. The integration of SPS and TBT provisions into the PAFTA was an unplanned positive outcome. At the country level, only two of the four planned country projects were implemented. Accordingly, only approximately US\$350,000 was allocated for country-specific support to Egypt and around US\$ 200,000 for Palestine, around 7% of the budget in total. In Palestine, the delivery of some small testing equipment is pending. UNIDO's support was instrumental to operationalize the Egyptian Food Safety Agency (NFSA). While a significant amount of the budget was allocated to communication, including the recruitment of a part-time communication officer, activities were not based on a clear strategy (what message to convey to whom and through which channels). Also, the value added of the conflict sensitivity analysis conducted by UNIDO was limited. The Evaluators positively noted UNIDO's efforts to reduce overhead costs after 2018, which enhanced the cost-benefit relationship substantially.

iv. While the SAFE Initiative was operationally well managed, governance was suboptimal

The SAFE Initiative benefitted from a highly experienced and motivated team led by a seasoned Project Manager. Familiarity with the regional context and the hands-on approach used to address the various challenges the SAFE Initiative faced were essential. Not a good example of good governance was the joint-steering mechanism established with ARAC Phase 2 through two different committees (Executive Committee, Steering Committee). The tasks and competences of these two committees partially overlapped. Strategic and operational decision making were not clearly separated. The roles of the two committees overlapped. Members of the Steering Committee participated in decisions that concerned a project, in which they did not participate, and for which they were not accountable. The ATF, which was formally not part of the management and governance took strategic decisions on the project, for example which countries should benefit from country support programmes.

v. Gender mainstreaming

While a non-discriminatory participation of women and men in the SAFE Initiative was ensured, including as UNIDO experts, UNIDO did not apply a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming. No gender-related objectives were defined. Gender Mainstreaming was unsatisfactory. It should be noted that UNIDO's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy has been enacted after the project was designed. The two reports produced did not explore gender-related aspects of food safety policies and their implementation.

vi. Sustainability

Overall, cautious optimism that the structure of ATF will be maintained and continue to contribute to the strengthening of the regional trade cooperation framework in the field of food safety. The ECS' decision to include the ATF under the implementation and follow up committee of PAFTA contributes to the sustainability of the ATF. The challenge will be to fund the current level of meetings without UNIDO support. If budget allocations to the NFSA are maintained, outcomes generated in Egypt are sustainable.

vii. Activities were monitored in detail, but without assessing their quality. But monitoring did not include an assessment achieved against planned results.

Significant weaknesses in the logical framework, which remained unchanged despite significant strategic shifts during implementation. While activity reporting is comprehensive, standard M&E tools were not properly applied. Reporting is activity- rather than results based. The application of RBM principles both at planning and implementation stage leaves significant room for improvement.

3.2 Overall rating of the project based on standard evaluation criteria at exit

#	Evaluation criteria	Summary comments
A	Impact	Not rated: too early to assess, see limitations
B	Project design	
	Overall concept	5 (satisfactory): Innovative, well-thought intervention strategy, clear intervention logic (although not clearly spelled out) that is commensurate for achieving high-level objectives.
	Logical framework	4 (moderately satisfactory): Application of tool correct, outcome objectives defined are rather output objectives (direct deliverables). Expected broader socio-economic changes beyond trade are not integrated into logical framework.
C	Project performance	
	Relevance	6 (highly satisfactory): Fully met needs of beneficiaries, relevance increased over time.
	Effectiveness	5 (satisfactory): With some exceptions, key outputs delivered; reasonable likelihood to achieve an SPS Annex to the PAFTA Agreement, which would be a break-through in upgrading the PAFTA into a comprehensive trade agreement.
	Efficiency	4 (moderately satisfactory): Appropriate approach. Efficiency of financial implementation at the output level satisfactory, at the outcome level too early to be assessed. Cost saving measures in 2018 reduced overhead costs.
	Sustainability	4 (satisfactory): Depends on transforming ATF into a sustainable structure until the end of UNIDO funding, which is formally done. The challenge will be to obtain funding to continue operating at the same scale.
D	Cross-cutting issues	
	Gender mainstreaming	2 (unsatisfactory): Limited relevance for this type of project. Gender specialist hired, report produced, yet no systematic approach and implementation of gender mainstreaming.
	M&E conception and implementation	3 (moderately unsatisfactory): M&E handbook rather generic. Reporting accurate and up to date. Activities systematically monitored (including quality based on feed-back of participants), but no systematic monitoring of expected/unexpected outcomes using logical framework.

#	Evaluation criteria	Summary comments
	RBM	3 (moderately unsatisfactory): Detailed activity reports, financial reporting up to date and disaggregated (budget lines, objectives). Room to systematically improve reporting towards comparing planned with achieved objectives.
E	Performance of partners	Not rated (see methodology above)
F	Overall rating	5: Moderately satisfactory

Explanations:

- Highly satisfactory (HS = 6): The project had no shortcomings
- Satisfactory (S = 5): The project had minor shortcomings
- Moderately satisfactory (MS = 4): The project had moderate shortcomings
- Moderately unsatisfactory (MU = 3): The project had significant shortcomings
- Unsatisfactory (U = 2) The project had major shortcomings
- Highly unsatisfactory (HU = 1): The project had severe shortcomings

4. Recommendations and lessons learned

4.1 Recommendations

Project-specific recommendations to UNIDO (Department)

1. Finalize activities as per current annual workplan, with emphasis on support to ensure sustainability of the regional coordination structure (ATF, Expert Working Groups, and other key deliverables).

Recommendations to UNIDO (Department) on a possible follow-up phase

2. Consider proposing a new Food Trade Initiative to strengthen country level value chain comprehensively.
3. Selection of countries and value chains to be based on relevant and verifiable criteria and approved by the parties of the project agreement or the Steering Committee.
4. In preparation, map all relevant projects in the region to avoid overlaps and identify possible synergies.
5. Provide selective support to transforming the ATF into a permanent structure.
6. Ensure engagement of all stakeholders, including the private sector and consumer associations.
7. Ensure cost-contributions from beneficiaries to contribute to ownership and sustainability.
8. Establish a monitoring system that allows for tracking of outcomes generated by project outputs. That will require budgeting specific resources. In addition, consider using periodic Strategic External Monitoring as partially applied within the UNIDO Programmes.
9. Define clear objectives and activities for gender-mainstreaming and conflict sensitivity analysis rather than generic awareness raising and monitoring.
10. In designing capacity building activities, prioritize in-depth training of specialists in selected fields relevant to food safety instead of generic awareness raising.
11. In close consultation with all partners, clarify the governance structures at strategic and operational levels ensuring the following principles:
 - (a) Decision making power and decision mechanisms must be clearly defined.
 - (b) Strategic level decision making should be separated from operational decision making
 - (c) Competences to decide must match responsibilities and accountabilities.
 - (d) Consider establishing an advisory committee for networking and consultation purposes or to invite stakeholder representatives with no decision-making power as observer.

Recommendations to SIDA

12. Favorably consider funding a proposal for a project along the lines described in recommendations 2 – 10 above.

4.2 Lessons learned

The Evaluation confirms emerging evidence from the Mid-Term Review, which identified the following good practices in strengthening regional trade cooperation frameworks:

- Identify and enroll all related government stakeholders (country level, regional level) from an early stage.
- If a functioning coordination mechanism at the regional level is not yet in place, use formalized joint committee work on specific technical issues of common interest to gradually foster a culture of cooperation among participating countries.
- Provide support to the establishment of a conducive legislative and regulatory framework and corresponding capacity building at national and regional level.
- Provide capacity building and support advocacy activities at both the level of member countries and regional bodies.
- Include consumer and private sector organizations to lobby for the necessary policy changes.
- Implement an exit strategy whereas the temporary structure (joint working committees) is gradually transformed into a permanent structure and subsequently further strengthened.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of reference documents

1. **UNIDO documents relating to monitoring & evaluation**
- 1.1 UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, Evaluation Manual, ODG/EIO/IED/16/R.27, March 2018
2. **Project documents (SAFE Project)**
- 2.1 6 Meeting Reports Arab Task force on Food Safety (ATF), [only the first report available in English, oral summary translation during mission]
 - 2.1.1 Arab Task Force on Food Safety (ATF) 1st meeting report, March 2016
 - 2.1.2 Arab Task Force on Food Safety (ATF) 2nd meeting report, September 2016
 - 2.1.3 Arab Task Force on Food Safety (ATF) 3rd meeting report, May 2017
 - 2.1.4 Arab Task Force on Food Safety (ATF) 4th meeting report, December 2017
 - 2.1.5 Arab Task Force on Food Safety (ATF) 5th meeting report, September 2018
 - 2.1.6 Arab Task Force on Food Safety (ATF) 6th meeting report, October 2019
- 2.2 Report Mid-Term evaluation report for SAFE Program
- 2.3 Arab Food Industries Forum on Food Safety and Trade Facilitation (AFIF), March 2019
- 2.4 Expert Working Groups (EWGs) members list
- 2.5 Executive Committee (ExCom) Members list
- 2.6 Conflict Sensitivity Specialist Conflict Sensitivity Assessment Summary Report, Ms. Rana FAKHOURY, February 2018
- 2.7 Joint EXCOM minutes for the SAFE& ARAC projects November 2018
- 2.8 Arab Task-Force (ATF) on Food Safety members list
- 2.9 List of SAFE Produced Documents, Jan 2020
- 2.10 Project Document “Enhancement of regional trade capacities in food through harmonized regional conformity assessment and food safety systems”, UNIDO, May 2014
- 2.11 Inception Report “Enhancement of regional trade capacities in food through harmonized regional conformity assessment and food safety systems”, UNIDO, October 2014
- 2.12 SAFE Annual Progress Report 2015, UNIDO (February 2015 - March 2016)
- 2.13 SAFE Annual Progress Report 2016, UNIDO
- 2.14 SAFE Annual Progress Report 2017, UNIDO, 23 May 2018
- 2.15 SAFE Annual Progress Report 2018, UNIDO, 11 June 2019 (including Workplan 2019)

- 2.16 SAFE Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Manual and Implementation Plan (April 2016)
- 2.17 SAFE MoM 4th executive committee (EXCOM), November 2018
- 2.18 SAFE MoM 5th executive committee (EXCOM), September 2019
- 2.19 Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan under the Regional Food Safety Project, April 2016
- 2.20 Safe country support program, Egypt
- 2.21 Report Rula Zuhier Al-Sadi, Gender Mainstreaming Specialist, Mainstreaming Gender Policy in the Arab Region with a focus on Food safety, trade and development
- 2.22 Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Executive Committee, LAS Headquarters, 18 February 2015
- 2.23 Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the Executive Committee, LAS Headquarters, 24 March 2016
- 2.24 Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the Executive Committee, 7-8 May 2017
- 2.25 Private sector engagement roadmap, draft, August 2018
- 2.26 Safe project Brochure, September 2019
- 2.27 Common Program Executive Committee (EXCOM), Program Governance structure | 05.07.2018
- 2.28 46th meeting for the follow up and monitoring committee, Arab league Economic integration department, December 2018
- 2.29 SAFE Project Briefing presentation, UNIDO, October 2019
- 2.30 Decisions, Ministers, Economic and Social council, September 2018
- 2.31 Decision and report, Ministers, Economic and Social council, September 2019
- 2.32 Workshop report, Use of the FAO/WHO Tool to assess national food control systems, in support of smart investments and strategic improvements, October 2019
- 2.33 FAO Report on the implementation of the pilot assessments in Tunisia and Sudan, May 2019
- 2.34 SAFE Financial report as at 22 January 2020
- 2.35 SAFE presentation for the closing ceremony October 2019
- 2.36 UNIDO RBM Service Summary Sheet for SAFE project
- 2.37 Arab Food Standards setting manual, October 2019
- 2.38 Institutional Framework Focal Points Meeting Report, TBT and SPS, in the framework of PAFTA, March 2019
- 2.39 Concept note UNIDO IFS enhancing scientific researches capacities related to risk analysis
- 2.40 Food and drug regulatory science journal, June 24 2019 vol. 2
- 2.41 Concept note no. 1, joint center of expertise in food risk analysis

- 2.42 Report on food safety risk assessment training
- 2.43 Study needs for countries on inspection methods based on risk level
- 2.44 Risk assessment Training evaluation by trainees
- 2.45 ARASSF guideline prepared by ATF
- 2.46 Codex guideline prepared by ATF 14 May 2019 Expenditure grant delivery report 26 Feb 2020
- 2.47 Importance of risk assessment in food safety decision support
- 2.48 Import and Export inspection & certification system of Morocco, Jordan and Saudi Arabia
- 2.49 Inspection Guideline For joint Arab Certificate for Import and Export inspection & certification system
- 2.50 Briefing note SAFE country support to NFSA
- 2.51 SPS draft agreement
- 2.52 TBT draft agreement
- 2.53 Arab strategy for standardization and quality by AIDMO 2014-2018
- 2.54 Arab strategy for standardization and quality by AIDMO 2019-2023
- 2.55 Anti-conflict revision draft PAFTA agreement
- 3. **Other project documents**
- 3.1 Project Document Phase (2018 – 2020), Support the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) to be sustained, effective and internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration, May 2018.

Annex 2: Persons and organizations met

No.	Date	Entity	Participants
1	23/02/2020	SAFE PMU Cairo.	Ms. Shaimaa Amasha , Regional Programme Officer and PMU Team Leader, PMU Cairo
2	23/02/2020	SAFE PMU Cairo.	Mr. Abdelfattah Nada , ATF Coordinator, PMU Cairo
3	24/02/2020	UNIDO HQ, Vienna	Mr. Ali Badarneh , Project manager
4	24/02/2020	SAFE PMU Cairo.	Mr. Mohamed Salama , Event and Communication Coordinator, PMU Cairo
5	24/02/2020	SAFE PMU Cairo.	Ms. Shaimaa Ibrahim – Regional Administrative and Financial Assistant, PMU Cairo
6	24/02/2020	UNIDO HQ, Vienna	Mr. Raed Alomari – Financial and Administrative Assistant, UNIDO HQ
7	24/02/2020	SIDA	Mr. Peter Cederblad , Counsellor, Embassy of Sweden in Amman
8	24/02/2020	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)	Dr. Salah Mohamed Deputy director of Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)
9	24/02/2020	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)	Mr. Hashim salem , Focal point of Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)
10	24/02/2020	ATF Chair	Mr. Amjad Rashaideh , Director of Food Control Directorate Jordan Food & Drug Administration (JFDA) ,3rd ATF Chair and Chair of Inspection EWG.
11	24/02/2020	Jordanian ATF representative	Dr. Jafar Alqudah , Food Safety Expert, Jordan Food & Drug Administration (JFDA)

No.	Date	Entity	Participants
12	24/02/2020	ARAC project manager	Mr. Rafik Feki , UNIDO project manager of the ARAC project.
13	24/02/2020	Jordanian risk assessment trainee	Ms. Ruba Nail Goussous , Head of Risk Assessment Department of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA)
14	24/02/2020	ATF member of Sudan	Dr. Amien Hassan El-Amien , Ministry of Agriculture and forestry in Sudan
15	24/02/2020	Sudanese focal point for pilot assessment using FAO/WHO tool in Sudan	Mrs. Batoul Abdu , Ministry of Agriculture and forestry in Sudan
16	25/02/2020	ARAC chair	Ms. Amina Ahmad Muhammad , ARAC chair.
17	25/02/2020	ATF member of Palestine	Mr. Mousa Al-Halaika, MoH Palestine
18	26/02/2020	Tunisian focal point for pilot assessment using FAO/WHO tool in Tunisia	Mrs. Wiem Guissoouma , ANCSEP
19	26/02/2020	Arab Industrial and Mining Organization (AIDMO)	Dr. Emad Elhali - Director of the Standardization and Metrology Center - AIDMO
20	26/02/2020	Arab Industrial and Mining Organization (AIDMO)	Ms. Shadwa Saad - Senior Specialist at the Standardization and Metrology Center - AIDMO
21	26/02/2020	Union of Arab Chambers (UAC)	Ms. May Serhal , Private Sector Representative in the ATF, Union of Arab Chambers
22	26/02/2020	League of Arab States (LAS) Economic integration Department (EID)	Mrs. Noura Salem , Economic integration Department (EID)

No.	Date	Entity	Participants
23	26/02/2020	Arab Federation for Food industries (AFFI)	Mr. Fadi Gebr , Arab Federation for Food Industries (AFFI)
24	26/02/2020	Arab Federation for Food industries (AFFI)	Mr. George Khayyat , Arab Federation for Food Industries (AFFI)
25	26/02/2020	ATF member from Morocco	Mrs. Zeineb El-bouchikhy , ONSSA.
26	26/02/2020	ATF member from Libya	Mr. Jumamah Aboulqasim Salim , Ministry of economy and industry.
27	26/02/2020	ATF member from Qatar	Mr. Khalid Yousef Ahmed , Ministry of public health.
28	26/02/2020	ATF member from KSA	Mr. Ahmed Omar , Saudi Food and Drugs Association.
29	26/02/2020	Chair of Codex EWG and ATF member of Lebanon	Ms. Mariam Eid , Head of Agro-Industries Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Lebanon
30	26/02/2020	ATF member of Egypt	Mrs. Marwa Badr , National food safety Authority in Egypt.
31`	26/02/2020	ATF member of Libya	Mr. Jomaa Al Taeleb , General cooperation for agriculture, animal and marine resources
32	01/03/2020	League of Arab States	Dr. Bahget Abu El-nasr , Head of Economic integration Department (EID) Mrs. Noura Salem Economic integration Department (EID) Mrs. Jawaher Badr , Economic integration Department (EID)
33	01/03	League of Arab States	Mrs. Noura Salem and Mr. Sayed El-Badwy , Economic integration Department (EID)

No.	Date	Entity	Participants
34	01/03	UNIDO Expert	Mr. Sherif Hazem , International trade expert
35	01/03	UNIDO Project Team (Cairo)	Ms. Shaimaa Amasha – Regional Programme Officer and PMU Team Leader, PMU Cairo Ms. Shaimaa Ibrahim – Regional Administrative and Financial Assistant, PMU Cairo Mr. Mohamed Salama – Event and Communication Coordinator, PMU Cairo Mr. Abdelfattah Nada – ATF Coordinator, PMU Cairo
36	02/03/2020	NFSA	Dr. Hussien Mansour , CEO of National Food Safety Authority in Egypt (NFSA)
37	02/03/2020	NFSA	Dr. Ehab Murad and Dr. Eman Helmy , National Food Safety Authority in Egypt (Risk assessment program trainees)
38	02/03/2020	Egyptian Organization for Standardization	Mrs. Hanan Fouad , Egyptian Organization for Standardization (EOS).
39	04/03/2020	Risk assessment trainee, Iraq	Ms. Ilham Abd Fathi Person
40	05/03/2020	UNIDO Senior International Food Safety Expert, Canada	Dr. Samuel Godefroy , Senior International Food Safety Expert

Annex 3: Terms of reference



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Independent terminal evaluation of project

[Title]

UNIDO ID: [Status]

July 2019

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Annex 1: Project Logical Framework as per the original project document

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I. Project background and context

1. Project factsheet³³³⁴

Project title	[Title]
UNIDO ID	[Status]
Region	Arab Countries: Pan Arab Free Trade Area (PAFTA Agreement) within the League of Arab states (LAS)
Country(ies)	Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Palestine, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
Project donor(s)	Kingdom of Sweden/SIDA
Project implementation start date	1 st January 2014
Expected duration	6 Years (Including 6 months inception phase)
Expected implementation end date	31 st December 2019
Implementing agency(ies)	UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)
Government coordinating agency	Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) League of Arab States (LAS) Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)
Executing Partners	UNIDO
UNIDO RBM code	HC 22 – Competitive trade and CSR
Donor funding	USD 7,526,857 (including 10% UNIDO project support costs)
UNIDO input (in kind, USD)	n.a.
Co-financing at CEO Endorsement, as applicable	n.a.
Total project cost (USD), excluding support costs	USD 6,842,597.2
Mid-term review date	September/October 2018
Planned terminal evaluation date	Q4 2019

(Source: Project document)

³³ Data to be validated by the Consultant

2. Project context

RATIONALE

The Arab region has one of the lowest levels of intra-regional trade despite preferential market access provided under the Pan Arab Free Trade Agreement (PAFTA). The potential exists, but is yet untapped, and analysis shows that by removing remaining obstacles to trade, there is potential to increase total trade of member states by 10% and to create at least 2 million jobs.

Fifty four percent (54%) of the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) in the regions are mainly related to technical barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, which has a negative impact on intra-regional trade especially in food and agricultural products.

Although several countries in the Arab region have taken steps to upgrade their Food Safety systems, the capacity and efficiency of many countries still need to be enhanced in order to assure an adequate surveillance of locally produced and imported food, as well as to demonstrate compliance with food standards in export markets. Therefore, regional cooperation and harmonization among member states of the League of Arab states (LAS) is critical for the successful execution of the PAFTA agreement.

In efforts to address and overcome this challenge, UNIDO is implementing the Arab Food Safety Initiative for Trade Facilitation, known as the SAFE Initiative, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), with the key objective to facilitate regional trade in food/ agri-based products and improved integration through strengthening the regional coordination and harmonization mechanisms on conformity assessment and Food Safety systems following international best practices (TBT and SPS).

Overall, the broader objective of the project is to support the regional efforts, coordinated by AIDMO and AOAD, aiming at achieving regional integration, harmonization and effective coordination in food safety ensuring compliance with international trade rules and regulations (i.e. TBT and SPS agreements).

The development goal is to facilitate regional trade in food/agro-based products and improved integration through strengthening the regional coordination and harmonization mechanisms on conformity assessment and food safety systems following international best practices (i.e. TBT and SPS).

ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

In 2010 and in response to a request from AIDMO and with the financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA), UNIDO developed a technical support programme to support AIDMO in the implementation of the Regional Standardisation Strategy targeting the regional cooperation in Accreditation as the main focus.

The project aimed at achieving regional integration, harmonization and effective coordination in the area of quality infrastructure, ensuring compliance with international trade rules and regulations. Following the successful implementation of before mentioned accreditation project, UNIDO received on 21st September 2012 a letter from the Director General of AIDMO, requesting UNIDO's support in the formulation of a regional food safety programme.

While the ongoing project was addressing the challenge the region was facing when it comes to the availability and recognition of accreditation services within the region, hence focusing on an important aspect of the region's compliance with the WTO's Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement, the new programme was requested to be designed by aiming in a complementary manner at supporting the region in its endeavor to implement measures in regard to the WTO's Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement.

The financing agreement of the project was ultimately signed between UNIDO and SIDA, and the first funds instalment received in December 2013, followed by an inception phase that started in January 2014.

INCEPTION PHASE

As stated in the signed project document, an inception phase of six months was concluded at the beginning of the project with the aim of fine-tuning the project implementation approach, verifying and adjusting the logical framework, designing a monitoring and evaluation system, establishing the steering committee and further assessing other project requirements.

During this phase intensive consultation were held with relevant stakeholders as to ensure their full and effective involvement from the very beginning. Consequently, the implementation approach was defined in details and it includes the key principles, tools and approaches to be followed during the project implementation. It was designed to guide the project team and partners to implement the different components based on an agreed approach and framework, and it was decided that the approach will be reviewed and evaluated on regular basis throughout the implementation of the project.

Furthermore, the inception phase resulted in the definition of the scope of work and terms of reference for the development of the M&E system, in the determination of joint implementation and governance arrangements with the ARAC Phase II project, as well as that the recruitment of the project team was initiated.

Following the identification of strategic partners already at the design stage - based on thorough consultations with the donor and the main counterpart, AIDMO - this first phase of the project was also used to have intensive discussions and consultations with the potential partners to identify the scope of cooperation under the different project outputs / intervention areas.

While the inception phase ended officially in July 2014, it was for strategic reasons associated to the election of a new Director General at AIDMO, and because of the ongoing discussions on the integration of a Phase II of the ARAC project, that the preliminary findings and outcomes of the inception phase were eventually discussed only in the first coordination meeting held between AIDMO, SIDA and UNIDO on 30th September 2014. Based on the conclusions made in that meeting, UNIDO prepared a final version of the inception phase report which was eventually approved by SIDA.

In general, this first phase of the project re-confirmed the importance and relevance of this project for the economic development and integration of the region, as well as the high interest and commitment of all stakeholders to cooperate in its implementation.

PROJECT EXTENSION AND MID-TERM REVIEW

While the SAFE Programme started at the beginning of 2014 with an inception phase as planned, it was, however, not completed by the end of June 2018 as initially expected. Aiming at securing full political ownership by the three relevant regional bodies, namely by AOAD, AIDMO and LAS, considerable time had to be spent by the project management team on securing the full political buy-in, which was clearly defined as prerequisite for a successful implementation of the technical interventions of this project.

Due to the resulting delayed start of the full implementation phase and to compensate for the time spent on securing required political support, UNIDO requested at the beginning of 2018 on behalf of the project's counterparts as a first step a 18 months no-cost extension³⁵ of the project, which was eventually approved by SIDA on 29th May 2018.

In the course of the negotiation of this extension, UNIDO and SIDA also agreed to proceed with a mid-term review (MTR) of the programme with the main goal of generating recommendations for the project's further implementation until 31 December 2019. Moreover, the international evaluator was asked to assess the amount of additional funding required for the extension phase. The MTR thus combined a look at past implementation with an ex-ante assessment of a preliminary work plan. Beyond the scope of a typical MTR, UNIDO expected lessons learned and strategic recommendations in optimizing the approach on providing support in regional harmonization of conformity assessment and food safety systems. Rather than elaborating on individual activities, the MTR thus assessed whether the SAFE Programme in its entirety provided the right type of support to achieve its objectives in the right way.

Overall, the outcomes of the MTR were very encouraging and this positive assessment was the basis for SIDA's approval of additional funding of approximately US\$ 860,000 which was eventually granted in November 2018. The total budget of the project eventually amounts now to USD 7,526,857.

3. Project objective and expected outcomes

Objective

The broader objective of this proposed intervention is to support the regional efforts, coordinated by AIDMO and AOAD, aiming at achieving regional integration, harmonization and effective coordination in food safety ensuring compliance with international trade rules and regulations (TBT and SPS agreements)

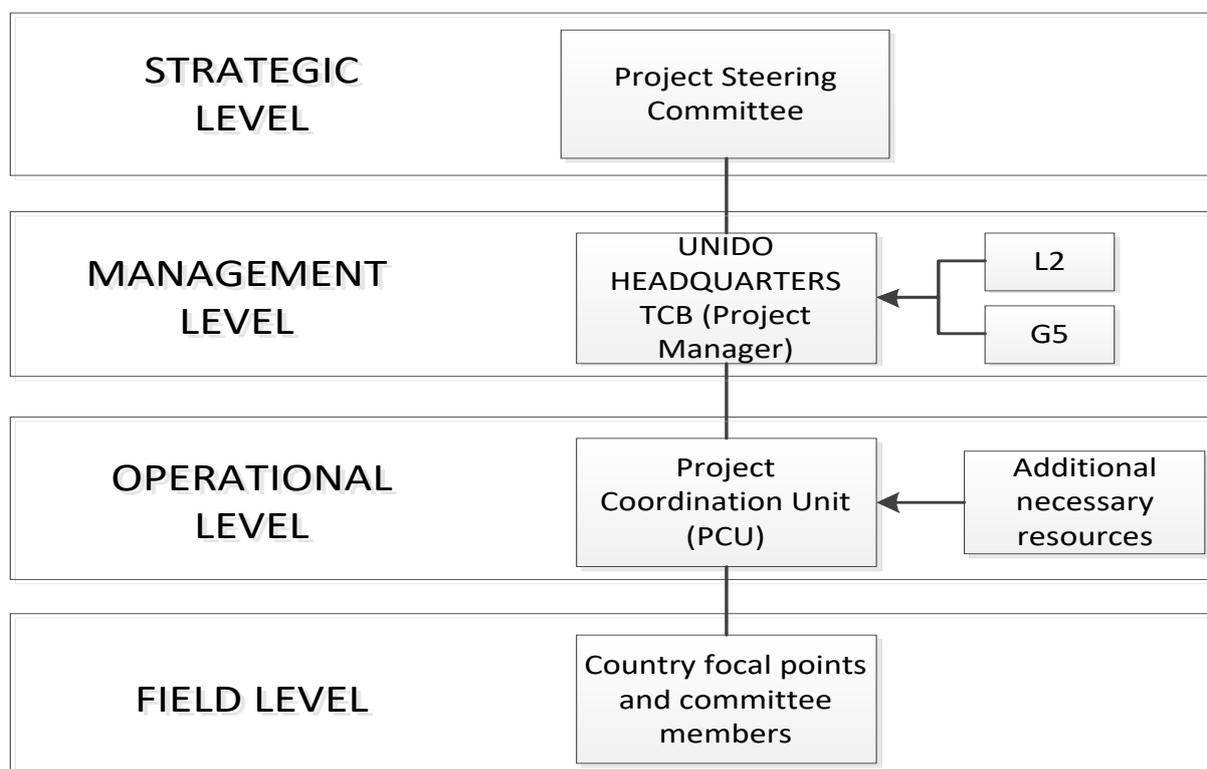
The development goal is to facilitate regional trade in food and regional integration through strengthening the regional coordination and harmonization mechanisms on conformity assessment and food safety systems following international best practices (TBT & SPS).

³⁵ A no-cost extension is to be understood as a continuation of implementation within the originally approved budget, while extensions obviously cause additional costs (e.g. for project management).

Expected Outcomes

<p>OUTCOME 1:</p> <p>AIDMO and AOAD technical and regional coordination capacities strengthened for the planning, implementation and management of a harmonized regional food safety system within the framework of the Regional Standardization Strategy</p>
<p>OUTCOME 2:</p> <p>AIDMO member countries improve their national food safety systems following regionally harmonized policies and protocols and according to international best practices and agreements (SPS)</p>
<p>OUTCOME 3:</p> <p>Programme management, monitoring, coordination and evaluation</p>

4. Project implementation arrangements



5. Main findings of the Mid-term review (MTR)

Overall the MTR led to the following main conclusions:

- **In terms of ongoing relevance,** the SAFE Programme fully meets the needs of beneficiaries, aligns well with the policies of the League of Arab States (LAS), particularly also to its recent decision to include an SPS Annex into the Pan Arab Free Trade Agreement (PAFTA). Including an SPS Annex into PAFTA is part of an ambitious aim to upgrade the PAFTA into a comprehensive trade agreement responding to WTO requirements and international good practices. Besides other advantages (exception from Most Favorite Nation clauses in favor of WTO member states outside PAFTA), a comprehensive PAFTA also enhances the value of the LAS as a potential partner for trade agreements. The selection of the food sector was based on an assessment of its regional trade potential conducted by the International Trade Center (ITC). While the SAFE Programme is primarily addressing food safety issues in the context of a conducive business and trade environment, food safety relates also strongly to public health and wellbeing, which both have a potential direct positive impact on poverty alleviation.
- **Effectiveness:** UNIDO delivered most of its outputs as planned and in good quality. Based on a cross-validation of information obtained through interviews, desk study and personal observation, the MTR endorses UNIDO's implementation report as per end of 2017, including the update until July 2018. The country support programmes (except Egypt), the cancellation of the planned Master Course in Food Safety, the conflict sensitivity analysis, and the work on gender mainstreaming did not meet expectations. There is also room to enhance communication activities based on a clear strategy. Main outcomes observed so far are, firstly, a significantly improved awareness and technical knowledge on food safety issues. Secondly, with the ATF, the SAFE Programme established a functioning regional cooperation machinery in the field of food safety (SPS). Participating countries are leading the work, elect their chair, and coordinate working groups. As also confirmed through personal observation, UNIDO assumes mainly the role of an advisor and facilitator, although meetings and travel of some participants are still funded by the SAFE Programme. Provided that the ATF is institutionalized and remains functional beyond the end of the SAFE Programme, it will obviously greatly facilitate regional cooperation in the field of food safety, including within the framework of the envisaged SPS Annex to the PAFTA.
- **Efficiency of approach and implementation:** The SAFE Programme's approach to foster regional trade cooperation is innovative for UNIDO and has the potential for replication. Key success factors were: the enrollment of all government stakeholders, industry representatives and consumers from the beginning, the combination of advocacy and capacity building at both national and regional level, and the piloting of a cooperation mechanism through jointly working in a formalized setting (committees). To the degree that an analysis was possible (see above), the SAFE Programme was generally efficiently implemented. UNIDO's partners unanimously praised the strong commitment, responsiveness, and flexibility of the programme team. At the onset of the programme extension, SIDA and UNIDO implemented several cost-saving measures, including moving from a costly rented project office to an office at UNIDO premises in Cairo. Moreover, the programme team was restructured. The current personnel resources and qualifications seems to be adequate to ensure the implementation of planned activities.
- **Sustainability of results:** The commitment of key stakeholder to maintain the ATF is high, which not only shows its value, but also the ownership of stakeholders involved. The fact that sustainability of the ATF is of great concern to everyone interviewed is a

good sign. Several options for transforming the ATF into a permanent structure under the LAS are under discussion. The need for further technical and institutional strengthening beyond the SAFE Programme's end is evident and requires additional donor support. Accompanying the institutionalization of the ATF and support fund mobilization is a priority for UNIDO.

- **Content and budget for further implementation:** Overall, activities foreseen in UNIDO's action plan for the extension phase respond to beneficiaries' priorities but expected outcomes of UNIDO's support have yet to be clearly spelled out. Using the pace of financial implementation so far as an indication, UNIDO should be able to absorb the additional funding of US\$944,000 it applied for. To grant the necessary approvals for the extension phase, SIDA and counterparts will need a detailed results framework linked to a budget.

The resulting recommendations were acknowledged by all partners and fully considered in the 2019 planning.

6. Budget information

Table 1. Financing plan summary - Outcome breakdown³⁶

Project outcomes	Donor (US\$)	Co-Financing (US\$)	Total (US\$)
Outcome 1	4,762,730.98 USD	0 USD	4,762,730.98 USD
Outcome 2	809,522.37 USD	0 USD	809,522.37 USD
Outcome 3	1,270,343.93	0 USD	1,270,343.93
Total (US\$)	6,842,597.28 USD	0 USD	6,842,597.28 USD

Source: Annual progress report 2018

³⁶ Source: Project document.

Table 2. UNIDO budget execution (Grant 2000002527)

Items of expenditure	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total expend.
Contractual Services	0	0	9,205.82	435,675.36	491,429.12	102,848.75	1,039,159.05
International Meetings	3,724.14	115,145.98	186,376.82	468,448.73	267,944.33	191,183.05	1,232,823.05
Local travel	18,586.87	61,767.20	128,850.24	301,701.61	92,673.75	47,164.78	650,744.45
Staff travel	5,121.84	14,613.63	30,797.72	27,682.56	20,859.72	21,712.47	120,787.94
Nat. Consult./Staff	10,350.85	80,105.99	129,328.17	150,809.95	219,716.59	192,097.22	782,408.77
Other Direct Costs	11,067.52	22,038.15	38,763.03	45,423.08	39,337.36	8,712.39	165,341.53
Staff & International Consultants	17,273.64	88,675.63	463,825.21	606,670.19	460,406.30	364,233.81	2,001,084.78
Train/Fellowship/Study	0	-22.38	0	411.52	34,846.34	73,545.46	108,780.94
Premises	0	42,210.00	22,438.34	22,948.78	7,051.72	0	94,648.84
Equipment	0	7,441.20	16,621.19	1,955.59	47,975.33	158,601.92	232,595.23
Grand Total	66,124.86	431,975.40	1,026,206.54	2,061,727.37	1,682,240.56	1,160,099.85	6,428,374.58

Source: UNIDO Project Management database as of 1st July 2019

II. Scope and purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to independently assess the project to help UNIDO improve performance and results of ongoing and future programmes and projects. The terminal evaluation (TE) will cover the whole duration of the project from its starting date in January 2014 to the estimated completion date in December 2019.

The evaluation has two specific objectives:

- (i) Assess the project performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and progress to impact; and
- (ii) Develop a series of findings, lessons and recommendations for enhancing the design of new and implementation of ongoing projects by UNIDO.

III. Evaluation approach and methodology

The TE will be conducted in accordance with the UNIDO Evaluation Policy³⁷ and the UNIDO Guidelines for the Technical Cooperation Project and Project Cycle³⁸. UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation shall also be observed.

The evaluation will be carried out as an independent in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby all key parties associated with the project will be informed and consulted throughout the evaluation. The evaluation team leader will liaise with the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (ODG/EIO/IED) on the conduct of the evaluation and methodological issues.

The evaluation will use a theory of change approach and mixed methods to collect data and information from a range of sources and informants. It will pay attention to triangulating the data and information collected before forming its assessment. This is essential to ensure an evidence-based and credible evaluation, with robust analytical underpinning.

The theory of change will identify causal and transformational pathways from the project outputs to outcomes and longer-term impacts, and drivers as well as barriers to achieve them. The learning from this analysis will be useful to feed into the design of the future projects so that the management team can effectively manage them based on results.

1. Data collection methods

- (a) **Desk and literature review** of documents related to the project, including but not limited to:
 - The original project document, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports, mid-term review report, output reports, back-to-office mission report(s), end-of-contract report(s) and relevant correspondence.
 - Notes from the meetings of committees involved in the project.
- (b) **Stakeholder consultations** will be conducted through structured and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. Key stakeholders to be interviewed include:
 - UNIDO Management and staff involved in the project; and
 - Representatives of donors, counterparts and stakeholders.
- (c) **Field visit** to project sites in October 2019.

³⁷ UNIDO. (2015). Director General's Bulletin: Evaluation Policy (UNIDO/DGB/(M).98/Rev.1)

³⁸ UNIDO. (2006). Director-General's Administrative Instruction No. 17/Rev.1: Guidelines for the Technical Cooperation Programme and Project Cycle (DGAI.17/Rev.1, 24 August 2006)

2. Evaluation key questions and criteria

The key evaluation questions are the following:

- (b) What are the key drivers and barriers to achieve the long-term objectives? To what extent has the project helped put in place the conditions likely to address the drivers, overcome barriers and contribute to the long-term objectives?
- (c) How well has the project performed? Has the project done the right things? Has the project done things right, with good value for money?
- (d) What have been the project's key results (outputs, outcomes and impact)? To what extent have the expected results been achieved or are likely to be achieved? To what extent the achieved results will sustain after the completion of the project?
- (e) What lessons can be drawn from the successful and unsuccessful practices in designing, implementing and managing the project?

The evaluation will assess the likelihood of sustainability of the project results after the project completion. The assessment will identify key risks (e.g. in terms of financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental risks) and explain how these risks may affect the continuation of results after the project ends. Table 3 below provides the key evaluation criteria to be assessed by the evaluation. The details questions to assess each evaluation criterion are in annex 2.

Table 3. Project evaluation criteria

#	<u>Evaluation criteria</u>	<u>Mandatory rating</u>
A	Impact	Yes
B	Project design	Yes
1	• Overall design	Yes
2	• Logframe	Yes
C	Project performance	Yes
1	• Relevance	Yes
2	• Effectiveness	Yes
3	• Efficiency	Yes
4	• Sustainability of benefits	Yes
D	Cross-cutting performance criteria	
1	• Gender mainstreaming	Yes
2	• M&E: ✓ M&E design ✓ M&E implementation	Yes
3	• Results-based Management (RBM)	Yes
E	Performance of partners	

#	<u>Evaluation criteria</u>	<u>Mandatory rating</u>
1	• UNIDO	Yes
2	• National counterparts	Yes
3	• Donor	Yes
F	Overall assessment	Yes

Performance of partners

The assessment of performance of partners will **include** the quality of implementation and execution of the project executing entities (EAs) in discharging their expected roles and responsibilities. The assessment will take into account the following:

- Quality of Implementation, e.g. the extent to which the agency delivered effectively, with focus on how well risks were identified and managed.
- Quality of Execution, e.g. the appropriate use of funds, procurement and contracting of goods and services.

3. Rating system

In line with the practice adopted by many development agencies, the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division uses a six-point rating system, where 6 is the highest score (highly satisfactory) and 1 is the lowest (highly unsatisfactory).

Table 4. Project rating criteria

Score	Definition	Category
6	Highly satisfactory Level of achievement presents no shortcomings (90% - 100% achievement rate of planned expectations and targets).	SATISFACTORY
5	Satisfactory Level of achievement presents minor shortcomings (70% - 89% achievement rate of planned expectations and targets).	
4	Moderately satisfactory Level of achievement presents moderate shortcomings (50% - 69% achievement rate of planned expectations and targets).	
3	Moderately unsatisfactory Level of achievement presents some significant shortcomings (30% - 49% achievement rate of planned expectations and targets).	UNSATISFACTORY
2	Unsatisfactory Level of achievement presents major shortcomings (10% - 29% achievement rate of planned expectations and targets).	

Score		Definition	Category
1	Highly unsatisfactory	Level of achievement presents severe shortcomings (0% - 9% achievement rate of planned expectations and targets).	

IV. Evaluation process

The evaluation will be conducted from September to December 2019. The evaluation will be implemented in five phases which are not strictly sequential, but in many cases iterative, conducted in parallel and partly overlapping:

- i. Inception phase: The evaluation team will prepare the inception report providing details on the methodology for the evaluation and include an evaluation matrix with specific issues for the evaluation; the specific site visits will be determined during the inception phase, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the mid-term review.
- ii. Desk review and data analysis;
- iii. Interviews, survey and literature review;
- iv. Country visits;
- v. Data analysis and report writing.

V. Time schedule and deliverables

The evaluation is scheduled to take place from September to December 2019. The evaluation field mission is tentatively planned for 6th to 10th October 2019. At the end of the field mission, there will be a presentation of the preliminary findings for all stakeholders involved in this project. The tentative timelines are provided in Table 5 below.

After the evaluation field mission, the evaluation team leader will visit UNIDO HQ for debriefing and presentation of the preliminary findings of the terminal evaluation. The draft TE report will be submitted 4 to 6 weeks after the end of the mission. The draft TE report is to be shared with the UNIDO PM, UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, and other stakeholders for receipt of comments. The ET leader is expected to revise the draft TE report based on the comments received, edit the language and form and submit the final version of the TE report in accordance with UNIDO ODG/EIO/EID standards.

Table 5. Tentative timelines

Timelines	Tasks
September 2019	Desk review and writing of inception report
End of September 2019	Briefing with UNIDO project manager and the project team based in Vienna through Skype
October 2019	Field visit to Amman, Jordan from 6 th to 10 th October 2019
End October 2019	Debriefing in Vienna Preparation of first draft evaluation report
November 2019	Internal peer review of the report by UNIDO's Independent Evaluation Division and other stakeholder comments to draft evaluation report
December 2019	Final evaluation report

VI. Evaluation team composition

The evaluation team will be composed of two international evaluation consultants, one of those acting as team leader. The evaluation team members will possess relevant strong experience and skills on evaluation management and conduct together with expertise and experience in innovative clean energy technologies. Both consultants will be contracted by UNIDO.

The tasks of each team member are specified in the job descriptions annexed to these terms of reference.

According to UNIDO Evaluation Policy, members of the evaluation team must not have been directly involved in the design and/or implementation of the project under evaluation.

The UNIDO Project Manager and the project team in Vienna and Cairo will support the evaluation team.

An evaluation manager from UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division will provide technical backstopping to the evaluation team and ensure the quality of the evaluation. The UNIDO Project Manager and national project teams will act as resourced persons and provide support to the evaluation team and the evaluation manager.

VII. Reporting

Inception report

This Terms of Reference (ToR) provides some information on the evaluation methodology, but this should not be regarded as exhaustive. After reviewing the project documentation and initial interviews with the project manager, the Team Leader will prepare, in collaboration with the national consultant, a short inception report that will operationalize the ToR relating to the evaluation questions and provide information on what type of and how the evidence will be collected (methodology). It will be discussed with and approved by the responsible UNIDO Evaluation Manager.

The Inception Report will focus on the following elements: preliminary project theory model(s); elaboration of evaluation methodology including quantitative and qualitative approaches through an evaluation framework (“evaluation matrix”); division of work between the International Evaluation Consultant and national consultant; mission plan, including places to be visited, people to be interviewed and possible surveys to be conducted and a debriefing and reporting timetable³⁹.

Evaluation report format and review procedures

The draft report will be delivered to UNIDO’s Independent Evaluation Division (the suggested report outline is in Annex 4) and circulated to UNIDO staff and national stakeholders associated with the project for factual validation and comments. Any comments or responses, or feedback on any errors of fact to the draft report provided by the stakeholders will be sent to UNIDO’s Independent Evaluation Division for collation and onward transmission to the project evaluation team who will be advised of any necessary revisions. On the basis of this feedback, and taking into consideration the comments

³⁹ The evaluator will be provided with a Guide on how to prepare an evaluation inception report prepared by the UNIDO ODG/EVQ/IEV.

received, the evaluation team will prepare the final version of the terminal evaluation report.

The ET will present its preliminary findings to the local stakeholders at the end of the field visit and take into account their feed-back in preparing the evaluation report. A presentation of preliminary findings will take place at UNIDO HQ after the field mission.

The TE report should be brief, to the point and easy to understand. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated, and the methods used. The report must highlight any methodological limitations, identify key concerns and present evidence-based findings, consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. The report should provide information on when the evaluation took place, the places visited, who was involved and be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. The report should include an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons.

Findings, conclusions and recommendations should be presented in a complete, logical and balanced manner. The evaluation report shall be written in English and follow the outline given in annex 4.

VIII. Quality assurance

All UNIDO evaluations are subject to quality assessments by UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division. Quality assurance and control is exercised in different ways throughout the evaluation process (briefing of consultants on methodology and process of UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, providing inputs regarding findings, lessons learned and recommendations from other UNIDO evaluations, review of inception report and evaluation report by UNIDO's Independent Evaluation Division).

The quality of the evaluation report will be assessed and rated against the criteria set forth in the Checklist on evaluation report quality, attached as Annex 5. The applied evaluation quality assessment criteria are used as a tool to provide structured feedback. UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division should ensure that the evaluation report is useful for UNIDO in terms of organizational learning (recommendations and lessons learned) and is compliant with UNIDO's evaluation policy and these terms of reference. The draft and final evaluation report are reviewed by UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, which will circulate it within UNIDO together with a management response sheet.

Annex 1: Project Logical Framework as per the original project document

Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>Development goal/impact:</p>			
<p>To facilitate regional trade in food and regional integration through strengthening the regional coordination and harmonisation mechanisms on conformity assessment and food control systems following international best practices (TBT & SPS).</p>			
<p>Outcome 1:</p>			
<p>AIDMO and AOAD technical and regional coordination capacities strengthened for the planning, implementation and management of a harmonized regional food control system within the framework of the Regional Standardization Strategy</p>			
<p>Output 1.1 A joint AIDMO-AOAD regional coordination and cooperation platform (High level committee and working groups) established and operational for the harmonization of regional conformity assessment and food safety standards and protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of committees and working groups established and operational • No. of resolutions, decisions and recommendations made by committees and working groups • Level of representation and participation of member countries • No. of officials trained and sensitized • No. of women taking part of the committees and working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project progress reports • Minutes of meetings for the regional committees and working groups • Independent evaluation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cooperation level of all countries in providing the accurate and up-to-date data and information • Commitments and willingness of the different countries to work closely and jointly. • Political stability in the region
<p>Output 1.2 A number of regional conformity assessment and food safety standards, protocols, schemes, training programs and guidelines prepared and endorsed at regional level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of policies, protocols and schemes developed and endorsed • No. of meetings and workshops organised • No. of professionals trained and sensitized • Percentage of consensus between member countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project progress reports. • Committee reports • AIDMO annual reports to the member countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of effective participation by member countries representatives • Political stability in the region • Ability to achieve consensus between member countries

Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p>Output 1.3</p> <p>Effective and well-coordinated approach for the participation of the Arab States in the Codex food standards setting process is established and operational</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of member countries effectively participates in Codex development work • No. of standards initiated and developed by Arab States, • No. of regional standards endorsed by the Codex as international standards • percentage of representation in the Codex committees • No. of professionals trained and sensitized • No. of regional committees / working groups established and operational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codex Alimentarius reports • Project progress reports • Committee reports and minutes of meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of effective participation by member countries representatives • Political stability in the region • Effective UNIDO-FAO cooperation
<p>Outcome 2: AIDMO member countries improve their national food safety control systems following regionally harmonized policies and protocols and according to international best practices and agreements (SPS)</p>			
<p>Output 2.1</p> <p>4 AIDMO-AOAD member countries assisted in the implementation of the regional harmonized standards and protocols (Libya, Palestine, Egypt and Yemen)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of countries achieve progress against their food safety development plans • No. of nationals trained on the harmonised programs. • Percentage of progress in modernising the national food safety system per country. • No. of policies developed per country • No. of awareness seminars / campaigns organised • No, of policy makers sensitized per country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project progress reports. • Country specific reports • Project monitoring and evaluation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitments and willingness of the target countries • The different levels of capacities within AIDMO members (capacity gaps). • Lack of capacity to implement a new national structures • The political stability in the target countries

Annex 2: Detailed questions to assess evaluation criteria: (See Annex 2 of the UNIDO Evaluation Manual)

Annex 3: Job descriptions



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PERSONNEL UNDER INDIVIDUAL SERVICE AGREEMENT
(ISA)

Title:	International Evaluator, Team Leader
Main Duty Station and Location:	Home-based with field missions
Missions:	Missions to Vienna, Austria – Amman, Jordan – Cairo, Egypt and other countries to be decided at Inception stage
Start of Contract (EOD):	1 st September 2019
End of Contract (COB):	31 st December 2019
Number of Working Days:	34 working days spread over the above mentioned period

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

The UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (ODG/EIO/IED) is responsible for the independent evaluation function of UNIDO. It supports learning, continuous improvement and accountability, and provides factual information about result and practices that feed into the programmatic and strategic decision-making processes. Independent evaluations provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons learned into the decision-making processes at organization-wide, programme and project level. ODG/EIO/IED is guided by the UNIDO Evaluation Policy, which is aligned to the norms and standards for evaluation in the UN system.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Detailed background information of the project can be found the terms of reference (TOR) for the terminal evaluation.

MAIN DUTIES	Concrete/ Measurable Outputs to be achieved	Working Days	Location
<p>1. Review project documentation and relevant country background information (national policies and strategies, UN strategies and general economic data).</p> <p>Define technical issues and questions to be addressed by the technical evaluator prior to the field visit.</p> <p>Determine key data to collect in the field and adjust the key data collection instrument if needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusted table of evaluation questions, depending on country specific context; • Draft list of stakeholders to interview during the field missions. • Identify issues and questions to be addressed by the technical evaluator 	4 days	Home-based

MAIN DUTIES	Concrete/ Measurable Outputs to be achieved	Working Days	Location
In coordination with the project manager, the project management team and the national technical evaluator, determine the suitable sites to be visited and stakeholders to be interviewed.			
<p>2. Prepare an inception report, which streamlines the specific questions to address the key issues in the TOR, specific methods that will be used and data to collect in the field visits, confirm the evaluation methodology, draft theory of change, and tentative agenda for fieldwork.</p> <p>Collaborate with the quality systems evaluator to prepare initial draft of results analysis and review technical inputs prepared by national evaluator, prior to field mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft theory of change and Evaluation framework to submit to the Evaluation Manager for clearance. • Results analysis and identification of technical issues to be addressed by the evaluation 	3 days	Home-based
3. Briefing with the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, project managers and other key stakeholders at UNIDO HQ (included is preparation of presentation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed evaluation schedule with tentative mission agenda (incl. list of stakeholders to interview and site visits); mission planning; • Division of evaluation tasks with the quality systems evaluator. 	1 day	Through Skype
<p>4. Conduct field mission in 2019⁴⁰ as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jordan, Amman from 5th to 11th October (including travel days) for conduct of interviews with key stakeholders • -More countries might be selected at Inception stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct meetings with relevant project stakeholders, beneficiaries for the collection of data and clarifications; • Agreed structure and content of the evaluation report and distribution of writing tasks; • Evaluation presentation of the evaluation's 	12 days	Countries to be selected at Inception stage

⁴⁰ The exact mission dates will be decided in agreement with the Consultant, UNIDO HQ, and the country counterparts.

MAIN DUTIES	Concrete/ Measurable Outputs to be achieved	Working Days	Location
	preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations to stakeholders in the country at the end of the mission.		
5. Present overall findings and recommendations to the stakeholders at UNIDO HQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After field mission(s): Presentation slides, feedback from stakeholders obtained and discussed. 	2 days	Vienna, Austria
6. Prepare the evaluation report, with inputs from the National Consultant, according to the TOR; Incorporate the inputs of the quality systems evaluator in finalizing the draft evaluation report. Share the evaluation report with UNIDO HQ and national stakeholders for feedback and comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft evaluation report. 	8 days	Home-based
7. Official de-briefing with main regional stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of draft evaluation report 	2 days	Cairo, Egypt
8. Revise the draft evaluation report based on comments from UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division and stakeholders and edit the language and form of the final version according to UNIDO standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final evaluation report. 	2 days	Home-based
	TOTAL	34 days	

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

Core values:

1. Integrity
2. Professionalism
3. Respect for diversity

Core competencies:

1. Results orientation and accountability
2. Planning and organizing
3. Communication and trust
4. Team orientation
5. Client orientation
6. Organizational development and innovation

Managerial competencies (as applicable):

1. Strategy and direction
2. Managing people and performance
3. Judgement and decision making
4. Conflict resolution

MINIMUM ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Education:

Advanced degree in food safety, food engineering, development studies or related areas.

Technical and functional experience:

- Minimum of 10 years' experience in evaluation of development projects and programmes
- Good working knowledge in food safety and engineering
- Knowledge about multilateral technical cooperation and the UN, international development priorities and frameworks
- Working experience in developing countries

Languages:

Fluency in written and spoken English is required.

All reports and related documents must be in English and presented in electronic format.

Absence of conflict of interest:

According to UNIDO rules, the consultant must not have been involved in the design and/or implementation, supervision and coordination of and/or have benefited from the programme/project (or theme) under evaluation. The consultant will be requested to sign a declaration that none of the above situations exists and that the consultants will not seek assignments with the manager/s in charge of the project before the completion of her/his contract with the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division.



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PERSONNEL UNDER INDIVIDUAL SERVICE AGREEMENT
(ISA)

Title:	International quality systems evaluator
Main Duty Station and Location:	Home-based with field missions
Missions:	Missions to Vienna, Austria – Amman, Jordan – Cairo, Egypt and other countries might be decided at Inception stage
Start of Contract (EOD):	15 th September 2019
End of Contract (COB):	31 st December 2019
Number of Working Days:	34 working days spread over the above mentioned period

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

The UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (ODG/EIO/IED) is responsible for the independent evaluation function of UNIDO. It supports learning, continuous improvement and accountability, and provides factual information about result and practices that feed into the programmatic and strategic decision-making processes. Independent evaluations provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons learned into the decision-making processes at organization-wide, programme and project level. ODG/EIO/IED is guided by the UNIDO Evaluation Policy, which is aligned to the norms and standards for evaluation in the UN system.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Detailed background information of the project can be found the terms of reference (TOR) for the terminal evaluation.

MAIN DUTIES	Concrete/ Measurable Outputs to be achieved	Working Days	Location
<p>1. Review project documentation and relevant country background information (national policies and strategies, UN strategies and general economic data).</p> <p>Define technical issues and questions to be addressed by the national technical evaluator prior to the field visit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusted table of evaluation questions, depending on country specific context; • Draft list of stakeholders to interview during the field missions. • Identify issues and questions to be 	4 days	Home-based

MAIN DUTIES	Concrete/ Measurable Outputs to be achieved	Working Days	Location
<p>Determine key data to collect in the field and adjust the key data collection instrument if needed.</p> <p>In coordination with the project manager, the project management team and the national technical evaluator, determine the suitable sites to be visited and stakeholders to be interviewed.</p>	<p>addressed in relation to integration of food safety systems in the region</p>		
<p>2. Prepare an inception report which streamlines the specific questions to address the key issues in the TOR, specific methods that will be used and data to collect in the field visits, confirm the evaluation methodology, draft theory of change, and tentative agenda for field work.</p> <p>Collaborate with the Team Leader in finalizing the Inception Report, providing the required results analysis. Provide guidance to national consultants in preparation for the field mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft theory of change and Evaluation framework to submit to the Evaluation Manager for clearance. • Results analysis and identification of technical issues to be addressed by the evaluation. 	3 days	Home-based
<p>3. Briefing with the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, project managers and other key stakeholders at UNIDO HQ (included is preparation of presentation).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed evaluation schedule with tentative mission agenda (incl. list of stakeholders to interview and site visits); mission planning; • Division of evaluation tasks with the technical evaluator. 	1 day	Through Skype
<p>4. Conduct field mission in 2019 as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jordan, Amman from 5th to 11th October (including travel days) for conduct of interviews with key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct meetings with relevant project stakeholders, beneficiaries for the collection of data and clarifications; 	12 days	Countries to be selected at Inception stage

MAIN DUTIES	Concrete/ Measurable Outputs to be achieved	Working Days	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More countries might be selected at Inception stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and content of the evaluation report and the distribution of writing tasks; • Stakeholder debriefing - presentation of the evaluation's preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations to stakeholders in the country at the end of the mission. 		
5. Present overall findings and recommendations to the stakeholders at UNIDO HQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After field mission(s): Presentation slides, feedback from stakeholders obtained and discussed. 	2 days	Vienna, Austria
6. Prepare the evaluation report, with inputs from the technical evaluator, according to the TOR; Prepare the technical assessment to be included in the draft evaluation report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft evaluation report. 	8 days	Home-based
7. Official de-briefing with main regional stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of draft evaluation report 	2 days	Cairo, Egypt
8. Revise the draft evaluation report based on comments from UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division and stakeholders and edit the language and form of the final version according to UNIDO standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final evaluation report 	2 days	Home-based
	TOTAL	34 days	

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

Core values:

1. Integrity
2. Professionalism
3. Respect for diversity

Core competencies:

1. Results orientation and accountability
2. Planning and organizing
3. Communication and trust
4. Team orientation
5. Client orientation
6. Organizational development and innovation

Managerial competencies (as applicable):

1. Strategy and direction
2. Managing people and performance
3. Judgement and decision making
4. Conflict resolution

MINIMUM ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Education:

Advanced degree in food safety, food engineering, development studies or related areas.

Technical and functional experience:

- Minimum of 10 years' experience in evaluation of development projects and programmes
- Good working knowledge in food safety and engineering
- Knowledge about multilateral technical cooperation and the UN, international development priorities and frameworks
- Working experience in developing countries

Languages:

Fluency in written and spoken English is required.

All reports and related documents must be in English and presented in electronic format.

Absence of conflict of interest:

According to UNIDO rules, the consultant must not have been involved in the design and/or implementation, supervision and coordination of and/or have benefited from the programme/project (or theme) under evaluation. The consultant will be requested to sign a declaration that none of the above situations exists and that the consultants will not seek assignments with the manager/s in charge of the project before the completion of her/his contract with the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division.

Annex 4- Outline of an in-depth project evaluation report

Executive summary (maximum 5 pages)

Evaluation purpose and methodology

Key findings

Conclusions and recommendations

Project ratings

Tabular overview of key findings – conclusions – recommendations

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation objectives and scope

1.2. Overview of the Project Context

1.3. Overview of the Project

1.4. Theory of Change

1.5. Evaluation Methodology

1.6. Limitations of the Evaluation

2. Project's contribution to Development Results - Effectiveness and Impact

2.1. Project's achieved results and overall effectiveness

2.2. Progress towards impact

2.2.1. Behavioral change

2.2.1.1. Economically competitive - Advancing economic competitiveness

2.2.1.2. Environmentally sound – Safeguarding environment

2.2.1.3. Socially inclusive – Creating shared prosperity

2.2.2. Broader adoption

2.2.2.1. Mainstreaming

2.2.2.2. Replication

2.2.2.3. Scaling-up

3. Project's quality and performance

3.1. Design

3.2. Relevance

3.3. Efficiency

3.4. Sustainability

3.5. Gender mainstreaming

4. Performance of Partners

4.1. UNIDO

4.2. National counterparts

4.3. Donor

5. Factors facilitating or limiting the achievement of results

5.1. Monitoring & evaluation

5.2. Results-Based Management

5.3. Other factors

5.4. Overarching assessment and rating table

6. Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

6.1. Conclusions

6.2. Recommendations

6.3. Lessons learned

6.4. Good practices

Annexes (to be put online separately later)

- Evaluation Terms of Reference
- Evaluation framework
- List of documentation reviewed
- List of stakeholders consulted
- Project logframe/Theory of Change
- Primary data collection instruments: evaluation survey/questionnaire
- Statistical data from evaluation survey/questionnaire analysis

Annex 5: Checklist on evaluation report quality

Project Title:

UNIDO ID:

Evaluation team:

Quality review done by:

Date:

Report quality criteria	UNIDO IEV assessment notes	Rating
a. Was the report well-structured and properly written? (Clear language, correct grammar, clear and logical structure)		
b. Was the evaluation objective clearly stated and the methodology appropriately defined?		
c. Did the report present an assessment of relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives?		
d. Was the report consistent with the ToR and was the evidence complete and convincing?		
e. Did the report present a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes or did it explain why this is not (yet) possible? (Including assessment of assumptions, risks and impact drivers)		
f. Did the evidence presented support the lessons and recommendations? Are these directly based on findings?		
g. Did the report include the actual project costs (total, per activity, per source)?		
h. Did the report include an assessment of the quality of both the M&E plan at entry and the system used during the implementation? Was the M&E sufficiently budgeted for during preparation and properly funded during implementation?		
i. Quality of the lessons: were lessons readily applicable in other contexts? Did they suggest prescriptive action?		
j. Quality of the recommendations: did recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can these be immediately implemented with current resources?		
k. Are the main cross-cutting issues, such as gender, human rights and environment, appropriately covered?		
l. Was the report delivered in a timely manner? (Observance of deadlines)		

Rating system for quality of evaluation reports

A rating scale of 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately satisfactory = 4, Moderately unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = 0.

Annex 6: Guidance on integrating gender in evaluations of UNIDO projects and Projects

A. Introduction

Gender equality is internationally recognized as a goal of development and is fundamental to sustainable growth and poverty reduction. The UNIDO Policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and its addendum, issued respectively in April 2009 and May 2010 (UNIDO/DGB(M).110 and UNIDO/DGB(M).110/Add.1), provides the overall guidelines for establishing a gender mainstreaming strategy and action plans to guide the process of addressing gender issues in the Organization's industrial development interventions.

According to the UNIDO Policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women:

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not suggest that women and men become 'the same' but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. It is therefore not a 'women's issues'. On the contrary, it concerns and should fully engage both men and women and is a precondition for, and an indicator of sustainable people-centered development.

Empowerment of women signifies women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building of self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discriminations and inequality.

Gender parity signifies equal numbers of men and women at all levels of an institution or organization, particularly at senior and decision-making levels.

The UNIDO projects/projects can be divided into two categories: 1) those where promotion of gender equality is one of the key aspects of the project/project; and 2) those where there is limited or no attempted integration of gender. Evaluation managers/evaluators should select relevant questions depending on the type of interventions.

B. Gender responsive evaluation questions

The questions below will help evaluation managers/evaluators to mainstream gender issues in their evaluations.

B.1. Design

- Is the project/project in line with the UNIDO and national policies on gender equality and the empowerment of women?
- Were gender issues identified at the design stage?
- Did the project/project design adequately consider the gender dimensions in its interventions? If so, how?
- Were adequate resources (e.g., funds, staff time, methodology, experts) allocated to address gender concerns?
- To what extent were the needs and priorities of women, girls, boys and men reflected in the design?
- Was a gender analysis included in a baseline study or needs assessment (if any)?

- If the project/project is people-centered, were target beneficiaries clearly identified and disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity and socio-economic group?
- If the project/project promotes gender equality and/or women's empowerment, was gender equality reflected in its objective/s? To what extent are output/outcome indicators gender disaggregated?

B.2. Implementation management

- Did project monitoring and self-evaluation collect and analyze gender disaggregated data?
- Were decisions and recommendations based on the analyses? If so, how?
- Were gender concerns reflected in the criteria to select beneficiaries? If so, how?
- How gender-balanced was the composition of the project management team, the Steering Committee, experts and consultants and the beneficiaries?
- If the project/project promotes gender equality and/or women's empowerment, did the project/project monitor, assess and report on its gender related objective/s?

B.3. Results

- Have women and men benefited equally from the project's interventions? Do the results affect women and men differently? If so, why and how? How are the results likely to affect gender relations (e.g., division of labour, decision making authority)?
- In the case of a project/project with gender related objective/s, to what extent has the project/project achieved the objective/s? To what extent has the project/project reduced gender disparities and enhanced women's empowerment?