



FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECT 12/13 AC

**Towards productivity convergence: trade, financing
and technology for small-scale enterprises**

September 2016

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All comments on the evaluation report by the Evaluation Reference Group and the evaluation team of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit were considered by the evaluator and duly addressed in the final text of the report, where appropriate. The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission.

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ACRONYMS

EA	Expected accomplishment
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IR	Inception report
ITC	International Trade Centre
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PPEU	Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit
PPOD	Programme Planning and Operations Division
RBM	Results-based management
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPO	Trade promotion organization
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
UN	United Nations
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project, entitled “Towards productivity convergence: trade, financing and technology for small-scale enterprises”, sought to strengthen the capacities of beneficiaries, mainly in trade promotion organizations (TPOs), and to promote small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) internationalization and access to financial services. The project was designed around three expected accomplishments (EAs): EA 1, increased capacity of export promotion organizations, development banks, national statistical institutes and/or other public agencies in charge of SME internationalization programs to measure SME internationalization performance; EA 2, improved capacity of export promotion agencies, and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization to design and implement effective policies/programs to foster innovation among SMEs, in coordination with the private sector; and EA 3, improved capacity of export promotion agencies, development banks, and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization to design and implement effective policies/programs to address SME constraints regarding financial services, in coordination with the private sector.

The Division of International Trade and Integration of ECLAC oversaw implementation of the project, which was carried out over the course of nearly three years. Launched in early 2013, it was scheduled to end in 2015, but was extended until April 2016. The project’s budget was US\$ 575,000 and it targeted four countries: Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru.

This assessment of the project is being undertaken to review its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability and, more particularly, to document the project’s outcomes and impact in relation to the overall objectives and expected results as defined in the project document. The assessment officially started on 26 May 2016 and ended on 12 September 2016. Data were collected through a document review, a survey and interviews with stakeholders involved in the project. No issues were encountered in the data collection phase, meaning the information used for the assessment is valid and useful.

The assessment found the project to be relevant in both its content and format. The tools and approaches used were well aligned with needs and priorities of the region, the beneficiary countries, as well as the organizations and individuals involved.

The project was based on a complex, multi-level, multi-stakeholder design that was logically built. However, in this context, more effort than was expected was needed to reach the various actors. The assessment also acknowledges that more stakeholders should have been involved, although this could have complicated implementation further.

The project was successful in achieving its expected accomplishments. Interviews and surveys with stakeholders revealed that respondents were generally satisfied with the project’s activities and outputs. Activities under EA 2, centred on the essential theme of innovation for exports, were considered the most successful. However, some challenges were encountered with regard to EA 3 (improving the access of SMEs to financial services), compared to the activities under the other two EAs.

The most important result is that the majority of direct project beneficiaries (TPOs) reported that they had adopted the main methodology of the project —an enhanced diagnosis of the innovation gaps of SMEs. The main challenges, even though minor, encountered in the implementation of some activities and the achievement of EAs were mainly the result of stakeholders’ not fully understanding the overall logic of the project.

All data collected during the assessment process points to a timely and efficient implementation of the project, confirming the renowned efficiency of ECLAC’s in the implementation of its projects. ECLAC operated well through its own implementation structure and the project did not require synergies or cooperation with other international projects, with the notable exception of the component linked to improved access to financial services for SMEs. In this regard, the assessment noted that outside agencies’ potentially useful support for the project management team had gone untapped.

The project has helped to generate conditions at the national level that indicate that the results achieved can be sustained over time. However, given that the project ended only a few weeks before this report was prepared, to date only a few stakeholders have undertaken concrete actions. Continuing the work of fostering strong enabling policies on SMEs innovation and exports should therefore be the main aim at this point, to ensure that the results are lasting and widespread.

The key recommendations emanating from the assessment are:

- In future, equally complex projects should, with the support of the national focal points, map (more) carefully the stakeholders involved in each thematic area and ensure that their involvement is relevant. In addition to relying on focal points for national coordination, ECLAC should engage directly with national specialized organizations for each thematic area. This would allow the relevant stakeholders to be provided with the necessary attention, demonstrating the added value and pertinence of the project for the organizations, and thus enhancing both the quality and extent of their involvement.
- As a matter of priority, the project should be fully and systematically explained to the stakeholders and the results monitored continuously. This is a proven method of increasing stakeholders' project ownership and buy-in, by helping them to understand the logic involved in everything the project is trying to accomplish.
- In this context, synergies should be developed with specialized projects and initiatives that focus almost exclusively on agricultural producers' access to financial services.
- The policy environment in the recipient countries should be enhanced, which would eventually allow TPOs to scale up and extend their support for innovations in exports to many more SMEs. This would help the project to have a more sustainable and meaningful impact in the recipient countries. In this regard, activities linked to policy dialogue should be developed. This recommendation is based on the success of activities under EA 2, which was clearly presented as a pilot scheme from the beginning.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This assessment report was prepared as part of the evaluation of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project “Towards productivity convergence: trade, financing and technology for small-scale enterprises” (hereafter “the project”), executed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This report was prepared by Alexandre Daoust, at the request of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (PPEU) of the Programme Planning and Operations Division (PPOD) of ECLAC, between 26 May and 12 September 2016.
2. This section presents general information about the project, examines the purpose and scope of the assessment, and discusses key assessment questions and criteria.

1.1 GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

1.1.1 THE UNDA CONTEXT

3. The project was implemented using UNDA funds, as part of its mandate to finance “technical cooperation projects that benefit developing countries within the individual strategic priorities of the respective implementing entities”.¹ Other UNDA project objectives include advancing the implementation of internationally agreed development goals and the outcomes of UN summits and conferences. Projects financed by UNDA aim to build the socioeconomic capacity of individuals and organizations and the enabling environment of developing countries through collaboration at the national, subregional, regional and interregional levels.
4. UNDA provides a mechanism for promoting the exchange and transfer of skills, knowledge, and good practices among target countries within and between different geographic regions, in the case of ECLAC, within Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and through cooperation with a wide range of partners in the broader development assistance community. It bridges in-country capacity development actors, on the one hand, and UN Secretariat entities, on the other. The latter offer distinctive skills and competencies in a broad range of economic and social issues that are often only dealt with marginally by other development partners at the country level. UNDA projects are funded from the UN Regular Budget and overseen by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). Funded initiatives must also be aligned with beneficiary countries’ strategic priorities; in other words, projects are demand driven.
5. The project was chosen following an extensive UNDA selection process. After it was selected by ECLAC from among other proposals, the project outline was sent to DESA. DESA receives proposals from various UN agencies that compete for UNDA funding for their projects. Once selected, proposals are discussed and fine-tuned through back and forth between DESA and the relevant UN agencies to adapt the projects to meet UNDA requirements, until a final project document is approved. UNDA projects, through each programming cycle called “tranches”, are classified by regions. This project falls under the “Trade, Economics and Finance” thematic cluster of tranche 8.

1.1.2 BACKGROUND

6. According to a recent Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) study, SMEs make up more than 90% of firms in the LAC region.² The project document also highlights the fact that SMEs generate the most

¹ UNDA, *Guidelines for Joint Development Account Projects* (2008), p. 3.

² Gorden, Reena B., and Kati Suominen, *Going Global: Promoting the Internationalization of Small and Mid-Size Enterprises in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Washington, D.C., Inter-American Development Bank, 2014).

employment opportunities in the region. By indirectly supporting SMEs, the project aimed to reach many beneficiaries and to tackle the limited access of SMEs in LAC to international markets.

7. The project document identifies the low levels of productivity, scale and quality of SMEs as some of the reasons for their limited access to international trade. Moreover, it states that participation in international trade can help to increase SMEs productivity by encouraging them to adopt new technologies and production and management techniques. Other potential benefits include expanding their market and customer base, and optimizing their production capacity. SMEs appear to be in a vicious circle from which they have trouble freeing themselves.
8. This diagnosis is in line with the principal barriers to SME growth and export identified by the Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUNDES).³

Table 1
Principal barriers to SME growth and exports

Barriers	Brief description
Limited market information	Inadequate knowledge of opportunities, customer needs and preferences, product standards and market requirements are major barriers to firms wanting to internationalize their offerings.
Market entry	Difficulties related to the selection of trade channels, buyers' networks and the promotion of products prevent many firms from exporting their products.
Market access	Certification requirements as well as a lack of knowledge regarding export market trends, developments, conditions and opportunities are other important barriers.
Lack of adequate human resources	A shortage of experienced and skilled staff, combined with weak management and few training opportunities.
Lack of export strategy	Very few SMEs have a structured approach to exports (e.g. based on an export marketing strategy); they tend to respond in an ad hoc manner to opportunities.
Poor quality of products and production processes	Changing products, prices, standards and requirements, a general lack of organization, inadequate communication, and limited access to finance are all impediments to the export capacity of SMEs.

Source: Prepared by the author based on the guidelines for improving the business environment developed by the Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUNDES).

9. Another obstacle the project wanted to tackle was the lack of access to investment and general financial resources faced by SMEs.
10. Thus, the project sought to address all these barriers by creating an enabling environment and providing tools to help SMEs meet international requirements and standards for exports. Working on the missing link would help break the aforementioned vicious circle. The project was designed to (i) facilitate access to useful information and data for beneficiary countries to help them to understand better their SMEs and the barriers to exports that they face (EA 1); (ii) provide diagnostics on SME innovation gaps for exports to improve government capacity to design and implement effective policies and programmes that foster innovation (EA 2); and (iii) detail, analyse, and contribute to improving access to financial sources to support SME exports (EA 3).

³ Using the guidelines for improving the business environment developed by the Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUNDES). See www.fundes.org.

1.1.3 PROJECT DETAILS

A. Implementing structure

11. The primary project implementing agency was ECLAC, specifically, the Division of International Trade and Integration. Internally, the Division of Production, Productivity and Management and the Financing for Development Division, both of ECLAC, as well as its subregional headquarters in Mexico, were to be involved for coordination purposes at the substantive and technical levels.⁴ For certain activities, support from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) were to be solicited.

B. Timeline

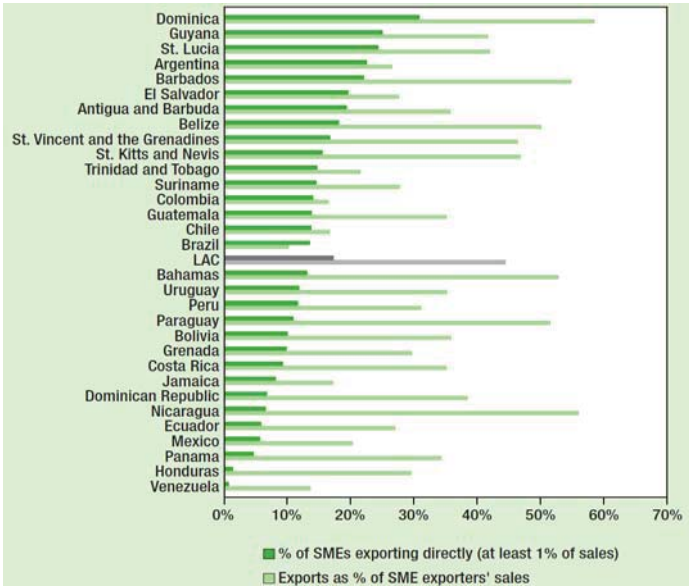
12. The project document was finalized in May 2013 and activities began in June 2013. The timeline was originally from the beginning of 2013 to the end of 2015, but the project was extended until April 2016. Its duration was thus a little less than three years. Its budget was US\$ 575,000.

C. Beneficiary countries

13. The project targeted four countries: Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Peru. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was also originally selected as a beneficiary country but internal political instability, beyond the project management team’s control, rendered implementation there impossible.

14. As shown in figure1, the countries selected, except for El Salvador, all fall below the LAC average in terms of direct SME exports (at least 1% of sales). It should be noted that the project also targeted indirect exports, i.e. supplying products or services to other exporting companies.

Figure 1
SMEs exporting directly (at least 1% of their sales) by country, 2009-2010
 (Percentages)



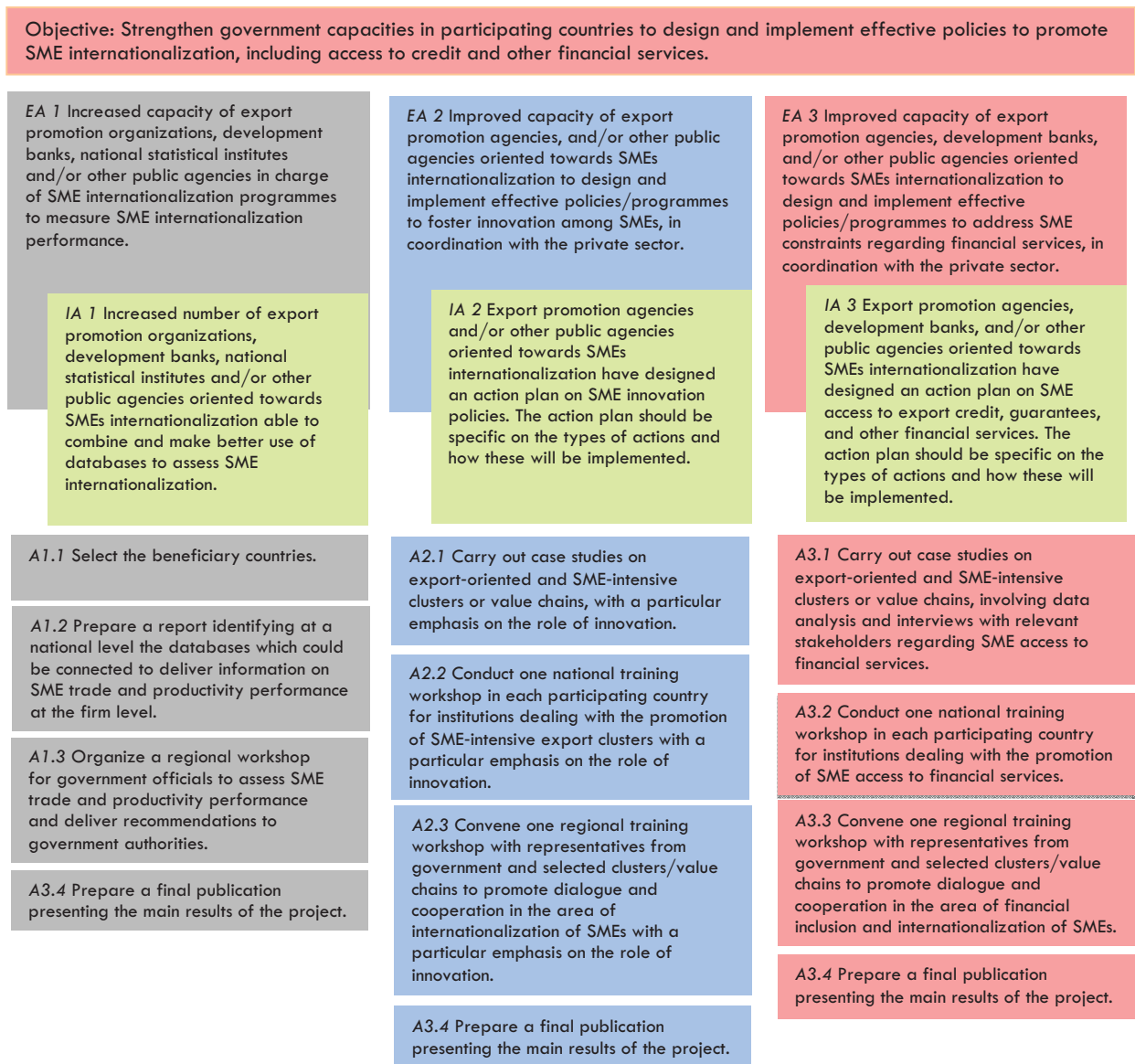
Source: Gorden, Reena B., and Kati Suominen, *Going Global: Promoting the Internationalization of Small and Mid-Size Enterprises in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Washington, D.C., Inter-American Development Bank, 2014), p. 13.

⁴ ECLAC, *Towards productivity convergence: Trade, financing and innovation for small-scale enterprises*. Revised Project Document (May 2013), p. 14.

D. Logical framework

15. The project's objective, EAs, indicators of achievement and supporting activities were as follows.

Diagram 1
Logical framework



Source: Prepared by the author based on the project document.

16. The project management team hired regional and national consultants from the target countries to conduct studies and research, and to provide technical assistance to, beneficiaries from both the public and private sector. ECLAC staff worked with the consultants to deliver the workshops, symposiums and meetings organized as part of the project.

E. Direct and indirect beneficiaries

17. This project aimed to strengthen the capacities of high- and medium-level national officials from the ministries of trade, industry and finance, as well as in other agencies working to promote SME internationalization and access to financial services. Export-oriented SMEs were considered indirect beneficiaries, although they did participate actively in some activities (e.g.: workshops on innovation gaps and the trade and technology mission to the United States (US)). The participating SMEs mainly served as case studies for some of the research carried out as part of the project (e.g. EA 2, fostering innovation). This gave a specific and practical aspect to some of the reports that were produced (addressing issues related to and defined by particular SMEs). However, it is important to mention that the primary purpose of the project was to enhance public sector institutions' capacity to help SMEs. While the involvement of SMEs did benefit the enterprises, it was seen as a pilot project that was actually aimed at helping public sector officials learn by providing practical support to real SMEs.

F. Implementation and results

18. Table 2 summarizes the project activities and their results. The research conducted by the regional and national consultants in conjunction with the stakeholders over the course of the project is not identified specifically in table 2; however, the events and activities listed did contribute to that research.

Table 2
From activities to results

Country	Events/ Activities				EA	Consultant	Results
	2013	2014	2015	2016			
All beneficiary countries		Nine working sessions to present the project to and coordinate with implementation partners in the beneficiary countries	Nine working sessions to present the project to and coordinate with implementation partners in the beneficiary countries	One forward-looking working session to assess the way forward for partners			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation structure designed - Coordination of efforts with partners enhanced - Action plan presented
All beneficiary countries	Regional workshop to present the first component of the project	One workshop on export activity databases in the region			EA 1		Efforts coordinated and lessons learned exchanged for EA 1
Ecuador		Two workshops on export activity databases				María Laura Roche	Report on database analysis prepared – Ecuador
El Salvador		One workshop on export activity databases				Ivette Contreras	Report on database analysis prepared – El Salvador
Nicaragua		One workshop on export activity databases				Gustavo Sequeira	Report on database analysis prepared – Nicaragua
Peru		Two workshops on export activity databases				Víctor Ballena	Report on database analysis prepared – Peru
Latin America and the Caribbean region						Roberto Urmeneta	Summary EA 1 report prepared at regional level

Table 2 (continued)

Country	Events/ Activities				EA	Consultant	Results
	2013	2014	2015	2016			
Ecuador			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar to discuss the results linked to EA 2 and EA 3 - Symposium on innovation, exports and gender - Workshop to discuss the action plan for innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop on innovation and agriculture (Europe) - Workshop on certification for exports 	EA 2	Jaime Santillán	Innovation and exports report prepared – Ecuador
El Salvador			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar to discuss the results linked to EA 2 and EA 3 - Symposium on innovation, exports and gender - Workshop to discuss the innovation action plan 	Workshop on innovation and agriculture (Europe)		Miguel Angel Rivas	Combined EA 2 and EA 3 report prepared on innovation, exports and finance mechanisms– El Salvador
Nicaragua			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar to discuss the results linked to EA 2 and EA 3 - Symposium on innovation, exports and gender - Workshop to discuss the innovation action plan - Financing round - National meeting with producers and exporters 			Sonia Vargas	Innovation and exports report prepared – Nicaragua
Peru			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar to discuss the results linked to EA2 and EA 3 - Symposium on innovation, exports and gender - Workshop to discuss the action plan for innovation 			Dante Poggi Daniel Arístegui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combined EA 2 & EA 3 report prepared on innovation, exports and finance mechanisms – Peru - Innovation and exports report prepared – Peru
Regional Latin America and the Caribbean region			Four workshops on innovation gaps and to prepare for the mission to New York (one in each country)			Alejandro Cerda Marian Geluk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation gaps for exports to US – Regional Innovation gaps for exports to Europe – Regional mission with SMEs to US

Table 2 (conclusion)

Country	Events/ Activities				EA	Consultant	Results
	2013	2014	2015	2016			
Latin America and the Caribbean region				Seminar to discuss the results linked to EA 2 (Chile)		Rodrigo Astorga	Summary EA2 report developed
Ecuador			See EA 2 section above (combined activities)		EA 3	Edurne Quincoces	Exports financing mechanisms report prepared – Ecuador
El Salvador			See EA 2 section above (combined activities)			Miguel Angel Rivas	Exports financing mechanisms report prepared – El Salvador
Nicaragua			Two workshops on finance management plan			Sonia Vargas	Exports financing mechanisms report prepared – Nicaragua
Ecuador			Workshop on available finance sources				Information on available finance sources disseminated to exporting SMEs – Ecuador
Latin America and the Caribbean region				Workshop on finance sources available in the region		Rodrigo Saldías	Innovation financing mechanism report prepared

Source: Prepared by the author.

19. According to the project management team, more than 95% of the budget was spent. The official data provided to the evaluator confirm this percentage to be exactly 95.8%.

1.2 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

20. This subsection summarizes, on the basis of the terms of reference (ToR),⁵ the purpose, objectives, scope, questions and criteria of the project assessment.

1.2.1 PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

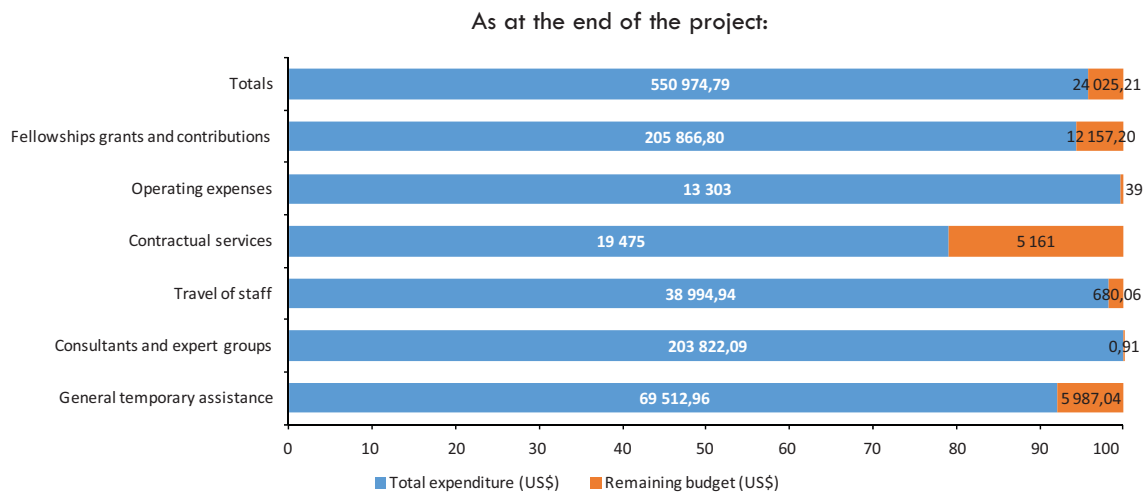
21. The purpose of an assessment is determined by answering the following questions: why is the evaluation being undertaken at this particular point in time? Why and for whom is it undertaken? And how is the evaluation to be used for learning and/or accountability functions?⁶

22. With regard to the timeliness of the assessment, the project was completed recently, so this is an opportune moment to undertake the end-of-cycle review of the regional project, in accordance with UNDA requirements and ToR drawn up by ECLAC.

⁵ ECLAC, *Terms of Reference. Assessment of the Development Account Project ROA 233-8: Towards productivity convergence: trade, financing and technology for small-scale enterprises.* (March 2016).

⁶ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series* (2010), p. 8.

Figure 3
Actual expenditure by budget line
 (Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the author.

23. The main reason the assessment is being undertaken is to review the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the project implementation and, more particularly, document the results and impact of the project attained in relation to its overall objectives and EAs, as defined in the project document.
24. As for the primary audience, the assessment provides credible, useful and practical information and makes constructive and forward-looking recommendations to inform “the decision-making cycle in the United Nations Secretariat in general and ECLAC in particular”. The evaluator hopes that the results of the assessment will also be of use to the project’s beneficiary States, SMEs and other stakeholders.
25. The ToR questions on the project’s sustainability (see table 4) indicate that the assessment will be used to help ECLAC replicate the project elsewhere while improving the design and implementation of similar future projects.

1.2.2 SCOPE

26. The scope of the assessment covers all of the activities undertaken as part of the project. It reviews the benefits accrued by the various stakeholders and the sustainability of the project, as well as the interaction and coordination modalities used within ECLAC and among other implementing partners.
27. In summary, the elements to be covered in the assessment include:
 - Actual progress made towards project objectives
 - The extent to which the project has contributed to outcomes, intended or unintended, in the beneficiary countries
 - The efficiency with which outputs were delivered
 - The strengths and weaknesses of project implementation
 - The validity of the strategy and partnership arrangements, including coordination among ECLAC Divisions and Offices and other implementing partners

- The extent to which the project was designed and implemented to facilitate the attainment of the goals
- The relevance of the project's activities and outputs to the needs of member States and the region and to the mandate and programme of work of ECLAC.⁷

28. The assessment scope defines the time period, geographical area, target groups, and the evaluation criteria, questions and methodology used.⁸

A. Time period

29. The assessment officially started on 26 May and ended on 12 September 2016. The assessment exercise was to be completed in three months and the final assessment report submitted to UNDA upon completion.

B. Geographical areas

30. The assessment budget allowed a limited number of interviews to be conducted with different stakeholders from the four beneficiary countries. A survey was also sent to stakeholders from all the countries involved.

C. Target groups

31. The evaluator undertook the assignment in a fully participatory manner, making this approach a central principle of the process. Indeed, the evaluator fully adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines on Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, which states that "evaluations should be carried out in a participatory and ethical manner". In this regard, the evaluator endeavoured to involve as many of the project's key stakeholders as possible. However, the logistical difficulties of contacting all stakeholders from all four countries covered by the project mean that not all of their opinions and recommendations could be collected and included in the assessment. Data for the assessment were gathered from many lines of inquiry, including the survey, which allowed many beneficiaries to provide their input, and 18 conference call interviews (conducted via Skype) were planned. In total, 16 interviews were conducted with TPO representatives, who were the project focal points, SMEs, consultants and the project management team. Hence, a critical mass of stakeholders was interviewed, meaning that sufficient information was collected to support a solid, complete and evidence-based analysis.

32. In accordance with the aforementioned participatory approach, the assessment's lines of inquiry targeted representatives from all relevant organizations in all the countries involved, including, but not limited to:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECLAC representatives in Santiago • Representatives of beneficiary national institutions, including development banks and export promotion institutions • Beneficiary SME representatives • Consultants hired in the context of the project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of partner international and regional institutions • Representatives of other donors and/or implementers (if considered useful) |
|--|--|

➤ **To ensure that all relevant representatives were invited to participate in at least one line of inquiry, the evaluator relied on ECLAC to corroborate and complete the list of stakeholders involved and send out official invitation letters to all potential survey respondents and interviewees.**

⁷ ECLAC, *Terms of Reference*.

⁸ Based on Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Quality Standards for Development Evaluation*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, (2010), p. 8.

D. Assessment criteria and questions

33. To assess the project's performance, the evaluator compared actual achievements with the EAs set out in the logical framework of the project document. In addition, all the ToR assessment questions, categorized as usual by the four standard evaluation criteria —relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability—,⁹ were linked to subquestions, indicators, data sources and data collection methods. Table 3 sets out the definitions used by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) for its evaluation criteria.

Table 3
OECD-DAC evaluation criteria definitions

Question 1: What has been achieved? (In terms of development results)	
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies. The appropriateness of development interventions in a given sector, region or country.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.
Question 2: Were the intended results achieved and, if so, how and why? (management factors)	
Efficiency ^a	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc) are converted to results in a timely manner.

Source: OECD-DAC, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* (Paris, 2002) and OECD-DAC, *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: a practical guide to ex ante Poverty Impact Assessment*, (Paris, 2007).

^a Given that cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness can be difficult to assess, this assessment will mainly focus on the timely delivery of the activities and outputs, coordination and collaboration mechanisms and whether management approaches were flexible and efficient.

34. Table 4 sets out the assessment questions, categorized according to the aforementioned evaluation criteria.

Table 4
Assessment questions by evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria	Questions
Relevance	To what extent were the project's activities and outputs in line with the priorities of the target countries? To what extent was the proposed programme of work aligned with the subprogramme's activities? Were there any complementarities and synergies with other work being undertaken?

⁹ The assessment will focus less on the project's impact on the beneficiary countries from a results-based management (RBM) perspective, as the project ended recently (December 2015) and it is too early to ascertain the project's long-term impact.

Table 4 (conclusion)

Evaluation criteria	Questions
Effectiveness	<p>How satisfied are the project's main clients with the services they received?</p> <p>How much more knowledgeable are the participants after the workshops and seminars?</p> <p>What are the results identified by the beneficiaries?</p> <p>Has the project made any difference in the behaviour/attitude/skills/performance of the clients?</p> <p>How effective were the project activities in building capacities and influencing policymaking?</p> <p>Have any tangible policies been developed on the basis of ECLAC contributions linked to the project under evaluation?</p>
Efficiency	<p>Did collaboration and coordination mechanisms within ECLAC, and between ECLAC and other implementing partners ensure efficiencies and a coherent response?</p> <p>Were services and support provided in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established by the project document?</p>
Sustainability	<p>With beneficiaries:</p> <p>How did the project utilize the technical, human and other resources available in developing countries?</p> <p>How have the project's main results and recommendations been used in or incorporated into the work and practices of beneficiary institutions after completion of the project's activities?</p> <p>What were the multiplier effects generated by the project?</p> <p>What mechanisms were set up to ensure the follow-up of networks created as part of the project?</p> <p>Within ECLAC:</p> <p>How has the project contributed to shaping and/or enhancing the programme of work, priorities and activities of ECLAC?</p> <p>How has it shaped and/or enhanced the work modalities and type of activities carried out?</p> <p>How has ECLAC built on the project's findings?</p>

Source: Prepared by the author.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

35. The second section of the assessment report describes the assessment strategy, data gathering and analysis tools, and any challenges encountered or limitations.

2.1 ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

36. The assessment strategy allowed the ToR evaluation questions to be addressed fully in a timely manner, and an independent, participatory and professional approach to be adopted. In addition to the methodology extensively described in ToR, the methodological principles below guided the assessment process:

- **Triangulation of observations and findings.** The evaluator systematically applied the information and data triangulation method to answer the evaluation questions. Where possible, all findings emerging from all lines of inquiry (desk research, survey and interviews) were cross-checked to answer the evaluation questions comprehensively and thoroughly. The assessment findings have therefore been corroborated by three sources of information.
- **Participatory and iterative management.** To ensure the assignment ran smoothly and within the proposed timeline, the evaluator adopted a flexible management approach to the assessment process and took into consideration the points of view of all stakeholders directly involved in overseeing the assessment process. This entailed working in close cooperation with PPEU and with the project managers. The inception report and the draft assessment report were sent to these stakeholders for questions, comments and suggestions. This approach ensured that the assessment tools used by the evaluator were approved by the stakeholders and were considered to be adequate and of sufficient quality. Subsequently, a videoconference was held with PPEU, a debrief session took place with the project managers and the draft assessment report was submitted for approval, allowing the project managers to correct any factual errors and present new points of view and opinions in response to the findings, conclusions and recommendations, which were then integrated into this report.
- **Application of knowledge.** Throughout the assessment process, the evaluator profitably employed his theoretical and practical knowledge of assessments, export promotion policy, aid for trade, trade-related technical assistance for SMEs and national institutions, qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies, RBM, ECLAC as an institution and report writing, among other things.

2.2 ASSESSMENT APPROACH, DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS STEPS

37. The methodology adopted for this assessment was designed to meet the ToR requirements and expectations. There were several steps in the data collection, analysis and reporting phases of the assessment.

38. The present assessment combines elements from different evaluation approaches, namely the goal-free approach (exploring expected and unexpected results), the theory-based approach (based on predefined logframes) and the collaborative approach (fostering large participation).¹⁰ This ensured that the assessment process respected the UNEG ethical principles, guidelines, standards and norms

¹⁰ See Kahan, Barbara, *Excerpts from Review of Evaluation Frameworks* (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, March 2008).

(as cited in ToR), as well as those of the Evaluation Policy of ECLAC,¹¹ to produce useful, evidence-based findings for ECLAC.

39. To further strengthen the assessment methodology, the evaluator referred to the project's logical framework (see annex 1 of the revised project document), which sets out EAs and their respective performance indicators. The logical framework also helped the evaluator to develop and strengthen the assessment matrix (see annex 1 of this report) and to measure the project's performance (see Step 2 below).

2.2.1 INCEPTION PHASE

Step 1: Preliminary document and literature review

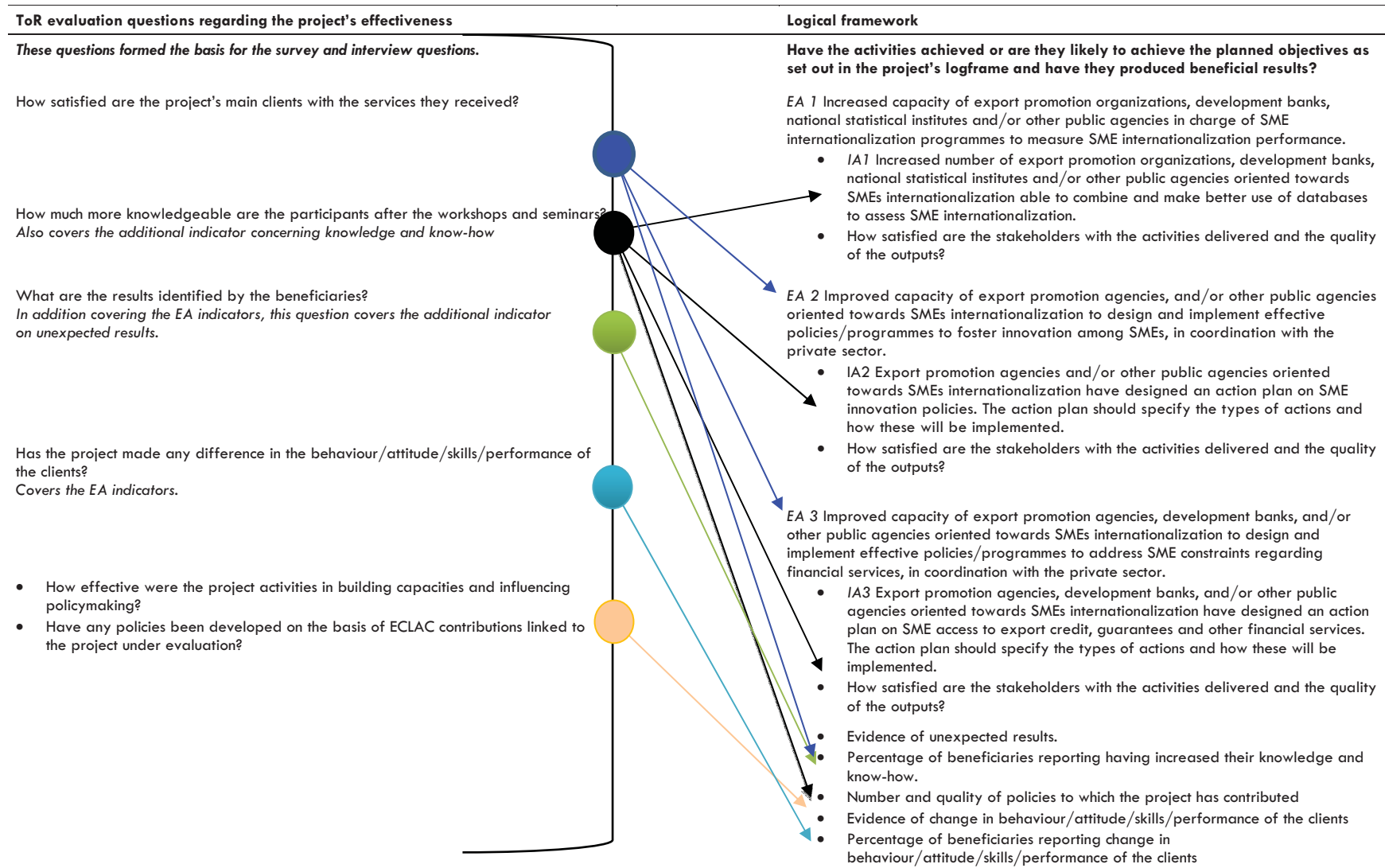
40. The purpose of this phase was to familiarize the evaluator with the project, the main stakeholders and partners, the beneficiaries and the results achieved to date. The evaluator reviewed files, reports and other documents provided by the project managers during the first month of the assessment.

Step 2: The inception report and development of data collection tools

41. A work plan was submitted to and approved by PPEU as an important building block of the inception report, which provided more details on the evaluator's approach to assessing the project management and the extent to which EAs had been achieved. This helped to synthesize the assessment activities, allowing the necessary staff, time and resources to be identified in advance.
42. In order to facilitate a rigorous and independent assessment approach, and in accordance with ToR, the evaluator proposed the development and use of an assessment matrix. The matrix is an overarching tool, based on the main ToR evaluation questions and the project's logical framework. It identifies specific performance indicators, information gathering methods and information sources for each assessment question. Having revised the ToR evaluation questions, the evaluator proposed changes under the effectiveness criterion which are set out below. Table 5 demonstrates how the ToR questions were linked to the specific EAs and their indicators, with some additional, tailored indicators to ensure a holistic assessment of the project. These additions were discussed with and accepted by PPEU and are reflected in the assessment matrix and the data gathering tools annexed to the present report.
43. Based on the assessment matrix, data gathering tools were developed: (a) a document review data collection matrix (internal document used by the evaluator); (b) customized interview protocols; and (c) a questionnaire sent to beneficiaries. All tools focused on the key assessment issues and allowed respondents to define, inform, and/or validate those issues.
44. The predefined tools were also used to standardize the interview and survey processes. The interview protocol (see annex 2) was adapted on a case by case basis; for every interview, the evaluator analysed the respondent's profile, including their role, which country they worked on and which activities they took part in, and adapted the questions accordingly.
45. The inception report was submitted four weeks after the assessment process started. The validation of the assessment matrix and data gathering tools by ECLAC, and more specifically PPEU, facilitated the participation of relevant stakeholders in the assessment process. This represented an opportunity to collectively question the logic and viability of the process.

¹¹ ECLAC, *Evaluation Policy and Strategy* (Santiago, April 2014) pp. 13-14.

Table 5
Links between the ToR evaluation questions and the logical framework



Source: Prepared by the evaluator.

46. Comments from PPEU on the inception report allowed the evaluator to finalize, fine-tune and polish the assessment matrix and data collection tools, and produce this final version of the report.
 - **Once approved, the inception report became the road map for the rest of the assignment and the working document on the basis of which decisions on how to conduct and structure this assessment exercise were taken.**

2.2.2 DATA COLLECTION PHASE

Step 3: In-depth desk review

47. The in-depth desk review allowed for data to be collected prior to the interviews conducted by Skype or telephone. The interviews either supported the data collected or provided alternative views, forming the core of the information triangulation process. Information was systematically classified in the document review data collection matrix by relevant indicator.
48. During the desk review and the literature review (steps 1 and 3), the evaluator examined documentation such as the ECLAC programme of work, the project document, annual progress reports, workshop and meeting reports and evaluation surveys, the project methodology documents, country reports prepared by consultants and consolidated reports, in accordance with ToR.

Step 4: Interviews with and surveys completed by key stakeholders and beneficiaries

49. After the invitations were sent by ECLAC, the evaluator conducted interviews via Skype or telephone with the relevant respondents. These interviews took place after the Inception Report was approved by PPEU. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with project managers and all available relevant ECLAC staff, general stakeholders and beneficiaries (see subsection 1.2 above). The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour, depending on the category of the interviewee and the nature of their involvement with the project. During these interviews, all of the questions and indicators presented in the assessment matrix were addressed.
50. The e-survey, produced using the website www.fluidsurveys.com, was sent to as all those who had participated in any events or activities organized as part of the project, except ECLAC representatives, who were interviewed. The e-survey was mainly used to obtain quantitative data, but it also contained qualitative questions. It was kept short to ensure a high response rate (see annex 3). The evaluator submitted the questions in Spanish in order to avoid having to translate them. The evaluator considered e-surveys to be the most appropriate manner to (a) reach as many of the potential respondents as possible with a minimum amount of effort; (b) generate a large quantity of quantitative data to triangulate qualitative information collected through other lines of inquiry (document review and interviews); and (c) ensure total confidentiality.
51. Once the e-survey had been approved by PPEU, the evaluator uploaded the questionnaire onto the FluidSurveys website. Tests were then conducted to ensure that the survey could be accessed and completed without any difficulties. The e-survey was seen as a type of census, as all respondents in each category were invited to answer.
52. Once those preliminary steps had been finalized, the official data collection process began, using the e-survey. The following steps were taken to ensure the smooth implementation of the e-survey:
 - ECLAC validated and completed the list of e-mail addresses of all stakeholders, covering all categories of respondents
 - ECLAC sent invitation letters and e-mails to all potential respondents
 - The evaluator then sent the e-survey link to the potential respondents using the e-mail addresses provided by ECLAC and the FluidSurveys messaging system

- After three working days, a reminder was sent to prompt the potential respondents to complete the questionnaire. A second reminder was sent three working days later and a third and final reminder was sent by PPEU three working days before the survey deadline
 - Every time a respondent closed the questionnaire web page, any data entered was automatically saved on FluidSurveys' server. Thus, once the e-survey was officially closed, the full set of data (all answers provided by respondents) was available to be downloaded in its raw state for analysis.
53. FluidSurveys' software provides survey development, diffusion and data analysis services, paid for by the evaluator in order to manage e-surveys for larger numbers of potential respondents, such as this one, and multiple surveys at the same time.

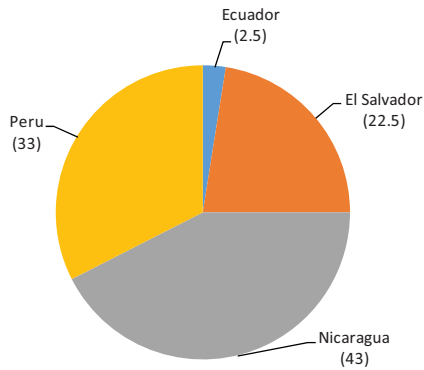
As part of the e-survey process, e-invites were sent to 221 potential respondents, of these 70 could not be delivered (31.7%), leaving 151 potential respondents, of which 52 stakeholders (34.4%) responded to the e-invite, the results can be broken down as follows:

- Incomplete surveys: 8 (15.4%)
 - Those who reported not having participated in any event or been provided with any documentation: 4 (7.7%)
 - Completed surveys: 40 (76.9% of those who accessed the online survey and 26.5% of all potential respondents)
54. A response rate of 26.5% is considered to be quite good.¹² In the present assessment report, the quantitative survey data are always supported and discussed using the more qualitative data collected through open-ended questions from the survey and other lines of inquiry (interviews and document review).
55. The survey participation rate was slightly higher among men (53%) than women (47%). This seems to reflect the overall levels of participation of men (51%) and women (49%) in the project's activities. At first glance, there seems to be a low response rate from Ecuador (2%) and a high response rate from Nicaragua (43%), which could be seen as undermining the validity of the survey data. However, Ecuadorians were also underrepresented in the project's activities (with a participation rate of 7%) and Nicaraguans overrepresented (44%). Participants from El Salvador and Peru accounted for 19% and 30% of all potential respondents, respectively, which was mirrored in the survey response levels for those countries. In this context, these numbers do not invalidate the usefulness of the data as the variations are well within the acceptable boundaries for e-surveys.
56. Survey respondents represented many of the types of institutions that took part in the project; the majority of participants were either from TPOs or SMEs, and this is also the case for the survey respondents (22% and 48%, respectively).
57. The majority of respondents participated in between one and five events (73%), while 17% participated in more than nine events (of those, half were from SMEs and half from TPOs). Respondents were mainly directors or managers (60%), and a relatively good number of technical officers (18%) completed the survey.

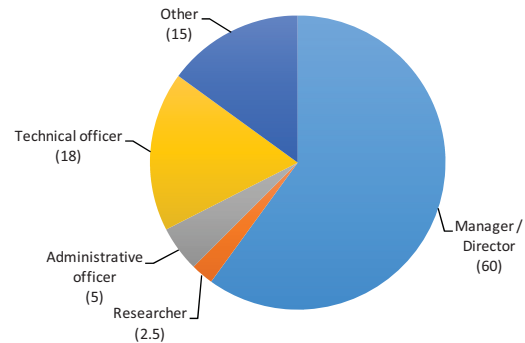
¹² In comparison, the evaluator's experience indicates that response rates for other UNDA projects, where the same methodology was used, vary between 5% and 34%.

Figure 4
Survey respondents' profiles
(Percentages)

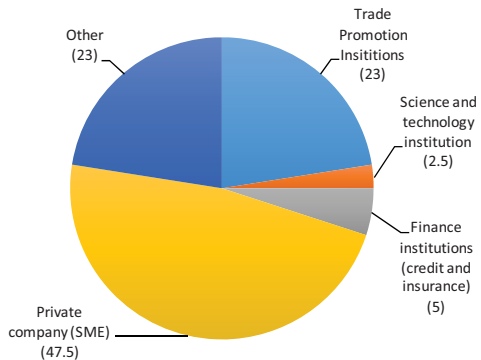
A. In which country do you work in?



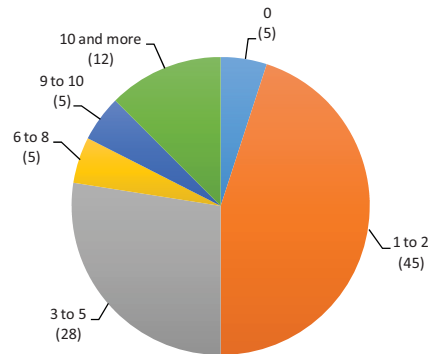
B. What is your current job description



C. In which type of institution do you work?



D. Number of events in which you participated



Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

58. The respondents who selected “Other” were employed as or for:

- Consultants
- Regional development promotion departments of local authorities
- Universities
- Customs general authorities
- Municipal authorities

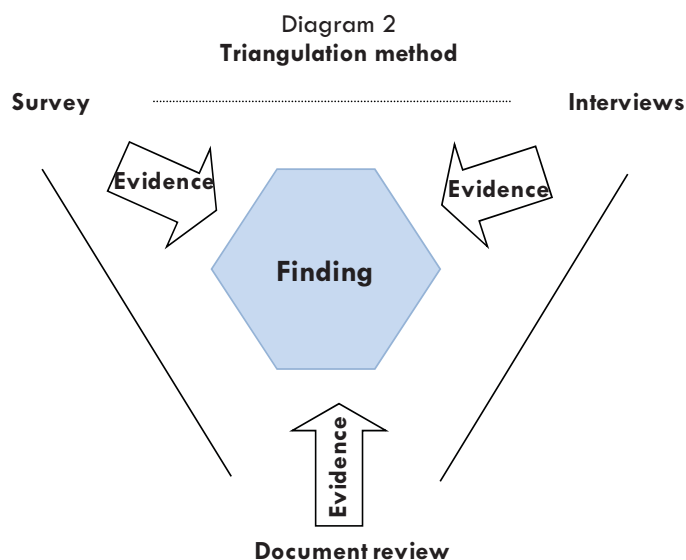
59. Respondents who selected “Other” for their job title were:

- Corporate legal advisors
- Contractors working in agribusiness
- University personnel
- Financial officers
- Sales representatives

2.2.3 REPORTING PHASE

Step 5: Data analysis

60. The data collected through the document review, interviews and e-survey were analysed using the aforementioned triangulation method.
61. The triangulation process was crucial for the assessment, as it ensures that findings are validated and supported, ideally by the three lines of evidence. Findings that are corroborated by the three lines of evidence are considered to be well-founded and valid, and form the basis for the report's conclusions and recommendations.



Source: Prepared by the author.

Step 6: Draft and final assessment reports

62. The present assessment report was prepared on the basis of the data analysis to share the initial evidence-backed findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned with ECLAC and PPEU representatives. As the assessment questions and matrix were built around the evaluation criteria —relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability—, this logical and simple sequence forms the basic structure of the report. The findings are clearly presented according to the evaluation criteria, together with the supporting evidence, explanations, followed by the resulting conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.
63. The qualitative data collected, which serves as supporting evidence for the findings, are presented using a simple, straightforward and efficient benchmark:
 - “All respondents said...” (i.e. 100%)
 - “The majority of respondents said...” (i.e. more than 75%)
 - “Many respondents said...” (i.e. more than 50%)
 - “Some respondents said...” (i.e. between 25% and 50%)
 - “A few respondents said...” (i.e. less than 25%)
 - “One respondent said...”.

64. Approximately two weeks after the draft assessment report was submitted. The Evaluation Reference Group provided feedback, comments and questions. Relevant feedback was then integrated into the final assessment report.
65. The final assessment report will be submitted to ECLAC, signalling the end of the assessment process.

2.3 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

66. The major constraints on an assessment process such as this one tend to be the availability of resources and the deadlines, as they determine the scope of the exercise and oblige the evaluator to stay within the ToR-defined boundaries. As described in the ToR scope section, it is important to keep in mind that this is considered an assessment, rather than an evaluation. Therefore, these constraints meant that only a limited number of interviews could be conducted (16), less time was spent on analysis and the assessment report is relatively shorter, although this has not compromised its quality. The evaluator has received continuous support from PPEU and the project managers to ensure that all deadlines were respected.
67. A potential assessment difficulty is the availability of relevant stakeholders and, to a lesser extent, documentation and information. However, this was not the case for this project. The survey response rate and the number of interviews conducted were sufficient and all documents were provided in a timely manner.
68. One aspect of the assessment methodology that has somewhat affected the depth of the analysis is the fact that the evaluator was unable to conduct field missions. Such missions would have allowed the explanations behind the statistical tendencies from the survey to be investigated more thoroughly. However, considering the assessment budget and scope, the methodology is sufficiently holistic to achieve its goals.
69. The methodology outlined in this section and in the relevant annexes was approved by ECLAC, is in line with international standards, and forms a solid foundation for the analysis and findings presented below.

3. FINDINGS

70. The present section is the core of the assessment report. The findings presented below are based on the analysis and triangulation of information and data collected through an extensive and agreed-upon process. Over 50 stakeholders were interviewed and/or completed the survey, and all the documentation provided was reviewed.
71. The project assessed is quite complex for a UNDA project, with its three distinct components, its many different stakeholders, and the disparity in the results achieved in the four countries. This sometimes makes it difficult for the assessment to provide a complete picture of the project and portray the dynamics of stakeholder interactions while answering the assessment questions. However, the evaluator accumulated a wealth of information which allows the report to speak to the evaluation criteria, questions and indicators in a clear and comprehensive manner.
72. It was evident during the data collection and analysis processes that the project was structured around three distinct initiatives in four diverse contexts.

3.1 RELEVANCE

3.1 (a) In the large majority of cases, the project's design, activities and deliverables were well aligned with the beneficiary countries' and organizations' priorities and needs, as well as with the mandate of ECLAC.

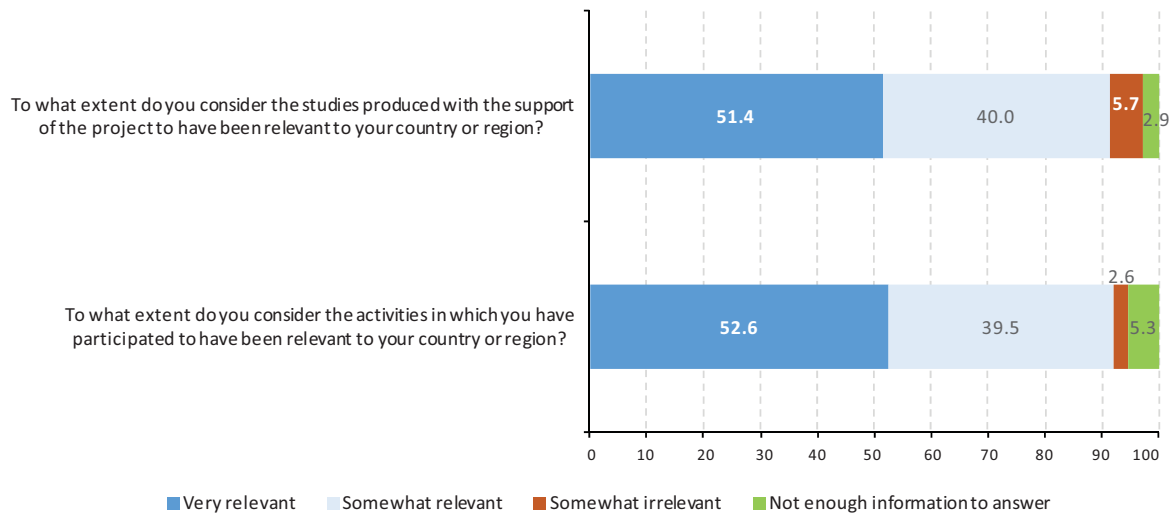
3.1 (b) Some challenges were encountered with regard to EA 1, particularly coordinating the efforts of stakeholders. However, these challenges were largely resolved by the end of the project. Generally speaking, EA 1 was considered relevant to the stakeholders, as were the other two EAs.

3.1 (c) With hindsight, it is clear that certain national stakeholders should have been (more) involved.

3.1.1 TO WHAT EXTENT WERE THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS IN LINE WITH THE PRIORITIES OF THE TARGET COUNTRIES?

73. On the whole, the respondents' impressions concerning the relevance of the project to their country's economic and political context was positive. As one person phrased it, the idea was "to teach the stakeholders a culture of innovation for export." In his view, this is an important step towards ensuring that SMEs can actually innovate to export in the near future, which is "something that everybody wants" and that creates prosperity and jobs. For the majority of the beneficiary countries, the issues addressed through the project were priorities and, for some, they were already being covered by pre-existing national support programmes.
74. As shown in figure 5, almost equal proportions of the survey respondents considered the activities and studies to be relevant. In fact, these are some of the most positive responses generated by the survey.

Figure 5
Relevance of activities and studies
 (Percentages)

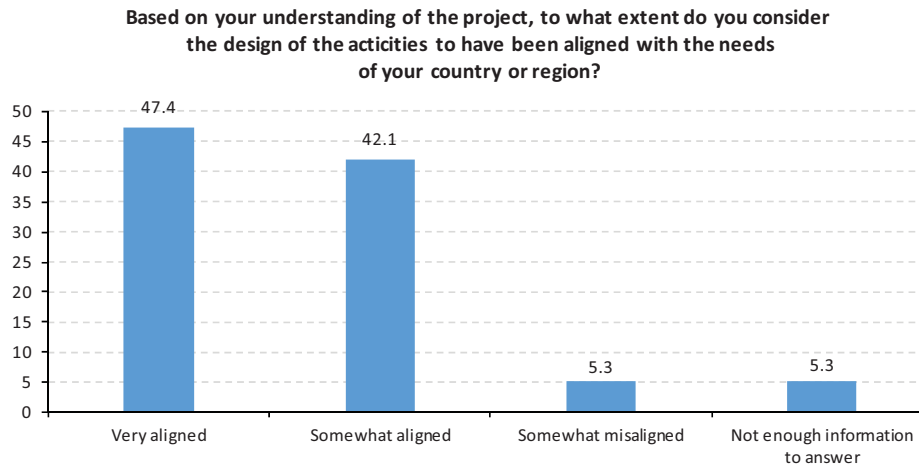


Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

3.1.2 A QUESTION OF HOW TO EXPORT

75. Beyond the alignment of the activities and outputs with the priorities of the target countries, the survey and interview respondents answered more narrow questions on their relevance. For example, with regard to EA 2, many SME representatives said that this specific component of the project was relevant because it allowed them to understand better the standards and requirements of new potential export markets—in particular the United States of America (US). The majority of SMEs involved in the project already wanted to export to US but did not know how to do so. So even if SMEs are still not exporting to US following their participation in the project (see subsection 3.2 below), they now have a better idea of what they must do to expand into that market in the future. Many respondents from the private and public sectors said that the capacity-building, trade and technology mission to New York (US) had been the most instructive, pragmatic, real-world and relevant activity.
76. Figure 6 shows that a total of 89.5% of respondents consider the project to be very or somewhat aligned (47.4% and 42.1%, respectively) with national and regional needs. To support this largely positive view of the project's relevance, respondents point to the fact that many SMEs from the target countries and the region do not understand international markets, something the project sought to remedy under EA 2. In this context, the project presented SMEs with an approach to entering potential export markets—mainly US—based on their specific needs (as identified by the consultants), notably by helping them to overcome export innovation gaps identified in the diagnostic studies. Hence, in the majority of cases, the project activities were tailored to SME needs. The project was also well aligned with TPOs needs because, according to many of their representatives, they were already discussing many of the issues that the project sought to tackle. Some respondents also commended the consultants' approach, which combined the innovative methodology of ECLAC and national diagnostic approaches and tools used by TPOs in connection with SMEs that export. The implementation of the project was therefore adapted to each country and context, thus ensuring that the project tools were aligned with beneficiaries' needs. Although many of the issues were being discussed in certain countries, concrete actions had not yet been implemented; the project therefore acted as a catalyst, putting into motion ideas that were already being considered.

Figure 6
Alignment with national needs
 (Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

3.1.3 A PROJECT FOR EVERYONE?

77. Although the project was generally considered to be relevant, during the interviews and in response to the open-ended survey questions, some respondents noted that various SMEs were not ready to close the innovation gaps highlighted in the diagnostic reports.¹³ This means their needs may be more basic than was anticipated by the project, TPOs and consultants. The gaps identified by the studies were sometimes more complex than SMEs could deal with at the moment. Hence, in those cases, the project was not as aligned with the needs of SMEs as it could have been. In the surveys conducted after some of the workshops—which contained some quite positive reactions and opinions about the events—, when asked how they would improve the workshops, some private sector representatives said that there were aspects of innovation that they would have liked to have discussed. For example, they would have appreciated more emphasis on specific issues and less on broader strategies for exporting to US. While much of the support provided by the project was specific, some of the recommendations would require investment of over US\$ 1 million. Diagnostic reports pointed to issues such as fair trade and/or organic certifications and corporate social responsibility standards, but some respondents considered these gaps to be too complex for many SMEs participating in the project to address.
78. This is also supported by data in project documents. For example, when the participating SMEs were asked how they intended to foster innovation, their answers indicated that they were more likely to develop new products, significantly improve existing ones, or work on new commercialization or marketing techniques, rather than introduce new production processes or reorganize the production chain.¹⁴ The first two goals are more easily achievable than the latter two.
79. While it might have been easier to target closer, less demanding markets than US, the size of that market means that it is too big to ignore. The majority of SME representatives felt that the studies were relevant to them, although some recognized that it would take time and financial resources to close the gaps and become export ready. In many cases, sufficient funds are not available yet to work on these issues (for example, the cost of certifications is beyond the means of the target SMEs).

¹³ It is important to mention that TPOs were fully involved in the selection of SMEs and that SMEs had expressed their interest in participating in the project.

¹⁴ ECLAC, *Internacionalización de las pymes: innovación para exportar* (November 2016).

3.1.4 STATISTICS AND COORDINATION

80. Concerning EA 1 (on stakeholders' capacity to measure SME internationalization performance), TPO representatives considered the results achieved relevant because they had added value to their export promotion work. There are big data gaps in this area in the four target countries and many respondents consider closing those gaps to be a matter of priority. As mentioned in the project management team's final report, "ECLAC sought to foster interagency cooperation through the workshops"¹⁵ to stimulate data sharing. However, some stakeholders who participated in the data sharing process in an effort to typify exporting SMEs said that they did not think that it would help them to meet their targets. For example, although customs authorities play a crucial role in trade processes and export operations, they are not involved in promoting exports, so customs representatives did not always understand the need to share data. After numerous efforts to explain that the aim of the project was to create national spaces for the exchange of information and data to typify exporting SMEs, the project management team was able to convince stakeholders in the majority of the countries to collaborate.

3.1.5 WHO TO INVOLVE?

81. In some cases, institutions that would have added value to the project, such as innovation promotion organizations, were not involved or, at least, not actively so. The project management team did consult with TPOs during the initial project phases to ensure that relevant stakeholders were involved, but, in retrospect, it has become clear that those implicated in SME innovation for export promotion efforts should also have been invited to participate in the project. The project launch in 2013 was delayed slightly because candidate countries needed more time for interministerial consultations to gather the necessary support to participate in the project.¹⁶ Export promotion agencies in each country acted as the national focal points for the project, while other agencies related to innovation and SME financing also participated in its execution.
82. However, as is often the case with UNDA projects, some TPO representatives were not able to dedicate themselves fully to the role of project focal point because they were too busy with their day-to-day tasks, which were not always related to promoting innovation. This issue was more apparent because of the project's dual aims relating to innovation and exports; some TPOs were not comfortable working on the innovation side of the project. Those that did express interest in that aspect of the project felt it provided important tools for their work.
83. It is always difficult to find the balance between using a streamlined, more efficient implementing structure (using focal points to coordinate national activities), and a more extensive implementing structure that includes all the relevant institutions, but which can slow the project down. In addition to this, the project was built on three EAs. While this is a standard number for UNDA projects, in this case, the EAs were considered "components" because they addressed separate aspects of the overall theme of innovation for export. The project design was therefore perhaps more complex than the budget allowed for. It also had to be presented in such a way as to convince stakeholders that it was relevant to them.
84. The project management team therefore decided to use a flexible approach and to adapt the structure to country's needs. Although different institutions are normally tasked with achieving each EA, the team decided to rely on national focal points, as previous ECLAC experience had shown it to be a more effective and efficient approach. TPO needs analysis was conducted during the initial phase of the project, albeit informally (no needs analysis report was produced).

¹⁵ ECLAC, *Final Report* (July 2016), p. 11.

¹⁶ ECLAC, *Progress report* (2013), p. 4.

3.1.6 TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK ALIGNED WITH THE SUBPROGRAMME'S ACTIVITIES? WERE THERE ANY COMPLEMENTARITIES AND SYNERGIES WITH THE OTHER WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN?

85. As specified in the project document and confirmed during the interviews, the project was aligned with the following subprogrammes of the programme of work of the ECLAC system 2012-2013:
- Subprogramme 1 (linkages with the global economy, integration and regional cooperation), expected accomplishment (a) of improved capacity of Latin American and Caribbean countries to participate effectively in global and regional trade flows and value-chains by formulating and implementing trade policies and export development strategies.
 - Subprogramme 2 (production and innovation), expected accomplishment (a) strengthened capacity of Latin American and Caribbean governments to formulate policies and strategies to enhance the competitiveness of their production structures.
 - Subprogramme 4 (financing for development), expected accomplishment (b) improved capacity of Latin American and Caribbean policymakers to mobilize foreign resources, generate and allocate domestic resources for financing for development in the productive, social and environmental areas.¹⁷
86. The project was also in line with the past, present and future work of the Division of Production, Productivity and Management of ECLAC, which has vast experience in two areas of SME performance, namely trends and changes in the financial systems aimed at SMEs, and policies and institutions oriented towards them.¹⁸

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

3.2 (a) The project activities and studies were generally appreciated by the respondents and led to the attainment of the majority of the expected achievements, with some minor limitations. One of the main impediments was that project information and results were not systematically shared.

3.2 (b) The project was a victim of its own success: many respondents said they would have appreciated more specific capacity-building activities, such as the trade and technology mission, which, compared to other events and studies, provided the most opportunities for learning.

3.2 (c) Most of the project results were generated under EA 2, but EA 3, linked to policies and programmes that address SME constraints regarding financial services, in coordination with the private sector, was the component under which the least satisfactory results were achieved. It should be noted that it is an area considered by many to be challenging in any context.

3.2 (d) One of the most important results was the adoption of the project's methodologies by TPOs.

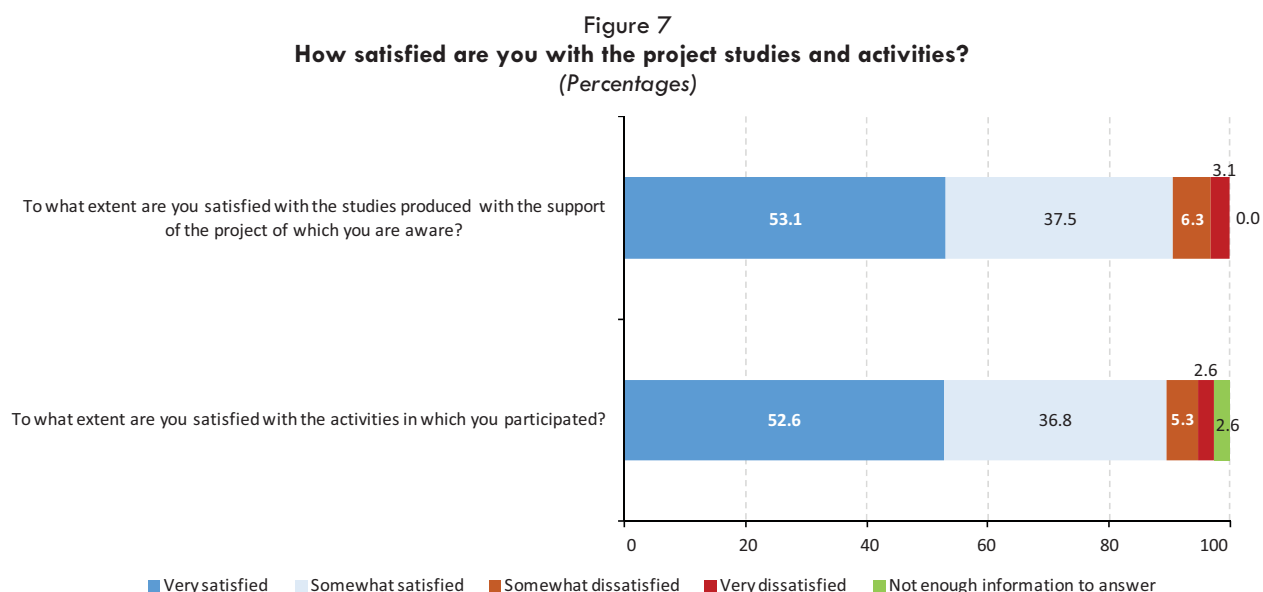
¹⁷ A/65/6/Rev.1.

¹⁸ ECLAC, *Towards productivity convergence: Trade, financing and innovation for small-scale enterprises*. Revised Project Document (May 2013), p. 5.

¹⁸ ECLAC, *Towards productivity convergence: Trade, financing and innovation for small-scale enterprises*. Revised Project Document (May 2013), p. 5.

3.2.1 HAVE THE ACTIVITIES ACHIEVED OR ARE THEY LIKELY TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES STATED IN THE PROJECT'S LOGFRAME AND BENEFICIAL RESULTS?

87. Given the complexity of the project, the number of countries and stakeholders involved, and the relatively limited budget, data indicates that the project management team achieved good results and struck a good balance between work to raise awareness of the importance of the targeted issues and producing concrete positive outcomes for beneficiaries (both from the private and public sector).



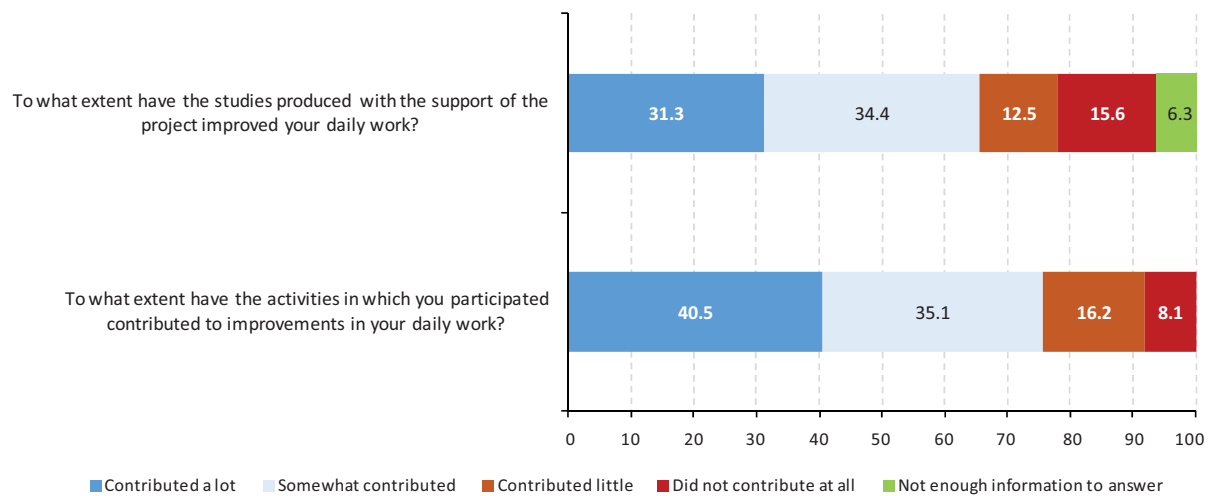
Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

88. Overall, close to 90% of survey respondents were satisfied with the activities and studies generated with the support of the project (see figure 7). The studies were well received because they contain relevant information and are short, readable documents.¹⁹ Respondents were generally happy with the project activities because relevant, valuable information was presented that helped to achieve the targets under the three EAs. The results that can be attributed to the studies and activities varied from one country to another, not necessarily in quality, but in form. In other words, the results were affected by national circumstances, notably the readiness of beneficiary SMEs to export (EA 2), the existence of inter-institutional coordinating mechanisms (EA 1), and the availability of financial services (EA 3). Those countries where stakeholders were less advanced in those areas more progress had to be made, while in countries where stakeholders were already on the path to achieving the project targets, the results were more impressive. Under EA 1, for example, in countries where information on exporting SMEs was already being collated, the results were more detailed and participants sought to enhance the flow of information and data among themselves. In other countries, the simple fact of having the relevant stakeholders sitting at the same table was a major first step, albeit a small one.

89. The project management team decided that TPOs would be the direct beneficiaries, working with real SMEs, in accordance with the pilot project approach. All the stakeholders interviewed and surveyed welcomed the involvement of the private sector.

¹⁹ According to interviewees, the quality of the studies varies significantly. However, it is always difficult to assess the quality of documents produced as part of this type of project, particularly as the survey did not contain questions on this matter, which meant that the information could not be triangulated.

Figure 8
How useful were the project studies and activities?
 (Percentages)



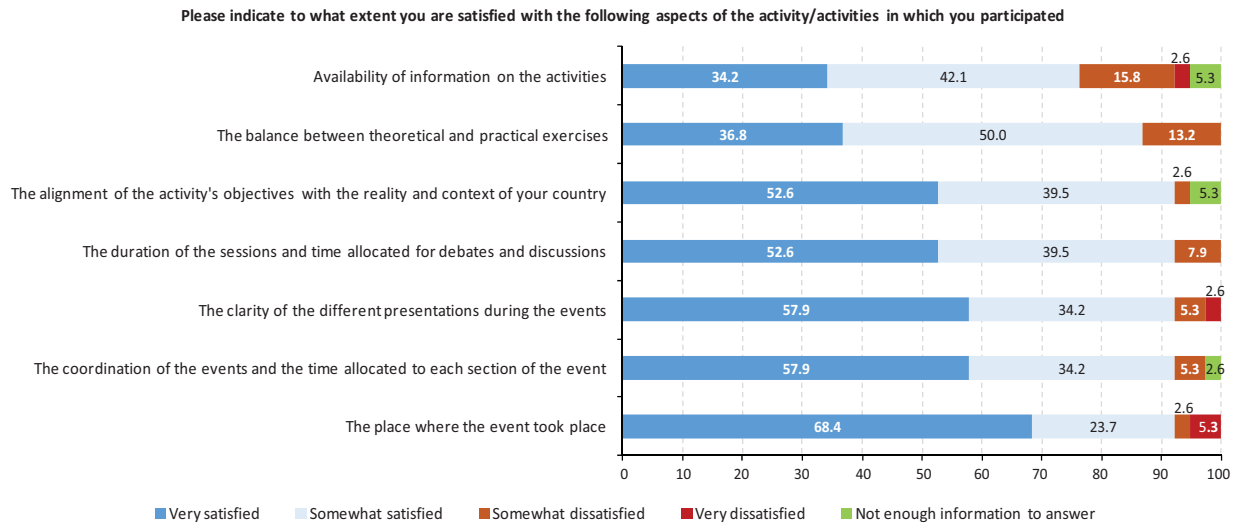
Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

90. Figures 7 and 8 show that although respondents were generally satisfied with the project activities and studies, when asked to what extent those outputs have contributed to improvements in their daily work, the responses are less positive (a total of 28.1% said that the studies had “contributed little” or “did not contribute at all”, while 24.3% said the same about the activities). When explaining their answers, some respondents pointed to the fact that although the information shared was relevant and important, it was sometimes difficult to put into practice in their country because of constraints such as lack of access to technology and credit, and SMEs low productivity.²⁰
91. Some respondents, representing the various types of stakeholders, said that, although the events and studies were useful and interesting, more concrete support would have been useful. They pointed out that they had already received training and participated in seminars, summits, and conferences; more practical support, like the mission to New York, would have been welcome.
92. With regard to EA 2, many TPO representatives said that they had completely integrated the innovation methodology into their daily work. One respondent said that a working group had been established to ensure institutional follow-up on the matter.²¹ Many SME owners indicated that the business plans developed as part of the project were useful. Those who developed contacts during the trade mission to New York said that they thought those contacts would prove useful and facilitate their eventual entry into the US market.
93. Figure 9 is interesting as it reflects the qualitative information collected through the interviews and the open-ended questions from the surveys well. Overall, the data is quite positive.

²⁰ This supports the information presented in the section on the relevance of the project concerning SMEs lack of readiness to follow the diagnostics recommendations.

²¹ The methodologies and approaches developed and disseminated as part of the project were used by Roberto Urmeneta in *Dinámica de las empresas exportadoras en América Latina* (ECLAC, June 2016).

Figure 9
Level of satisfaction with different aspects of activities
 (Percentages)



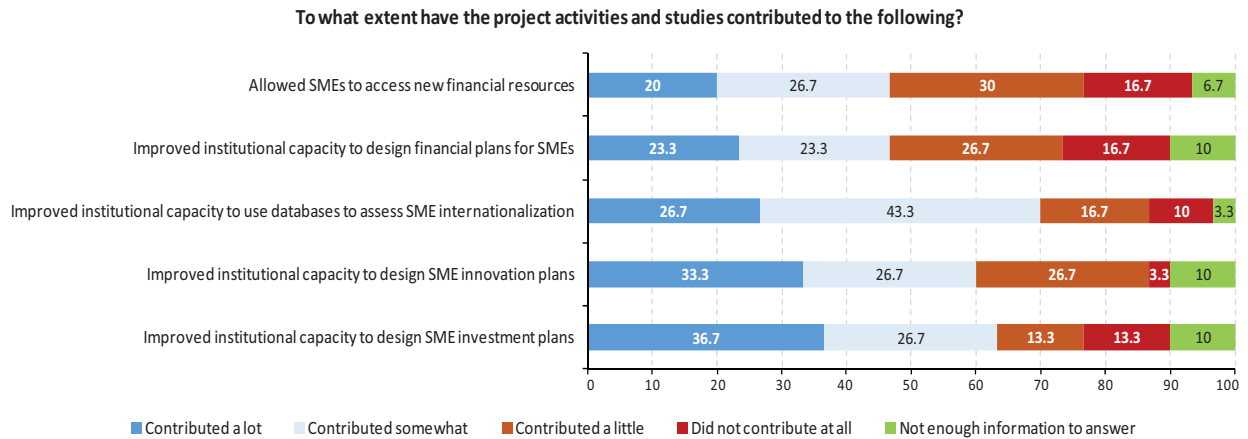
Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

94. Figure 9 shows that while, on the whole, respondents were satisfied with the activities, 18.4% were “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with the availability of information on activities. Information from surveys conducted after some of the project’s events concur on this point, with some respondents stating that it would have been useful to receive more information, data, examples, publications, presentations and logistical details, well in advance of the events. Moreover, during the assessment interviews, some respondents said that it would have been useful to have a better understanding of how the overall project and its EAs were structured, while others would have appreciated being provided with information on the project’s implementation in the other target countries, particularly with regard to SMEs. This is also supported by the events’ survey data. In addition, the respondents to the assessment survey said that it would have been beneficial if all the documentation available had been shared. Some even reported that they had not received the diagnostics reports drawn up by the consultants, although according to the project management team these documents were disseminated.
95. Taking all of this into consideration, more attention should have been paid to explaining the project to stakeholders. During the assessment interviews, some ECLAC representatives said that a number of participants at project events did not realize that they were part of the project; they thought they were simply attending an ECLAC event. In accordance with current thinking on how to increase stakeholder buy-in and ownership of projects, assessment interviewees and survey respondents said that systematically providing clear information on the project’s overall strategy, structure and approach would have made stakeholders feel that they were part of the project and thus maximized the likelihood of achieving all EAs fully. It is also important to provide regular updates on the project’s progress. This is recognized at the theoretical level. According to Kinlaw’s pillars of commitment,²² the first pillar for supporting buy-in and ownership is the clarity of the overall objectives and visions behind an initiative. Roy Webster similarly notes that in order to motivate the involvement of participants in an initiative it is important to share regular progress updates.²³

²² Dennis C. Kinlaw, *Coaching for Commitment: Interpersonal Strategies for Obtaining Superior Performance from Individuals and Teams*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, Pfeiffer, 1999).

²³ Roy Webster, “Change Management in Organizations”, Unedited notes, 2006.

Figure 10
Extent to which project activities and studies contributed to achieving project EAs
 (Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

96. Figure 10 shows that feedback was less positive on the extent to which the project contributed to improving stakeholders' capacities. This suggests that, even though much of the support provided was relevant and appreciated by the respondents, internal circumstances have not always allowed them to integrate their newly acquired knowledge into their everyday work. The questions were designed to gauge to what extent EAs were achieved, as indicated by the adoption of action plans. Responses to questions pertaining to EA 1 were more positive, but the respondents from organizations that have not adopted action plans tended to respond negatively to the questions in Figure 10. This does not necessarily mean that the project has failed, but rather that the respondents were being truthful.

EA 1: Increased capacity of export promotion organizations, development banks, national statistical institutes and/or other public agencies in charge of SME internationalization programmes to measure SME internationalization performance.

97. The indicator of achievement was the increased number of export promotion organizations, development banks, national statistical institutes and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization able to combine and make better use of databases to assess SME internationalization.

98. As Figure 10 shows, the project has been effective in improving respondents' capacity to assess SMEs internationalization (in all, 70% of respondents felt that the project had contributed either a lot (26.7%) or somewhat (43.3%) to improving their capacity in that respect). So, measured against that indicator of achievement, it can be said that EA 1 was reached.

99. The project generated a lot of important information and data to allow for a good understanding of exporting SMEs in the beneficiary countries. However, the assessment data show that, in some countries, there were obstacles to the project's efforts to support coordination among beneficiary organizations. As already mentioned in subsection 3.1, some organizations were initially resistant to sharing certain data that they considered sensitive. A few respondents were expecting more tangible results, for example, the signature of a memorandum of understanding between the institutions involved. In the light of the coordination challenges and the sometimes delicate task of encouraging stakeholders to share data, the fact that these targets were reached in most of the beneficiary countries is praiseworthy. Much awareness-raising work was done for EA 1 and all respondents agreed that the project's message on those issues was clear, consistent and useful.

EA 2: Improved capacity of export promotion agencies, and/or other public agencies oriented towards SME internationalization to design and implement effective policies/programmes to foster innovation among SMEs, in coordination with the private sector.

100. The indicator of achievement was that export promotion agencies and/or other public agencies oriented towards SME internationalization have designed an action plan on SME innovation policies. (The action plan should be specific on the types of actions and how these will be implemented).

101. Based on all the data collected from the documents, surveys and interviews, it can be said that the activities under EA 2 were the most successful. It was central to the project and, where possible, the project management team sought to link its activities with those under EA 3, as these two EAs are interconnected.

3.2.2 ACTION PLANS

102. In response to the questions on EA 2, 46.7% of survey respondents said that the focal point had developed an action plan for SME innovation as a result of the project. All of those actions plans are now being implemented, according to the survey results. Other tangible results include:

- Closer cooperation between SMEs and TPOs
- The involvement of SMEs in a larger, international programme coordinated by the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) (specific programme not mentioned)
- Product lines being upgraded, developed and diversified, and the packaging, complete with nutrition information, improved
- The organization of competitive intelligence events
- Higher SME productivity
- The establishment of a quality control laboratory.

3.2.3 INNOVATION DIAGNOSTICS

103. Figure 10 shows that a total of 60% and 63.4% of respondents think that the project contributed either a lot or somewhat to their capacity to design SME innovation and investment plans, respectively. In addition to the action plans for SME innovation policies, one of the project's key results was the adoption by TPOs of the ECLAC methodology for developing SME innovation diagnostic reports. All TPO representatives interviewed said that their institution had done so and many had concrete examples of how they had used it recently.

104. Over the course of the project, diagnostic tools were developed for selected SMEs. Just as the context and results achieved differed from country to country, SMEs were at different stages of readiness to export; some were already exporting and simply wanted to diversify their end markets, others needed help to meet export standards, including securing investment to improve their products, and some were export ready but needed to establish the necessary contacts to ensure smooth distribution logistics. By identifying their needs, the diagnostics tools gave them a path to expanding their businesses. An important problem SMEs face, which was addressed under EA 2, is the price of their products. The number of exporting competitors, other SMEs and larger companies, means that buyers can easily switch to another exporter offering the same product at a lower price. The beneficiary SMEs understood that they have to innovate to increase their productivity. This ties in with the activities under EA 3, as improving access to financial services and credit will allow SMEs to invest in production processes, thus boosting productivity and lowering prices.

3.2.4 A POTENTIAL NEW MARKET

105. Many respondents —mainly from SMEs— said that one of the project’s highlights was the trade and technology mission to New York. This was seen as a concrete, useful activity which opened participants’ eyes to one of the biggest markets in the world, the United States. They were given insight into how the international trade process looks from the other side, and with which organizations they should seek to establish successful export partnerships, specifically US distributors, rather than supermarkets as they had previously thought. The mission also underscored the value of working with other exporters from their home countries or even neighbouring countries. In certain circumstances —such as exporting to US— many SMEs are now considering partnering with their competitors (one respondent mentioned the concept of a “consortium of exports” and another spoke of “a delegation”). All SME representatives who were interviewed praised this mission and expressed hope that more such initiatives would be organized. Some TPO representatives said that it would have been useful to provide similar support to TPOs, particularly study tours to other LAC countries to learn how other TPOs are working on innovation for exports. It should be noted that representatives from other, non-beneficiary countries were invited to participate in some of the events.

EA 3: Improved capacity of export promotion agencies, development banks, and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization to design and implement effective policies/programmes to address SME constraints regarding financial services, in coordination with the private sector.

106. The indicator of achievement was that export promotion agencies, development banks, and/or other public agencies oriented towards SME internationalization have designed an action plan on SME access to export credit, guarantees and other financial services. (The action plan should be specific on the types of actions and how these will be implemented).

107. The survey data show that 30.3% of respondents’ organizations have developed both an investment action plan for SME access to credit and SME financial plans (the same percentage of TPO representatives said the same). Two TPO action plans were sent to the evaluator, which are different, but both contain achievable goals. All of these action plans are being implemented, according to the survey results. Tangible results achieved include:

- Increased financing for SMEs activities and hence improved infrastructure and/or technology
- Access to green funding sources

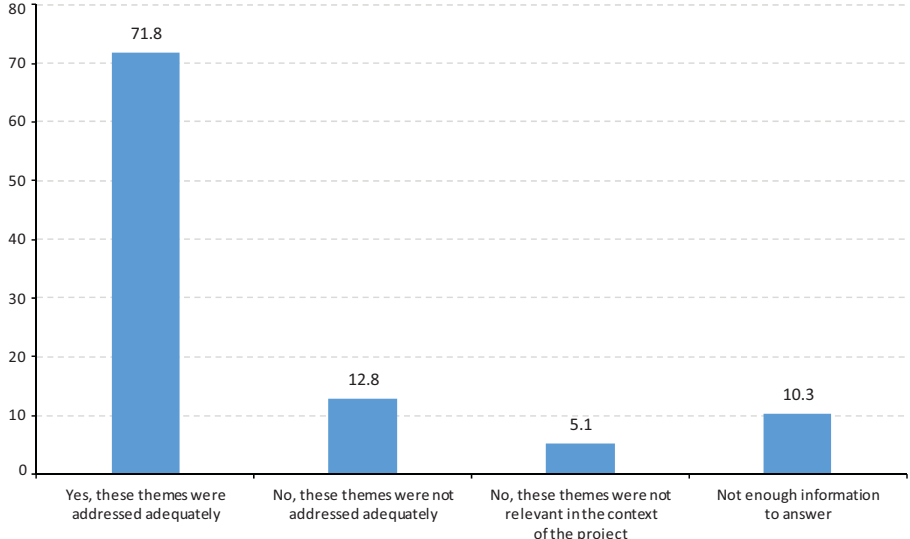
108. Closer analysis of the survey data reveals that EA 3 was not fully achieved. Only 46.6% of respondents thought the project had enhanced their capacity to design SME financing plans and 46.7% said that it had improved SMEs access to new financial resources. These were the most negative responses in the whole survey. The majority of SME representatives said that fewer results were achieved under EA 3 than under the other two EAs. For example, access to alternative financing opportunities was not extended to SMEs. However, it is important to note that the aim of the project was not to ensure that SMEs would receive financial support, but rather to develop strategies and tools to build the capacities of TPOs to foster contacts between SMEs and alternative financial services adapted to their needs (innovation and export).

109. The data do not explain why respondents were less positive about the activities under EA 3 than the other EAs. While the activities under EA 3 generated useful results, such as the SME business plans, stakeholders had high expectations about how access to financial solutions would promote innovation for exports and the project results did not always meet these expectations.

110. The main obstacle SMEs face when accessing finance is their lack of collateral and many respondents said that the project had not been able to offer a satisfactory solution to this problem. In retrospect, this was an important but complex objective. In addition to encouraging TPOs and SMEs to participate in the activities, financial service providers should also have been invited to take part. As was pointed out by a number of respondents, the activities were undermined by a wide array of factors and risks, such as the overall macroeconomic context in the beneficiary countries. The project management team should have taken all of this into consideration.

3.2.5 GENDER ASPECTS

Figure 11
Did the event in which you participated adequately address human rights and gender equality issues?
 (Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

111. Of the 37 SMEs that participated in the diagnostics studies of the innovation gaps, 18 were either owned or managed by women. The majority of respondents said that women’s level of participation was above satisfactory. It should be noted that the project implemented specific activities to mainstream gender considerations into trade policies. During the project, symposiums were held on gender and export innovation. Although the workshops²⁴ were not country-specific, they did address the advantages and challenges that women generally face in business and exports, and were linked to the project and relevant. Addressing gender issues specifically was considered an important aspect of the project.

112. A few respondents said that although those activities were generally considered to be important and relevant, they focused on women and failed to raise awareness among all stakeholders, regardless of their sex, of gender issues. Others considered that some activities under EA 3, on SME access to finance for exports, could have been specifically oriented towards the obstacles faced by women

²⁴ The same presentation was used for each of the four symposiums (one in each country).

when seeking funds. Nevertheless, overall, the project was considered to have adopted a good approach to gender issues related to trade and export processes. As a result, ECLAC is replicating this approach in other countries and projects, by using the same presentation.

3.2.6 UNEXPECTED RESULTS

113. Many respondents cited examples of new contacts developed in the context of the project as unexpected results. These contacts have led to interesting follow-ups and, for some, their involvement in other, similar projects or programmes, either as facilitators or as beneficiaries.

114. A few respondents said that if one SME was able to access credit to innovate that would be an unexpected result. Others cited this as the project's main goal. Other unexpected results include changes to the packaging of SMEs products after participating in the trade mission to New York.

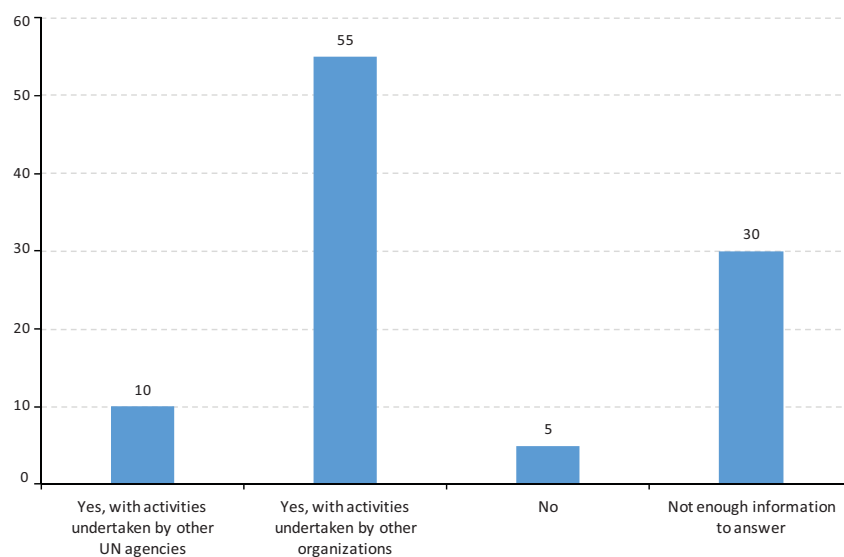
3.3 EFFICIENCY

3.3 (a) The project was generally implemented through its focal points and intra-institution cooperation. Many links were also developed with organizations that operate nationwide. It would have been helpful to extend those synergies to other international agencies as part of the activities under EA 3.

3.3 (b) The project management team delivered the outputs in a timely, reliable and efficient manner, particularly in cost-benefit terms.

3.3.1 DID COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS WITHIN ECLAC AND BETWEEN ECLAC AND OTHER IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS ENSURE EFFICIENCIES AND A COHERENT RESPONSE?

Figure 12
Has the project benefited from synergies and complementarities with other, similar initiatives to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its implementation?
(Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

115. Data collected through the document reviews, interviews and open-ended survey questions show that many respondents welcomed the involvement of relevant national institutions (55% of respondents said that the project had benefited from synergies with activities undertaken by other organizations). Some respondents said that they would have appreciated more multi-institutional collaboration.
116. Many respondents also said that the project activities were aligned with initiatives that they were involved in with other international organizations such as the Netherlands Centre for the Promotion of Imports (CBI), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO), among others. In addition, speakers from other international institutions attended ECLAC events and elements from other organizations' methodologies were used in the project.

3.3.2 INTRA-ECLAC LEVERAGE AND INTER-AGENCY SYNERGIES

117. Coordination with other international agencies and institutions did not appear to improve the efficiency of the project's implementation. It is not clear if more of the planned synergies would have rendered the project more efficient as ECLAC was uniquely positioned to implement the project; the activities were took place in LAC. Although UNCTAD and ITC both have good insight into trade issues, unlike ECLAC, they are not specialized in regional trade issues. ITC activities focus on the private sector and competitiveness issues, and it shared its expertise with the project's beneficiaries during a workshop in January 2016. However, the case studies used were from the State of Palestine and Zambia. Using UNCTAD methodologies may have allowed resources to be used more efficiently although it is not possible to calculate the impact exactly. In terms of logistics, ECLAC is physically closer to the beneficiary countries, as neither UNCTAD nor ITC have regional offices in LAC or elsewhere.
118. The project management team sought to coordinate with outside institutions to a limited extent. It may have been beneficial for ECLAC to work in conjunction or to a larger extent with other institutions, such as CAF, which participated in one event,²⁵ IDB²⁶ and the Organization of American States (OAS).²⁷ This is particularly true in the light of the difficulties in achieving results under EA 3. One agency that ECLAC could have worked with is the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which is seeking to promote smallholder financing.²⁸ The activities financed by the FAO grant will generate a wealth of information and data that will be disseminated by the Rural Finance and Investment Learning Centre (RFILC).²⁹ This is one example of how the project could eventually create useful synergies in areas that require special attention.
119. An interesting approach used by ECLAC was to urge beneficiary national institutions to put themselves at the centre of potential new cooperation with international, regional and national organizations working to promote innovation for exports. In addition to improving the efficiency of future activities, this approach could lead to more sustainable results (see subsection 3.4 below). In a few cases, national stakeholders were able to link the project's work to other initiatives taking place at the same time, which helped to focus stakeholders' attention on the project's EAs. This was the case, for example, for some of the banking sector representatives who participated in activities under EA 3 and, as a result, realized that the extent of SME demand for financing to innovate for exports is much greater than they had thought.

²⁵ See <https://www.caf.com/es/temas/i/innovacion-tecnologica/>.

²⁶ See <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-details,1301.html?Country=&Sector=PS&Status=&query=>.

²⁷ See <http://www.oas.org/en/topics/trade.asp>.

²⁸ See <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/169727/icode/>.

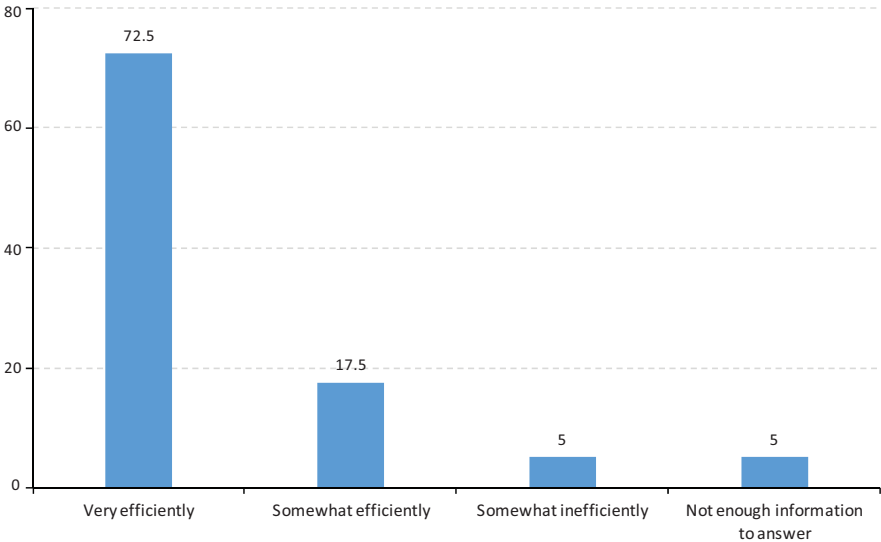
²⁹ See <http://www.ruralfinanceandinvestment.org/>.

120. The project management team worked closely with the Division of Production, Productivity and Management and the Financing for Development Division of ECLAC. Those entities did not have direct contact with SMEs, but they were involved in developing and coordinating the project activities.

121. It was originally planned that the project management team would work with the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico, but it seems that this coordination effort did not materialize.

3.3.3 WERE SERVICES AND SUPPORT PROVIDED IN A TIMELY AND RELIABLE MANNER, ACCORDING TO THE PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED BY THE PROJECT DOCUMENT?

Figure 13
To what extent do you consider that ECLAC planned and organized the project workshops, seminars and consultations efficiently?
(Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

122. Generally speaking, respondents considered the ECLAC approach to the implementation of events and activities to be efficient, as shown in figure 13 (90% said it was very or somewhat efficient). Many respondents compared ECLAC with other international organizations and said it was more efficient. An interesting point made by a few respondents was that ECLAC relied on national stakeholders to help with event and activity logistics; this is seen as a positive approach, which helped to avoid micro-obstacles that can sometimes lead to more serious problems. Other data that point to the efficiency of the project implementation by ECLAC is the expenditure to budget ratio (see figure 3), which indicates that 95.8% of the budget was spent. This is impressive compared to other UNDA projects.

123. A few respondents commented that certificates of participation in the events might have provided extra motivation. Respondents based in rural areas said that the cost of travelling to capital cities to participate in the events was prohibitive. Others mentioned that it might have been better to have longer events, in order to explore the theoretical aspects of innovation. Some considered that the stakeholders selected to participate in activities, particularly the trade mission to New York, were not always the most relevant.

124. These comments are interesting, but it is sometimes hard to distil trends from them. They are included here simply to highlight some of the points that respondents made to the evaluator. A recurring point

that was made, linked to efficiency, was that the logistics of the activities were not clearly explained to stakeholders; specifically details about the activities and the agendas were not always made available in advance.

125. Lastly, the project was considered efficient in cost-benefit terms by the majority of respondents. Many said that they had had to work hard and dedicate considerable time to the project, but the outputs produced were worth it.

3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

3.4 (a) There are interesting early signs that the project has laid a solid foundation for the results to be sustained over time and even, eventually, scaled up. To increase this sustainability, additional stakeholders, including from academia, microfinance institutions and municipal councils, should have been involved in the project.

3.4 (b) Although many have stated their intention to continue the work initiated by the project, no activities appear to have been planned for now. To a certain extent, this is normal; however, the project's national networks should be reinforced in order to facilitate ongoing efforts and maintain progress.

3.4 (c) There is currently a policy gap in terms of creating an enabling environment to develop links between innovation and exports.

3.4.1 HOW DID THE PROJECT UTILIZE THE TECHNICAL, HUMAN AND OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

126. The consultancy work was done in each country by national consultants, in accordance with the project concept document. The majority of respondents agreed that the technical and human resources were well leveraged by the project and have the potential to ensure that the training provided through the activities will be put into practice by the national stakeholders, at least.

127. To enhance the sustainability of the project results under all three EAs, some respondents said that representatives from academia should have been more actively involved, while others suggested that microfinance experts from the target countries should have been invited to participate in project activities, particularly those under EA 3, because private banks are more profit-oriented and hence less willing to lend to SMEs, while the microfinance sector is better adapted to the needs of SMEs wanting to innovate for export purposes. Others felt that national statistical offices should also have been involved. The subject of which stakeholders to involve in the project is a recurring theme throughout this assessment.

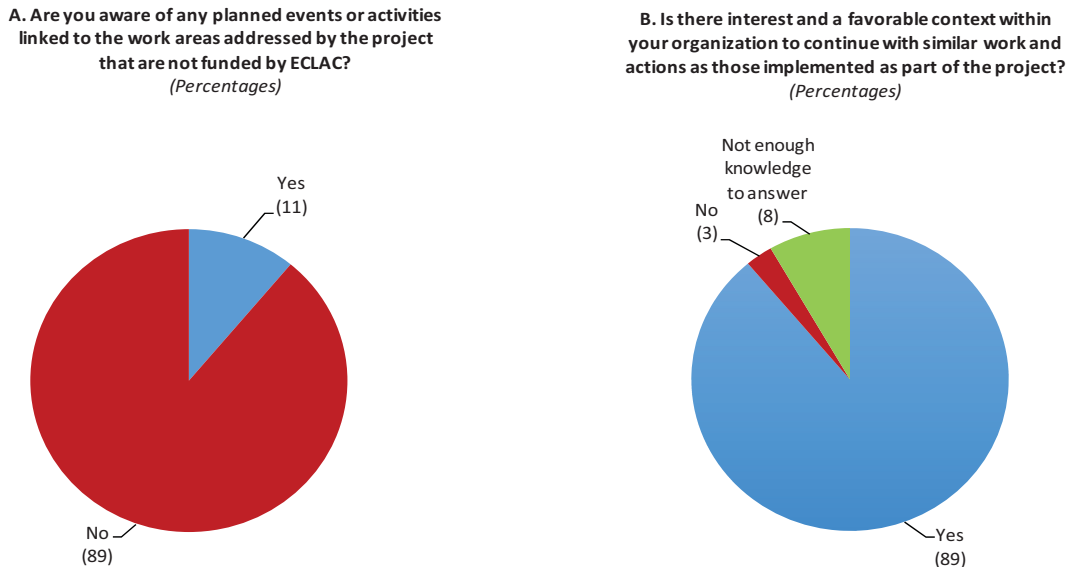
3.4.2 HOW HAVE THE PROJECT'S MAIN RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BEEN USED IN OR INCORPORATED INTO THE WORK AND PRACTICES OF BENEFICIARY INSTITUTIONS AFTER COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES? WHAT WERE THE MULTIPLIER EFFECTS GENERATED BY THE PROJECT?

128. It should be borne in mind that the project was completed in June 2016, two months before work on this assessment report began. The sustainability of UNDA projects with relatively small budgets is always difficult to assess compared to other international development projects. Hence, survey questions on that matter usually use the future tense and expressions like "planned events or activities" or "interest and a favorable context".

129. However, figure 14 indicates that while there is a lot of interest in continuing the work started by the project, no follow-up activities have been implemented as yet. The 11% who were aware of planned events or activities linked to the project referred to initiatives funded by CBI, the Central American

Integration System (SICA) or their national governments. National coordination groups, composed of beneficiary institutions, continue to support SMEs in some countries by facilitating contacts between businesses and banks (EA 3), and assessing gap to clarify what SMEs have to do to become export ready, among other things. Nevertheless, given that 89% of survey respondents were not aware of any planned events or activities, it would seem that follow-up efforts are not as systematic as was hoped.

Figure 14
Next steps



Source: Prepared by the author based on the survey responses.

130. The final report produced by the project management team indicates that stakeholders intend to continue their data-sharing efforts, to implement the innovation methodology, and to improve SMEs access to financial services.

131. When asked whether they knew of any plans to introduce new government policies, reforms and/or changes as a result of the project, 72.2% of respondents did not. The minority who had, said that their public institutions had started to apply systematically the diagnostics methodology introduced by the project; had launched a limited fund for small producers; was promoting certain agricultural products for export (although it is not clear whether this can be attributed solely to the project); had drafted a concerted export promotion plan as part of the broader national development agenda; and was planning to conduct another trade mission.

132. Many respondents attributed the general absence of plans to introduce new government policies, reforms and/or changes to a lack of funding, which meant that their governments, or more specifically TPOs, would not be able to pursue efforts linked to the project. Many interviewees said that there is a pressing need for national institutions to continue to receive support from ECLAC or similar organizations in order to build on the project's results. For example, with regard to activities under EA 2, respondents felt that it would have been beneficial to continue working with SMEs to help them reach the international standards or obtain the necessary certification to become export ready. The project methodology should also be used more widely and applied to new SMEs.

3.4.3 THE POLICY LEVEL

133. Although most respondents were satisfied with the project's results, the majority said that the effects have yet to be felt at the policy level.

134. The fact that this was a pilot project affects the sustainability of the activities, particularly those under EA 2 and EA 3. The project targeted 10 SMEs in each country, but the multiplier effects must be felt, otherwise the results will not be sustainable. The project did not generate a critical mass of results in participating SMES, as this was not the aim of the project. A broader, nationwide approach could lead to policy changes, TPOs must therefore replicate the project's methodology with other SMEs. Many respondents have said that they will do that, but there are currently only limited signs that they are. For example, some TPOs are discussing the possibility of replicating the project methodology in other sectors; however many respondents from TPOs say that further technical assistance is needed.

135. Some respondents argued that the next steps need to be taken at the policy level. The project identified the main export challenges that SMEs face, policies are now needed to address those challenges and support the products prioritized for exports. ECLAC is in the process of designing a project that would target policy work. In addition to providing technical assistance on policy design, helping countries to develop a national trademark could be an interesting avenue to explore.

3.4.4 WHAT MECHANISMS WERE SET UP TO ENSURE THE FOLLOW-UP OF NETWORKS CREATED AS PART OF THE PROJECT?

136. As was stated in the section on the project's relevance, mechanisms were created in some countries with the support of the project to ensure that efforts to characterize exporting SMEs (EA 1) were continued and sustained after the project ended. However, as one respondent said, "the circle was not closed"; some fear that the links forged between the relevant institutions will not be maintained in the near future, while others said that the links would be activated only when needed, which could be a more efficient approach. The activities under EA 2 of the project appear to be more sustainable than those under EA 1 and EA 3. With regard to EA 2, the majority of TPOs have developed some sort of mechanism that integrates the newly introduced methodology into the services they offer to SMEs. Mechanisms related to EA 3 do not seem to have been implemented systematically to date.

137. Some respondents mentioned the possibility of encouraging municipal authorities to participate in efforts to promote SME exports. This would further efforts to coordinate activities linked to all three of the project's EAs, undertaken by national, regional and international organizations, through national, non-funded mechanisms. Given that many SME representatives said that they needed additional, external support to establish links with US distributors and other markets, involving all levels of potential support could help to facilitate this.

3.4.5 HOW HAS THE PROJECT CONTRIBUTED TO SETTING AND/OR SHAPING THE PROGRAMME OF WORK, PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES OF ECLAC? HOW HAS ECLAC BUILT ON THE PROJECT'S FINDINGS?

138. The practices and methodologies used in the implementation of the project will probably be used in future ECLAC projects related to gender, commerce and policy dialogue. ECLAC intends to continue to extend support to TPOs and activities are planned in 2016 and 2017 in various countries of the region. These renewed efforts are funded by the Republic of Korea. ECLAC is also continuing its efforts linked to EA 1 and to promote database use in the project beneficiary countries and others in the region. ECLAC has therefore prioritized efforts to support SMEs for the foreseeable future.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

139. Lessons that can be drawn from the project and applied to future initiatives tackling similar issues in the region include:
140. **Lesson learned No.1:** When promoting intracountry institutional coordination it is important to proceed with care and make sure all stakeholder organizations are interested in participating. In this case, some stakeholders, notably customs authorities, were initially reluctant to take part in the project, but the project management team was ultimately able to convince them to participate. Evaluations of previous projects that sought to enhance national institutional coordination indicate that such resistance is not uncommon. It is therefore important to prepare the ground for such endeavours, by holding intensive discussions with stakeholders and explaining the added value of the project for them. This is true even for institutions like ECLAC that is well respected in the region.
141. **Lesson learned No.2:** The project management approach adopted by ECLAC was flexible and tailored to the individual circumstances of each country, allowing consultants and TPOs to adapt the methodology and tools accordingly. In addition to enhancing the project's effectiveness, this flexible approach meant that stakeholders adopted it more readily.
142. **Lesson learned No.3:** In a project of this nature, it is important to include the private sector because, in addition to benefiting from the project, the involvement of SMEs meant that TPOs, the intended beneficiaries of the project, could learn by doing. This approach is recognized as being a good way for TPOs to integrate the new methodologies into their work and achieving the project's goals. Similarly, the specific capacity-building experiences, such as the trade mission to New York, produced encouraging and positive results for both SMEs and TPOs. Consideration should therefore be given to the idea of extending such experiences to other beneficiaries, in the form of study tours for example.

5. CONCLUSIONS

RELEVANCE

143. **Key finding 3.1 (a).** Generally speaking, beneficiaries and stakeholders thought that both the content and how that content was transmitted was relevant. The main project tools, namely the diagnostics tools and methodologies, were well received and considered to be in line with respondents' needs and priorities. The adaptability of those tools was appreciated by all. Given that some of the diagnostics reports contained recommendations that SMEs were unable to implement, perhaps even more flexibility was needed.
144. **Key findings 3.1 (b), 3.1 (c).** The overall project design was well articulated and logical. EA 2 and EA 3 complemented each other, explicitly linking innovation and exports. EA 1 had a distinct goal but was still relevant to the project. As each EA covered a different thematic area, different partner institutions were involved, leading to a wide variety of stakeholders, categorized as TPOs, SMEs, innovation organizations, customs authorities and financial institutions. Convincing all of these organizations and individuals that the project was relevant to them and that they should play an active role in it was not always an easy task and took more time than anticipated.

EFFECTIVENESS

145. **Key finding 3.2 (a).** The project produced many interesting results through valued and high quality activities and studies. An important factor was the involvement of the private sector, SMEs looking to export or export more. In many similar projects, the majority of stakeholders, if not all, were from the public sector and the lack of private sector involvement is often considered a serious gap.
146. **Key finding 3.2 (c).** As demonstrated in this report, EA 2 was the most successful component of the project. This is not surprising since it was the central component of the project. EA 3 is a logical complementary component to EA 2; however, activities under EA 3 generated fewer results. Improving SMEs access to financial services for innovation and export is not an easy target to reach.
147. **Key finding 3.2 (a).** By and large, even if not all TPOs produced action plans to promote innovation and access to financial services, the results achieved in the four countries —albeit different in each country—, were impressive considering the time and money available. In the areas where there were more constraints, making it difficult to achieve results, if more information on the project, its objectives and logic had been available, perhaps the expected results would have been achieved. In order to implement the action plans that were drawn up, national policies must now be developed to encourage SME exports.

EFFICIENCY

148. **Key findings 3.3 (a), 3.3 (b).** The project was implemented efficiently, particularly in the light of the project's budget and scope —it was incredibly complex, covering as it did three components, four countries and multiple stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. With its strengths and strategic position in the region, ECLAC implemented the project with the limited participation of a few external partners. Given the complexity of EA 3, synergies and coordination efforts with other specialized international agencies might have been beneficial.

SUSTAINABILITY

149. **Key finding 3.4 (a).** As always when assessing UNDA projects, especially just a few weeks after they have ended, it is difficult to determine conclusively whether the results are sustainable or not. However, there are early positive signs that the project's approach to innovation and exports, adopted by stakeholders, will prove successful over time.

150. **Key findings 3.2 (d), 3.4 (b), 3.4 (c).** TPOs appear to have adopted the tools to support SMEs that want to export, developed as part of the project, although, to date, they have not been used extensively since the end of the project (this is not surprising given that little time has elapsed since June 2016). It is clear that in order to disseminate and ensure the sustainability of the project's results efforts should now focus on creating a strong, enabling policy environment for innovation and exports by SMEs.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

151. The recommendations below are based on the report's key findings.

152. **Key findings 3.1 (b), 3.1 (c) and 3.4 (a).** Given the challenges encountered in the activities under EA 1 to coordinate stakeholders' efforts and the evidence that some relevant national stakeholders (such as innovation institutions, trade ministries, national statistical organizations, microfinance institutions and municipalities) should have been (more) involved in the activities under all three EAs, project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability could be enhanced by implementing the following recommendations:

- **RECOMMENDATION 1:** In future, similarly complex projects should take care to map, with the support of the national focal points, the stakeholders involved in each of the thematic areas addressed, and ensure that they are involved to the extent considered relevant.
- **RECOMMENDATION 2:** In addition to relying on focal points for national coordination, ECLAC should engage directly with organizations specialized in each thematic area. Such personalized attention would demonstrate the added-value and relevance of the project to stakeholders. Both the quality and extent of the organizations' involvement would thus be enhanced.

153. The ECLAC project management team could assign team members to specific thematic areas or components and then work with the relevant national institutions to map a network of stakeholders and coordinate the implementation of that component. This would not affect the logical connections between each component and a more macro approach to project implementation would ensure its coherence, while allowing for a more detailed follow-up by each set of specialized stakeholders. Closer links with stakeholders would not undermine the coordinated approach to the project nor its efficiency, and would recognize their different needs.

154. **Key finding 3.2 (a).** Some results were limited owing to the fact that respondents felt the information and data available on the project's logic and outcomes were not always shared in a systematic and regular manner. Indeed, as mentioned by ECLAC representatives during the initial discussion with the evaluator, stakeholders sometimes found it difficult to see the project's big picture.

- **RECOMMENDATION 3:** Priority should be given to explaining the project fully and systematically to stakeholders and to providing regular updates on the results achieved. This will help stakeholders understand the logic behind the project and is proven to increase stakeholders' ownership and buy-in.

155. In addition to giving oral presentations on the project when in contact with stakeholders, ECLAC could create a monthly newsletter that highlights project achievements and upcoming events. Alternatively this information could be shared through a web portal. In addition, the project's global approach and a summary of the results achieved to date could be systematically presented at the beginning of each event.

156. **Key findings 3.2 (c) and 3.3 (a).** Many respondents consider access to financial resources an important issue in the thematic context in which the project was implemented (innovation for export). However, the results achieved under EA 3 fell short of the targets and did not completely satisfy stakeholders' expectations. This was not because EA 3 was irrelevant, but because of the lack of available inputs of all kinds that address this important issue. As was stated in the subsection on efficiency, other international agencies offer technical assistance on accessing financial services adapted to the needs of agricultural producers.

- **RECOMMENDATION 4:** Synergies should be developed with specialized projects and initiatives that focus almost exclusively on agricultural producers' access to financial services.

157. During relevant thematic events, ECLAC could foster close coordination with existing, related activities organized by other specialized agencies —such as training courses—, by integrating them into or linking them clearly to ECLAC projects.

158. **Key finding 3.4 (c).** This assessment demonstrates that the project achieved positive results. An important factor was the learn-by-doing approach, recognized as being central to the project's success by almost all respondents, which offered concrete examples of how TPOs could provide support to the private sector. In order to build on those results and the action plans drawn up by some TPOs as part of the project, follow-up at a higher, more macro level is needed. TPOs should be provided with support to implement the action plans, and policies that foster innovation for export should be adopted. The report's analysis points to the fact that, although the results were tangible, their effects were hard to quantify because of the reality in which stakeholders operate: "constraints such as lack of access to technology and credit and SMEs low productivity" (figures 7, 8 and 10, paragraph 90):

- **RECOMMENDATION 5:** The policy environment in the target countries should be enhanced, in order to scale up support for TPO efforts to promote innovation for exports among many more SMEs. This would help to create more sustainable and meaningful project impact in the target countries. In this regard, activities linked to policy dialogue efforts should be developed.

159. In future, technical assistance provided by ECLAC should include efforts to promote policy dialogue to stimulate debate on the subject at the national level. National policies that prioritize innovation in SMEs as part of an effort to boost national exports would create an environment in which the project's results could eventually be scaled up. As mentioned in this report (paragraphs 104 and 134) helping countries to develop a national trademark to promote SME exports could be an interesting avenue to explore.

ANNEXES

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ANNEX 1

ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Questions and subquestions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Information and data sources
RELEVANCE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were the activities and outputs delivered in line with the priorities of the target countries? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries' level of satisfaction with the project's design (activities and deliverables) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events' summary evaluation responses Progress reports SMEs Project managers National partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of occasions when beneficiaries were able to indicate their countries' priorities during the project's design and implementation Beneficiaries' perception of the extent to which their countries' needs were captured/reflected in the project design and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports Project document Project managers Consultants SMEs Project managers National partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the proposed programme of work aligned with the subprogramme's activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correlation between the project and the programme of work and other subprogramme's activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project document ECLAC general documentation Project managers Other ECLAC representatives (where possible)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were there any complementarities and synergies with other work being undertaken? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coordination and complementarities between subprogrammes and divisions involved in the implementation of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project document ECLAC general documentation Project managers Other ECLAC representatives (where possible)
EFFECTIVENESS			
Have the activities achieved or are they likely to achieve the expected accomplishments as set out in the project's logical framework and have the results produced been beneficial?			
EA 1 Increased capacity of export promotion organizations, development banks, national statistical institutes and/or other public agencies in charge of SME internationalization programs to measure SME internationalization performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IA1 Increased number of export promotion organizations, development banks, national statistical institutes and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization able to combine and make better use of databases to assess SME internationalization Level of satisfaction of the project's main clients with the services they received Percentage of beneficiaries reporting having increased their knowledge and know-how in terms of databases for exports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops' summary evaluation responses Report developed through the project SMEs Project managers National partners Consultants

Questions and subquestions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Information and data sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of change in behaviour/attitude/skills/performance of the clients • Percentage of beneficiaries reporting change in behaviour/attitude/skills/performance of the clients • Evidence of unexpected results • Number and quality of policies to which the project has contributed 		
<p>EA 2 Improved capacity of export promotion agencies, and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization to design and implement effective policies/programs to foster innovation among SMEs, in coordination with the private sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IA2 Export promotion agencies and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization have designed an action plan on SME innovation policies. (The action plan should be specific on the types of actions and how these will be implemented) • Level of satisfaction of project's main clients with the services they received • Percentage of beneficiaries reporting having increased their knowledge and know-how in terms of innovation for exports • Evidence of change in behaviour/attitude/skills/performance of the clients • Percentage of beneficiaries reporting change in behaviour/attitude/skills/performance of the clients • Evidence of unexpected results • Number and quality of policies to which the project has contributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews • Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops' summary evaluation responses • Report developed through the project • SMEs • Project managers • National partners • Consultants
<p>EA 3 Improved capacity of export promotion agencies, development banks, and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization to design and implement effective policies/programs to address SME constraints regarding financial services, in coordination with the private sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IA3 Export promotion agencies, development banks, and/or other public agencies oriented towards SMEs internationalization have designed an action plan on SME access to export credit, guarantees, and other financial services. (The action plan should be specific on the types of actions and how these will be implemented.) • Level of satisfaction of project's main clients with the services they received • Percentage of beneficiaries reporting having increased their knowledge and know-how in terms of available finance mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews • Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops' summary evaluation responses • Report developed through the project • SMEs • Project managers • National partners • Consultants

Questions and subquestions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Information and data sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of change in behaviour/attitude/skills/performance of the clients Percentage of beneficiaries reporting change in behaviour/attitude/skills/performance of the clients Evidence of unexpected results Number and quality of policies to which the project has contributed 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the project's design and implementation incorporate gender concerns, and can outcomes be identified in this regard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of men and women involved in all activities Evidence that measures were undertaken to increase women's participation in the project activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports Project document SMEs Project managers National partners Consultants
EFFICIENCY			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did collaboration and coordination mechanisms within ECLAC, and between ECLAC and other implementing partners ensure efficiencies and a coherent response? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of collaboration and coordination with other divisions outside the official management team Evidence of collaboration and coordination with other programme/agencies/institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports Project Document SMEs Project managers National Partners Consultants Other partners (to the extent possible)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were services and support provided in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established by the project document? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned work plan/ timeline versus actual work plan/ timeline Nature of delays that affected the work plan/ timeline Level of satisfaction of clients with timeliness of activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports Project Document SMEs Project managers National Partners Consultants
SUSTAINABILITY (BENEFICIARIES)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the project utilize the technical, human and other resources available in beneficiary countries? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and quality of the activities and events conducted in the beneficiary countries Level of satisfaction of the clients with the use of national resources to conduct the Project's activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops' summary evaluation responses Report developed through the project SMEs Project managers National Partners Consultants

Questions and subquestions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Information and data sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have the project's main results and recommendations been used in or incorporated into the work and practices of beneficiary institutions after completion of the project's activities? What were the multiplier effects generated by the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of institutionalization of the products/activities/results/skills acquired through project activities Level of engagement of beneficiaries in the project Evidence of continuity of project related activities or continued use of project outputs Evidence or probability of plans designed though the project being implemented Planned follow-up activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops' summary evaluation responses Report developed through the project SMEs Project managers National Partners Consultants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What mechanisms were set up to ensure the follow-up of networks created under the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence and quality of an exit strategy % of clients planning to continue organizing workshops, seminars, symposiums, etc. Evidence of upcoming, non-ECLAC financed events linked to the themes addressed in the context of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops' summary evaluation responses Report developed through the project SMEs Project managers National Partners
SUSTAINABILITY (ECLAC)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has the project contributed to shaping and/or enhancing the programme of work, priorities and activities of ECLAC? How has it shaped and/or enhanced the work modalities and type of activities carried out? How has ECLAC built on the project's findings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of ECLAC events disseminating the results, documentation and lessons learned from the project Evidence of references to this project in future programming Evidence of follow-up projects and/or projects in similar contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available, relevant ECLAC documentation (e.g. other project's documents, review of events, etc.) Project managers Other relevant ECLAC representatives

ANNEX 2

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Today’s interview is part of the external evaluation of the “Towards productivity convergence: trade, financing and technology for small-scale enterprises”, implemented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). My name is Mr. Alexandre Daoust and I was selected to conduct the external assessment of the project on behalf of ECLAC.

You have participated in the project’s activities, such as: (MENTION IN WHICH ACTIVITIES THE RESPONDENT HAS PARTICIPATED/WORKED). This is why we are talking today: the discussion gives you the opportunity to provide feedback on your involvement in the project.

The purpose of the assessment is: to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in order to build a body of knowledge which will permit to explore and evaluate its achievements.

Our interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The information you provide will be used solely for assessment purposes and will be handled taking into account principles of confidentiality.

Before we continue, do you have any questions? Let’s begin by establishing the context of your participation in the project.

Questions	ECLAC	National institutions	Beneficiary SMEs	Partner international/ regional institutions	Other donors/ implementers	Consultants
Relevance						
How in line were the activities and outputs delivered with the priorities of the targeted countries? Is there a correlation link between the project’s design, activities and outputs and the priorities of the beneficiaries?						
To what extent do you consider the project design (objective/expected accomplishments (EAs), activities etc.) ^a to have addressed the issues identified in the region?						
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you give examples of such needs? To what extent do you feel that the objective and EAs remained relevant throughout the implementation of the project? 						
How aligned was the proposed programme of work with the subprogramme’s activities? Were there any complementarities and synergies with the other work being developed?						
To what extent do you feel that the project design, objective and EAs align with ECLACs mandate and the relevant subprogrammes?						
	✓					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the project operated in synergy with other ECLAC projects or activities? 						
Effectiveness						
Have the activities achieved or are they likely to achieve planned objectives as enunciated in the project’s logical framework and produced beneficial results?						
EA1: Concerning the beneficiaries’ ability to measure SME internationalization performance using databases on exports:						
Do you think the project has performed well in its endeavour to reach this EA?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Questions	ECLAC	National institutions	Beneficiary SMEs	Partner international/regional institutions	Other donors/implementers	Consultants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you satisfied with the activities conducted through the project and the results reached? Have you enhanced your knowledge and know-how in terms of databases for exports through the project? If so, how? Have you changed the way you work because of your participation in the project? If so, how? From your participation in the Project's activities, were there outcomes you had not planned? Unexpected/ unforeseen positive or negative consequences? 		✓	✓			✓
<p>Do you consider that you are (that the beneficiaries are) now better able to combine and make better use of databases to assess SME internationalization?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To the extent of your knowledge, are there policies to which the project has contributed? 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EA2: Concerning the beneficiaries' ability to design and implement effective policies/programmes to foster innovation among SMEs, in coordination with the private sector:						
Do you think the project has performed well in its endeavour to reach this EA?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you satisfied with the activities conducted through the project and the results reached for you/ your organization/ your country? Have you enhanced your knowledge and know-how in terms of gaps in innovations for exports through the project? If so, how? Have you changed the way you work because of your participation in the project? If so, how? From your participation in the project's activities, were there outcomes you had not planned? Unexpected/ unforeseen positive or negative consequences? 		✓	✓			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you consider that you are (that the beneficiaries are) now better able to design and implement effective policies/programmes to foster innovation among SMEs, in coordination with the private sector? To the extent of your knowledge, are there policies to which the project has contributed? Has an SME innovation plan been developed? If so, is it actually being implemented? 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EA3: Concerning the beneficiaries' ability to design and implement effective policies/programmes to address SME constraints regarding financial services, in coordination with the private sector:						
Do you think the project has performed well in its endeavour to reach this EA?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you satisfied with the activities conducted through the Project and the results reached for you/ your organization/ your country? Have you enhanced your knowledge and know-how in terms of constraints regarding financial services through the project? If so, how? Have you changed the way you work because of your participation in the project? If so, how? From your participation in the project's activities, were there outcomes you had not planned? Unexpected/ unforeseen positive or negative consequences? 		✓	✓			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you consider that you are (that the beneficiaries are) now better able to design and implement effective policies/programmes to address SME constraints regarding financial services, in coordination with the private sector? To the extent of your knowledge, are there policies to which the project has contributed? Has an action plan to promote facilitation of SME access to innovation-oriented financial service been developed? If so, is it actually being implemented? 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think enough was done to stimulate the participation of women in the project's activities? Have you and/or any stakeholders you are aware of been sensitized to the importance of gender issues linked to trade, exports and the role of SMEs in international trade? 		✓	✓			✓

Questions	ECLAC	National institutions	Beneficiary SMEs	Partner international/ regional institutions	Other donors/ implementers	Consultants
Efficiency						
Are you aware of any collaboration and coordination between ECLAC and other implementing partners (e.g. you) to ensure efficiencies and coherence of response?	✓			✓	✓	
Do you consider the services and support provided by ECLAC were delivered in a timely and reliable manner?	✓	✓	✓			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To the extent of your knowledge, has the work plan and schedule been respected for the implementation of the project 						
Sustainability						
To what extent do you feel that the activities/outputs delivered by project will be sustained by project beneficiaries and other partners after project completion? To the extent of your knowledge, will the results reached have effects outside the beneficiary organizations?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Were the technical, human and other resources available in the beneficiary countries leveraged by the project/ during the activities conducted by the management team?	✓	✓	✓			✓
Although this is supposed to take place in the medium term, do you consider that the Project's beneficiary institutions, including yours, are now better able to combine and make better use of databases to assess SME internationalization?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Although this is supposed to take place in the medium term, do you consider that the project's beneficiary institutions, including yours, are now better able to design and implement effective policies/programmes to foster innovation among SMEs, in coordination with the private sector?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Although this is supposed to take place in the medium term, do you consider that the project's beneficiary institutions, including yours are now better able to design and implement effective policies/programmes to foster innovation among SMEs, in coordination with the private sector?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Are you aware of any mechanisms that have been set up to ensure the follow-up of networks created under the project?	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To the extent of your knowledge, are any upcoming events or activities that are susceptible of sustaining the results reached? Are you planning such activities? 						
How has the project contributed to shaping / enhancing programme of work, priorities and activities of ECLAC? The work modalities and the type of activities carried out? How has ECLAC built on the findings of the project?						
Has ECLAC organized any activities to disseminate the results reached and the lessons learned collected during the implementation of the project?						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you aware of any reference made to the project in future ECLAC programming? Are you aware of any projects or planned activities that would constitute a follow-up to this project? 	✓					

^a The objectives, EAs and activities will be summarized during the interview.

ANNEX 3

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Survey: Project Beneficiaries

EMAIL INVITATION:

Evaluación del proyecto de la Cuenta de Desarrollo: "Innovación para la internacionalización de las pymes"

La Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) está realizando una evaluación del proyecto "**Innovación para la internacionalización de las pymes**", ejecutado durante los años 2013 y 2016. La evaluación tiene como objetivo principal determinar la pertinencia, eficacia, eficiencia y sostenibilidad de las actividades del proyecto. Para llevar a cabo este proceso se ha contratado un consultor independiente basado en Montréal, Canadá.

El proyecto fue coordinado e implementado por la División de Comercio Internacional e Integración de la CEPAL con el objetivo de fortalecer las capacidades de las autoridades de los gobiernos participantes para diseñar e implementar políticas eficaces para promover la internacionalización de las Pequeña y Mediana Empresas (PyMES). Dentro del marco del proyecto, se implementaron diversas actividades, incluyendo estudios, **talleres, seminarios y conferencias** (para poder revisar la lista completa de actividades del proyecto por favor acceda al siguiente enlace: [Actividades](#)).

Nuestros registros muestran que usted participó en algunas de estas actividades, por lo que le solicitamos su colaboración en responder la encuesta adjunta. La encuesta ha sido diseñada y está siendo gestionada directamente por el consultor contratado para esta evaluación.

La encuesta le tomará aproximadamente 10-15 minutos de su tiempo. Lo invitamos a incluir información cualitativa adicional para explicar o detallar sus respuestas donde considere relevante incluir dicha información.

Todos sus aportes serán manejados en forma **estrictamente confidencial** y serán de mucha utilidad para establecer los impactos y la efectividad de los servicios prestados por la CEPAL y para mejorarlos en el futuro. Sus respuestas irán directamente en una base de datos que solo el evaluador podrá consultar.

Agradecemos mucho su ayuda y sus respuestas.

SURVEY INTRODUCTION:

Estimado señor o señora:

Bienvenido a la encuesta de evaluación del proyecto de la Cuenta del Desarrollo "Innovación para la internacionalización de las pymes" implementado por la División de Comercio Internacional e Integración de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL).

La CEPAL ha encomendado esta evaluación a un consultor independiente, el Sr. Alexandre Daoust. Como parte de este proceso, el Sr. Daoust está realizando la presente encuesta con las contrapartes que han participado en alguna(s) de las actividades desarrolladas en el marco del proyecto. Esta encuesta se ha diseñado y está siendo gestionada directamente por el Sr. Daoust, y busca generar información útil para medir la pertinencia, eficiencia y sostenibilidad de los servicios prestados por la CEPAL en el marco de este proyecto, identificar sus principales resultados de y definir áreas de mejora.

Responder a esta encuesta no tardará más de 15 minutos, y le proponemos incluir información cualitativa adicional detallando y explicando algunas de sus respuestas en caso de considerarlo relevante.

Agradeceríamos recibir sus respuestas antes del 29 de julio de 2016.

Sus respuestas se mantendrán en estricta confidencialidad ya que serán recibidas y administradas directamente por el Sr. Daoust. No serán compartidas directamente con la CEPAL. Los resultados no se presentarán por país o de manera individual, sino que se incorporarán y se analizarán en un nivel agregado, lo cual garantizará que los resultados de la encuesta sean presentados de forma anónima.

Agradeciendo de antemano su valiosa colaboración con este importante ejercicio de evaluación.

Alexandre Daoust

SECCION A: Identificación

- 1) ¿En qué país trabaja? (elija una opción)
 - Ecuador
 - El Salvador
 - Nicaragua
 - Perú
 - Otro: favor especificar _____

- 2) ¿ En qué tipo de institución trabaja? (elija una opción)
 - Organismo de Promoción de las Exportaciones
 - Agencia o institución de capacitación
 - Institución de ciencia y tecnología
 - Instituciones financieras (crédito y seguro)
 - Empresa privada (pymes)
 - Otro: favor especificar: _____

- 3) ¿Cuál es su cargo actual? (elija una opción)
 - Gerente/Director
 - Oficial técnico
 - Oficial administrativo
 - Investigador
 - Otro: favor especificar: _____

- 4) Indique su sexo
 - Hombre
 - Mujer

- 5) ¿Aproximadamente, en cuántos eventos/actividades del proyecto ha participado (por favor hacer clic aquí para obtener una lista de las actividades del proyecto - [Actividades](#))? **(Si respuesta es '0', la encuesta pasa la próxima pregunta)** (0; 1-2; 3 – 5; 6 – 8; 9 – 10; + de 10)

- 6) ¿Conoce usted o ha tenido acceso a alguna(s) de las siguientes publicaciones o estudios que fueron elaborados en el marco del proyecto? (Si, no). **(Si las respuestas son '0' a la pregunta 5 y 'no' a la 6, la encuesta se termina)**

SECCION B: Relevancia

- 7) ¿En qué medida le parece que las actividades en las que participó usted fueron relevantes al contexto de su país o de la región?
 - Muy relevantes
 - Algo relevantes
 - Algo irrelevantes
 - Muy irrelevantes
 - Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responderComentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

(Solo para los que han recibido los reportes)

- 8) ¿En qué medida le parece que los estudios producidos en el marco de este proyecto a los cuales ha tenido acceso fueron o son relevantes al contexto de su país o de la región?
- Muy relevantes
 - Algo relevantes
 - Algo irrelevantes
 - Muy irrelevantes
 - Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder
- Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

(Solo para los que han participado en actividades del proyecto)

- 9) ¿Basado en su conocimiento del proyecto, en qué medida considera usted que el *diseño* de las actividades está en línea con las necesidades de su país o de la región?
- Muy alineado
 - Algo alineado
 - Poco alineado
 - Nada alineado
 - Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder
- Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

SECCION C: Eficiencia

- 10) ¿Qué tan eficiente considera usted que fue la CEPAL al momento de planificar y organizar los talleres, seminarios, consultas, etc. en el(los) cual(es) usted ha participado (plazos en implementación, momento oportuno de las actividades/ reportes, etc.)?
- Muy eficiente
 - Algo eficiente
 - Poco eficiente
 - Ineficiente
 - Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder
- Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____
- 11) ¿Se han aprovechado sinergias entre el proyecto y otras iniciativas similares?
- Sí, con actividades desarrolladas por otros organismos de las Naciones Unidas
 - Sí, con actividades desarrolladas por otras instituciones
 - No
 - Sin conocimiento suficiente para responder
- Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

SECCION D: Satisfacción

(Solo para los que han participado en actividades del proyecto)

- 12) ¿En qué medida está usted satisfecho/a con las actividades en las que participó?
- Muy satisfecho
 - Algo satisfecho
 - Algo insatisfecho
 - Muy insatisfecho
 - Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder
- Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

(Solo para los que han recibido los reportes)

13) ¿En qué medida está usted satisfecho/a con los estudios producidos a través del proyecto a los cuales ha tenido acceso o conoce?

- Muy satisfecho
- Algo satisfecho
- Algo insatisfecho
- Muy insatisfecho
- Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder

Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

(Solo para los que han participado en actividades del proyecto)

14) Por favor indicar cuán satisfecho está con los siguientes aspectos de la(s) actividad(es) en la(s) cual(es) usted ha participado:

	Muy satisfecho	Algo satisfecho	Algo insatisfecho	Muy insatisfecho	Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder
El objetivo de la(s) actividad(es) con respecto a la realidad de su país					
Disponibilidad de información sobre la actividad					
La claridad de las diferentes presentaciones del evento					
El balance entre la parte teórica y los ejercicios prácticos					
La coordinación del evento y el tiempo asignado a las diferentes secciones del evento					
Duración de las sesiones y tiempo para el debate					
La estructura de las actividades (presentación, trabajo de equipo, pausas, etc.)					
El lugar donde tuvo lugar el evento					

Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

SECCION E: Contribución

15) ¿En qué medida el proyecto/las actividades/los estudios en el(los) cual(es) usted ha participado o conoce ha(n) **contribuido** a...?

	Contribuyó mucho	Contribuyó en cierta medida	Contribuyó un poco	No contribuyó del todo	Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder
Mejorar su capacidad a utilizar bases de datos para categorizar la internacionalización de la pymes					
Mejorar su capacidad a diseñar planes de acción sobre la innovación de las pymes					

	Contribuyó mucho	Contribuyó en cierta medida	Contribuyó un poco	No contribuyó del todo	Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder
Mejorar su capacidad a diseñar planes de acción sobre el acceso de las pymes a crédito, garantías u otros servicios financieros					
Permitir a las pymes de lograr financiamiento					

16) ¿Tiene conocimiento ...?

	Desarrollados	Implementados	Resultados tangibles que se haya alcanzado con la implementación
Plan(es) de acción sobre la innovación de las pymes	Sí/no	Sí/no	
Plan(es) de acción sobre el acceso de las pymes a crédito	Sí/no	Sí/no	

Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

(Solo para los que han participado en actividades del proyecto)

17) ¿En qué medida considera usted que la(s) actividad(es) en la(s) cual(es) ha participado ha(n) contribuido a mejorar su trabajo diario?

- Contribuyó mucho
- Contribuyó en cierta medida
- Contribuyó un poco
- No contribuyó del todo
- Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder

Si ha respondido “Contribuyó mucho”, “contribuyó en cierta medida” o “contribuyó un poco”, ¿En sus propias palabras, podría usted explicar cómo ha aplicado/utilizado los conocimientos/herramientas adquiridas/desarrolladas a través del proyecto en su trabajo o el de su institución? (Pregunta abierta). ¿En el caso contrario, ¿puede explicar por qué no contribuyó?

(Solo para los que han recibido los reportes)

18) ¿En qué medida los estudios elaborados en el marco del proyecto han contribuido a mejorar su trabajo diario?

- Contribuyó mucho
- Contribuyó en cierta medida
- Contribuyó un poco
- No contribuyó del todo
- Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder

Si ha respondido “Contribuyó mucho” o “contribuyó un poco”, ¿podría explicar cómo lo han hecho? En el caso contrario, ¿puede explicar por qué no contribuyó?

(Solo para los que han participado en actividades del proyecto)

19) A su juicio, después de haber participado en las actividades, ¿han surgido resultados inesperados/no previstos, positivos o negativos en su trabajo o institución? (sí, no)

Si la respuesta esta ‘sí’, por favor explicar cuáles: _____

- 20) ¿Considera que en los temas tratados en el/los evento(s) incorporaron un enfoque de derechos humanos e igualdad de género?
- Sí, estos temas se trataron adecuadamente
 - No, estos temas no se trataron adecuadamente
 - No, estos temas no eran relevantes en el contexto del proyecto

SECCION F: Sostenibilidad de los resultados

- 21) ¿En qué medida está satisfecho/a con la participación de las contrapartes nacionales (incluido usted) en la implementación de los talleres, seminarios, consultas etc. en el(los) cual(es) usted ha participado?
- Muy satisfecho
 - Algo satisfecho
 - Algo insatisfecho
 - Muy insatisfecho
 - Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder

Comentarios, detalles, explicaciones (opcional): _____

- 22) ¿Tiene conocimiento si su Gobierno tiene previsto implementar nuevas políticas/ reformas/ cambios en el futuro como resultado de este proyecto? (sí, no)

Si la respuesta esta 'sí', por favor dar detalles contextuales: _____

- 23) ¿Existe interés y contexto favorable para continuar con acciones similares a las implementadas por este proyecto?

- Sí
- No
- Sin conocimiento suficiente para poder responder

Comentarios: _____

- 24) ¿Tiene conocimiento de eventos y/o actividades previstas vinculadas a las áreas que fueron trabajadas durante este proyecto, financiadas con otras fuentes que no son la CEPAL? (sí, no)

Si su respuesta está positiva, podría usted explicar cuál es la naturaleza de estos eventos o actividades (opcional)

¿Tiene Ud. información adicional que desearía compartir con nosotros? _____

ANNEX 4

LIST OF PEOPLE MET

SKYPE INTERVIEWS

Name	Organization	Position	Country	Email
Alicia Frohmann	ECLAC	Programme manager at the International Trade and Integration Division	Chile	Alicia.FROHMANN@cepal.org
Nanno Mulder		Director at the International Trade and Integration Division		nanno.MULDER@cepal.org
Ximena Olmos		Programme manager at the International Trade and Integration Division		Ximena.OLMOS@cepal.org
Marco Dini		Programme manager Production, productivity and management		Marco.DINI@cepal.org
Nestor Moran	ProEcuador	Coordinator Projects and Programmes	Ecuador	nmoranm@proecuador.gob.ec
Edwin Andrade	Corporación Financiera Nacional	Deputy-director general		eandrade@cfn.fin.ec
Veronica Acosta	Sumak Mikui	Manager		veronicacostap@yahoo.com
Rocio Rivera	PorEsa	Specialist in export development for the food and beverage sector	El Salvador	rrivera@proesa.gob.sv
Miguel Angel Rivas	Independent	Project consultant		innovacion@intelligerepro.com
Patricia Ulloa	CEI	General Manager	Nicaragua	pulloa@cei.org.ni
Sonia Vargas	Independent	Project consultant		smvargasu68@hotmail.com
Rugrey Carcamo	Distribuidora El Carmen	Sales manager		distribuidoraelcarmen@hotmail.com
César Freund	PromPerú	Responsible for development cooperation	Peru	cfreind@promperu.gob.pe
Ricardo Dueñas		Multisector Programmes and Projects		rduenas@promperu.gob.pe
Dante Poggi	Independent	Project consultant		dante_poggi@yahoo.com
Cesar de la Cadena	Frutos, hortalizas y alimentos del Perú	Manager		fhyadelperu@gmail.com

ANNEX 5

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ANNEX 6

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Commissioner of the evaluation (ECLAC Executive Secretary and PPOD Director)
 - Mandates the assessment
 - Provides the funds to undertake the assessment
 - Safeguards the independence of the assessment process
- Task manager (PPEU Evaluation Team)
 - Drafts assessment TOR
 - Recruits the consultant
 - Shares relevant information and documentation and provides strategic guidance to the consultant
 - Provides overall management of the assessment and its budget, including administrative and logistical support in the methodological process
 - Coordinates communication between the consultant, implementing partners and ERG, and convenes meetings
 - Supports the consultant in the data collection process
 - Provides necessary support to the consultant to ensure free access to all kinds of documents and information needed for the assessment
 - Reviews key assessment deliverables for quality and robustness and facilitates the overall quality assurance process for the assessment
 - Coordinates the inputs from the stakeholders on the draft IR and assessment report (one set of consolidated comments in writing)
 - Manages the editing, dissemination and communication of the assessment report
 - Implements the assessment follow-up process
- External consultant
 - Undertakes the desk review, designs the assessment methodology and prepares IR
 - Conducts the data collection process, including the design of the electronic survey and semi-structured interviews
 - Carries out the data analysis
 - Drafts the assessment report and undertakes revisions
- Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) (Composed of representatives of each of the implementing partners)
 - Provides feedback to the consultant on assessment findings and final conclusions and recommendations
 - Reviews draft assessment report for robustness of evidence and factual accuracy

PLANNED DELIVERABLES AND CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

Activities The week of the	Detailed timeline														Deliverables					
	May		June			July			August				Sep 2016							
	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29		5				
Introductory document review																				
Preparation of the work plan (5 days after the start of the assignment)																Draft work plan submitted June 1 st				
Preparation of IR (4 weeks after the start of the assignment)																				Draft IR submitted by 24 June
Comments on the IR																			Comments received by 1 July	
Finalization of the inception report																			Final IR submitted by 8 July	
Launch of the electronic survey																The survey launched during the week of 13 July - Reminders 20 and 27 July				
In-depth document review																				
Skype/phone interviews																				
Close of the survey																			Close of the survey 5 August	
Data analysis and triangulation																				
Video conference with PPEU to initiate discussions on preliminary findings																				Video conference 12 August
Preparation of the draft assessment report																				Draft assessment report submitted by 19 August
Comments on the assessment report (12 weeks after the start of the assignment)																		Comments received by 26 August		
Finalization of the assessment report (14 weeks after the start of the assignment)																		Final assessment report submitted by 2 September		
Review of the final report by ERG during the week and presentation of the assessment																		Presentation of the assessment (video conference) 9 September		

ANNEX 7

EVALUATOR'S REVISION MATRIX

A. COMMENTS ERG

GENERAL COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
p.9	Es necesaria la actualización de la información sobre la ejecución presupuestaria	✓ Done (see paragraphs 19 & 125 as well as figure 3)
	Tal como se deduce del informe, la encuesta fue una fuente muy importante para la evaluación del proyecto. Sin embargo, las respuestas recibidas de Ecuador (uno de los 4 países participantes en el proyecto) sólo fueron el 2% de las respuestas, mientras que las de Nicaragua fueron el 43%. Esto relativiza, en alguna medida, la representatividad de la muestra y las conclusiones del informe.	✓ Done The variations between the sample and the population are not that big finally (participants in the projects activities were 7% from Ecuador and 44% from Nicaragua). See 2.2 for added details. (See paragraph 57) All data from the survey and interviews are relevant and CENTRAL to the assessment process.
	En el proyecto, los beneficiarios principales son los organismos de promoción comercial (OPC) y los logros esperados (EA 2 y 3) se refieren al impacto de las actividades del proyecto en sus capacidades para diseñar e implementar políticas y programas de innovación exportadora y su financiamiento. Aunque el evaluador indica en varias oportunidades que las pymes fueron sólo beneficiarias indirectas del proyecto en la medida que participaron en un programa piloto, ocasionalmente los logros del proyecto se evalúan según los impactos declarados por las propias pymes.	Ok, but we cannot avoid discussing the results for the SMEs. They have become quite central to the project. Generally speaking, the fact that the private sector was involved in the project is considered by the assessment consultant as a positive aspect of the project's approach. This point has been reinforced in the report. ✓ Done (see 1.1.3, subsections 4, 5 & 6 and throughout)
SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
3.1 Relevance	p.22 (SME export innovation readiness) Las pymes participantes en el programa piloto fueron seleccionadas por los OPC, según sus propias prioridades institucionales (tipo de empresa, producto, mercado).	Ok, added. ✓ Done (see key findings (deleted there) see paragraphs 80, 81 & 82)
	p.24 Recommendation 1 (ECLAC should not seek national interagency coordination) La participación multisectorial (multistakeholder participation) y la promoción del diálogo interinstitucional fue una premisa importante del proyecto para lograr un mayor efecto multiplicador. Los puntos focales	Ok, The recommendation was transformed into a LL that there needs to be much efforts to reach such results. What was meant here was that it is sometimes hard to set as a target the enhanced coordination amongst national institutions.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	nacionales, los OPC, convocaron a distintas instituciones a las actividades del proyecto. Asimismo, la CEPAL invitó a representantes de diferentes instituciones públicas y privadas a los eventos regionales en Santiago. Esto facilitó el diálogo, y su resultado se ve reflejado en la diversidad de instituciones que participarían en la implementación de los planes de acción.	<p>✓ Done</p> <p>✓ Addressed (see throughout and subsections 5 and 6)</p>
	p.25 (some TPOs were not fully comfortable working on the innovation side of the project) Muy por el contrario, el interés principal por el proyecto de los directivos de los OPC fue precisamente el componente de innovación (aún faltante en sus herramientas de trabajo) y esto se ve reflejado también en los planes de acción.	<p>✓ Addressed</p> <p>This is delicate because it comes from the data collected. (see paragraphs 84, 85, 86 & 87 as well as subsections 5 & 6)</p>
3.2 Effectiveness	p.26 (SME interest in more concrete activities, such as commercial missions) Aun cuando éstas puedan ser de especial interés para las empresas, el rol de la CEPAL no es organizar misiones comerciales. Se trató de una misión tecnológico comercial, donde las actividades estuvieron orientadas a la creación de capacidades para superar brechas de innovación.	<p>✓ Addressed</p> <p>This, again, comes from the data collected. More details and explanations were given. (see 3.2, findings, paragraph 108, subsections 4, 5 & 6)</p>
	p.26 y subsiguientes Las actividades y objetivos de EA2 (innovación exportadora) y EA3 (financiamiento) fueron enlazadas para dar continuidad y efectividad al proyecto. El foco de EA3 fueron los mecanismos para acceder al financiamiento de los planes de innovación exportadora de las pymes. Los OPC pueden tener un rol relevante en términos de acercar la oferta y la demanda de financiamiento y el proyecto promovió la facilitación al acceso al financiamiento a las herramientas de trabajo de estas instituciones.	<p>✓ Addressed</p> <p>Ok we can't put aside the fact that the data points to the fact that EA3 was not as successful at the two others. (see paragraphs 109 – 113, subsections 5 & 6)</p>
	Recommendation 3 (fully explain the project) Aun cuando el proyecto fue presentado en su totalidad a instituciones y empresas en distintas oportunidades, es posible que algunos de los participantes en la encuesta no hayan estado presentes.	<p>✓ Addressed</p> <p>Yes but this is coming out of the data, not only from the survey but also from the interviews as well as the documentation provided. And those that were not present most logically have answered that they do not know (5.3% answered this). More details were integrated (see paragraphs 96 – 98 and subsections 5 & 6)</p>

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	Recommendation 4 (Access to financial resources) El interés de las empresas es la obtención inmediata de financiamiento, pero la CEPAL no lo provee, sino que promueve las capacidades para desarrollar proyectos para poder acceder a él. Un aspecto relevante del proyecto fue también sensibilizar, junto a los OPC, a las entidades de financiamiento respecto de los proyectos de innovación y las necesidades de financiamiento de las pymes exportadoras. Las entidades frecuentemente no consideran este tipo de clientes.	✓ Addressed (see paragraphs 109 – 113, subsections 5 & 6)
3.4 Sustainability	Recommendation 6 (scale EA2 support to many more SMEs) Reiteramos que los beneficiarios directos del proyecto fueron los OPC y que las pymes participantes fueron parte de un acotado programa piloto. En la medida que estas organizaciones están incorporando la innovación para exportar a sus herramientas de trabajo, ésta beneficiará a un número de pymes mucho mayor a las que participaron en el programa piloto.	✓ Addressed (see throughout + 3.4, subsections 4, 5 & 6)
	p.38 (support from ECLAC for organization of commercial mission and signature of agreements with potential buyers) Estas actividades comerciales NO están siendo contempladas y no corresponden al rol de la CEPAL.	I must have understood wrong because I had that information from the discussions I held with the management team: “CEPAL: gender and commerce (commercial missions 2016 and accords and their content 2017). “ ✓ Addressed (see paragraph 141)
	We consider that the sustainability of the project's results is more comprehensive than what the draft report suggests. Survey results do not necessarily reflect this sustainability. We therefore include some additional information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In all participating countries, a variety of initiatives by the local TPOs and other agencies are in process to continue and sustain the project's results: Continued data sharing and collaborative work between government agencies in order to generate information about export firms: in Ecuador (PROECUADOR, Servicio Nacional de Aduana del Ecuador SENAE, Servicio de Rentas Interna SRI, INEC). El Salvador (PROESA, Dirección General de Aduanas, Instituto Salvadoreño de Seguro Social, Ministerio de Hacienda), Peru (PROMPERU, Ministerio de la Producción PRODUCE, Viceministerio de MYPE e Industria). Nicaragua (Centro de Exportaciones e Inversiones CEI, Centro de Tramites de las Exportaciones CETREX) to publish Exporter Directory. 	Much of this information is interesting and already shared in ECLAC's reports. However, not all of these sustainable elements have and can be triangulated (and sometimes, what is presented here is contradicted by the survey and interview data and information). I refer the reader to the reports in which these details are presented. ✓ Addressed (see paragraph 133)

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption by TPOs of export innovation methodology in programmes for SMEs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Ecuador</i>: Export Development Programme, Voluntary certifications seminars, Product and services seminars, Packing design for export products, Proyecto Mi tienda virtual, Capacity-building in good manufacturing practices (GMP) and other certifications, 3E coaching programme for export excellence, League of extraordinary entrepreneurs contest, Innovation and technology export product projects. – <i>El Salvador</i>: Assessment of export firm potential, Capacity-building about certifications needed to access developed-country markets,. – <i>Nicaragua</i>: Assessment of export firm potential, Project to strengthen marketing capabilities and managerial skills of agro-industry firms – <i>Peru</i>: Assessment of export firm potential, Assessment of competitiveness of export firms, Specialized export development programme (Ruta exportadora especializada), Continuity of the project export development programme for the olive export sector. • Programmes to replicate the ECLAC export innovation project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>El Salvador</i>: Export innovation project in 2017, in collaboration with innovation agencies; – <i>Peru</i>: Project with SMEs in the textiles (alpaca wool) sector. • Collaborative export innovation programmes between local institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Ecuador</i>: Product certification programme with Ministry of Industry and Productivity (MIPRO), 3E Programme with Federación de Exportadores (FEDEXPOR) and Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Extraordinary entrepreneurs contest with National Finance Corporation (CFN). – <i>El Salvador</i>: Replicate project with innovation development institutions Agro-industry Technology Park (PTA), Quality and Innovation Agency (DICA) and PROINNOVA. – <i>Nicaragua</i>: Collaboration with Nicaraguan Science and Technology Council (CONICYT). 	

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Peru</i>: Export innovation programme with Tacna Regional Government. • Financing for export innovation. – <i>Ecuador</i>: Include financing for export innovation in export development and financial services seminars, in collaboration with National Finance Corporation (CFN), crowdfunding platform project, in collaboration with National Finance Corporation (CFN) and Ministry of Foreign Trade (MCE), Dialogue (public-public and public-private) to develop proposal for new financial services for SMEs, in collaboration with National Finance Corporation (CFN) and Ministry of Foreign Trade (MCE). – <i>El Salvador</i>: Distribution of inventory of export innovation financial services, Replicate project with innovation development institutions Agro-industry Technology Park (PTA), Quality and Innovation Agency (DICA) and PROINNOVA. <i>Nicaragua</i>: Programme of bilateral meetings between SMEs and financial institutions (Ruedas de financiamiento), Collaboration with financial institutions (BANPRO, BAC, PROCREDIT and Banco Produzcamos) to support export innovation projects. <p><i>Peru</i>: Collaboration with other agencies to coordinate programmes to support export innovation, with Ministry of foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR), Ministry of Productions (PRODUCE), finance and Development Corporation (COFIDE) and Agrobanco.</p>	
	<p>Several follow-up activities of the project are under implementation, especially collaborative projects between different government and development agencies, which have adopted a focus on export innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In Ecuador, the export innovation focus is being introduced to a Product certification programme with Ministry of Industry and Productivity (MIPRO), 3E Programme with Federación de Exportadores (FEDEXPOR) and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Extraordinary entrepreneurs contest with National Finance Corporation (CFN). 	

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In El Salvador, the project will be replicated in 2017 in a different modality, as a joint programme between PROESA and other innovation development institutions: Agro-industry Technology Park (PTA), Quality and Innovation Agency (DICA) and PROINNOVA. – In Nicaragua, a project to strengthen marketing capabilities and managerial skills of agro-industry firms is being developed with support of development cooperation funds from Japan. – In Peru, Promperu has initiated an export innovation project with SMEs in the alpaca wool sector. 	
	As to the multiplier effect of the project methodology at ECLAC, in 2016-2017, work on export innovation and financing will be expanded to three additional countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), through consultancy reports and training seminars with financial support from the Republic of Korea. Work on the methodologies and analytical tools to develop databases to assess the internationalization of SMEs, will also be continued in other LAC countries.	✓ Addressed (see paragraph 141)

B. COMMENTS PPOD

GENERAL COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	Please number each paragraph of the report	ok
Introduction	Please include the period of time in which the evaluation was carried out in the introduction section.	Already in section 1.2.2, but it was added in the first paragraph of the introduction as requested during the follow up discussion ✓ Done (Paragraph 1)
Structure of the report	We would like to request re-organizing the structure of the report, separating findings, conclusions, recommendations and lesson learned into four separate and independent sections. In the way they have been structured right now, findings and conclusions cannot be identified easily.	This is all very good and helps in explaining my chain of thought leading to the recommendations. ✓ Done

GENERAL COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
Findings	Please highlight and number each finding and then include the supporting evidence and information.	✓ Done
Conclusions	Please clearly identify each conclusion and link it to the findings from which they derive. Conclusions should clearly answer the big evaluation questions and focus on significant issues, building on the findings already presented and adding value to them.	✓ Done (see subsection 5)
Lessons learned	We would also like to request strengthening the lessons learned section, as the report currently only includes two lessons learned, providing more details and information about each of them.	✓ Done (see subsection 4)
Recommendations	As stated above, we recommend adding an independent section with the recommendations, providing more details on what is being recommended (examples of proposed actions) and who should be responsible for implementing each recommendation. As demanded for the conclusions section, recommendations should be clearly linked to the specific finding and/or conclusion from which they derive. Please make sure that recommendations included in the report are “actionable”, to ensure that a proper follow-up process of the recommendations can effectively be implemented. Many of the recommendations included so far in the report may not respond to the need of having recommendations that lead to specific actions that can be monitored through the follow-up process.	✓ Done (see subsection 6)
Annexes 4 and 5	Please include annex 4 and 5, which have not been included in the draft report.	✓ Done (see annexes 4 and 5)

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
Page 1, section 1.1.1, paragraph 3	Please take into consideration that the programme manager for UNDA is DESA and please correct the text accordingly. See requested changes below.	✓ Done (see paragraph 5)

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER)	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	<p>The Project has been selected in the context of the UNDA selection process. Once selected internally at ECLAC amongst other project proposals, the Project was then sent to DESA. The latter institution receives proposals by different UN agencies that compete amongst each other for selection and DA funding of their projects. Once selected, the proposals are discussed and fine-tuned in the form of back and forth between DESA and the UN agencies to adapt the projects to meet UNDA requirements, until a final project document is approved. The UNDA projects, through each project cycle called tranches, are classified by regions. This Project was selected through this full process. In terms of thematic clusters, this Project falls under "Trade, Economics and Finance" cluster of UNDA projects.</p>	
Page 9, section 1.2.1, paragraph 3	Please make sure to mention DESA as one of the primary audiences, as they are the actual programme managers of the Development Account.	✓ Done (see paragraph 24)
Page 16, section 2) collection data, step3: in-depth desk review, paragraph 2	We recommend including a list of all consulted documents, preferably as an annex, making reference to it in the main text.	✓ Done (see annex 4)
Page 18, respondents' profiles and general characteristics	<p>In the last sentence of the first paragraph of this section, the evaluator has included the following note:</p> <p><i>The relatively low level of respondents from the financial sector is to be noticed.</i></p> <p>We consider that further analysis should be done or if it was done, should be explicitly included in the report, to back-up this statement. The fact that, of the total number of respondents, those representing the financial sector is only 5%, does not necessarily mean that the response level from this specific sector was lower than the rest, as this would depend on the original composition of the "whole Universe" to which</p>	✓ Deleted (see paragraph 58)

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER)	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	the survey was sent. That is, the comparison would need to be made against the original number of financial representatives to whom the survey was sent and not the total number of respondents from the different sectors.	
Page 22, 3.1 relevance	In the draft report you have included as one of the issues to highlight in relation to the criteria of relevance, the fact that some ("few") of SMEs were not fully ready to tackle the innovation gaps highlighted in the EA2 diagnostics. We are actually not sure if this is a relevance-related issue or an effectiveness related issue and would request you to reconsider and further analyze this issue. The fact that they are not ready to tackle the identified gaps yet is not an issue of whether it is or not relevant to them, but maybe more of how effective the selection of participating SMEs was, and even then, we are not sure that this should be regarded as a lack of effectiveness, since first of all SMES participating in the project had expressed interest in participating in the project and even though they might not be able to tackle the innovation gaps identified at this moment, they might be able to do so in the future.	It is a question of the adapted level of sophistication of the diagnostics or not. The diagnostics could have been more adapted to what SMEs could do. There are now more specific examples in the report. If you provide an SME with information it cannot use (not reachable), then it is not relevant for them. More explanations and examples are given in the report. ✓ Addressed (see key findings (deleted there) see paragraphs 80, 81 & 82)
Page 24, Recommendation 1	We invite the evaluator to reconsider this recommendation or justify it better providing the factual evidence that leads to the recommendation. First of all, we consider this recommendation not to be related with the criteria of relevance, but more to coordination issues (efficiency maybe?). Furthermore, and based not only in our experience but in the results of various previous evaluations we have quite a different opinion from what is being recommended. Actually, we consider and it has been identified, as one of the main advantages of ECLAC, that the capacity to involve different institutions at both national and regional level to implement specific project or activities is a value added of many of the projects implemented by ECLAC. Some of the main reasons for this, are the multiplier effects the involvement of various	Ok, The recommendation was transformed into a LL that there needs to be much efforts to reach such results. In the consultant's views, this is a relevance finding. The central idea behind C1 was to create spaces for coordination amongst national institutions. At first, it was not straightforward in the minds of some stakeholders that this idea was aligned with their priorities. Concerning the link with the data, I have made the case clearer. ✓ Addressed (see throughout and subsections 5 and 6)

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER)	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	<p>institutions has, the strength that most of our stakeholders have highlighted that ECLAC has to convene different stakeholders and foster joint work, which increases not only the probabilities of reaching the expected accomplishments but of them actually having more probabilities of being sustainable. Finally, we find that the link between the information hereby presented and the recommendation per se is not as straightforward as we would desire, meaning that we do not see the direct link between the interview and survey results and what is being recommended.</p>	
<p>Page 25 recommendation 2</p>	<p>As with recommendation 1, we do not see the direct link between the recommendation and the criteria of relevance. We also recommend further revising the recommendation. We are not fully convinced that the evidence presented is strong enough to back-up the recommendation being made. Would the project actually have been more effective if it only focused in one specific theme? Can we address the issue of productivity without addressing the issue of financing? Or would it have been enough to only work on identifying innovation gaps and developing innovation plans without considering how these could be financed? Is it more effective to focus in one of the issues affecting a specific area more in-depth or working in a more holistic approach working with a more reduced number of beneficiaries as pilots as this project did? These and other questions arise when we analyze the recommendation and would like the evaluator to consider them in his analysis as well, to ensure that the recommendation is actually valid to be considered as a best practice.</p>	<p>This is all very interesting... The fact is that there were issues of potentially interesting organization that should have participated were not present.</p> <p>Again, this is link to the broadness of the project linked to the budget. I understand the logic of brining the two components but the three together, quite intense for a USD575K project.</p> <p>✓ Addressed (see throughout and subsections 5 and 6)</p>
<p>Page 25, complementarities and synergies section</p>	<p>We consider that this section can be more useful in the section of efficiency, in response to the question on coordination. It is true that in ToR we have included a question on complementarities and synergies in the relevance section, but this question was actually oriented to establishing the link between the thematic area of the project with the</p>	<p>✓ Transferred (see paragraph 118)</p>

SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER)	COMMENTS ERG	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	programme of work of ECLAC and more specifically that of the specific subprogramme in charge of implementing the project, as a way of establishing how the project is embedded within the priorities of ECLAC.	
Page 32, Paragraph 1 and	We would like the evaluator to further consider and contextualize the finding related to the accomplishment of EA3, in the sense that even if results may seem lower in respect to the other EAs, we think that is not only foreseen but also justified. Achieving results in this area (access to finance) is actually a much more complex issue that requires not only the willingness of participating SMEs but also of financial institutions. This requires not only more coordination, but also involves many other aspects beyond the scope of the project, as the approval of a loan or other type of investment funds depends on a large variety of variables and the risks perceived by financial institutions in relation to the offering credit to SMEs.	Ok. ✓ Addressed (see paragraph 111 and subsections 5 & 6)
Recommendation 4	The recommendation is not clear enough, please revise accordingly.	✓ Addressed (see subsection 6)
Page 32, Gender Aspects	We would appreciate the inclusion of more information on how exactly the project incorporated the gender perspective. It is mentioned that this approach is being replicated in other countries and projects. Would you consider the approach used as good enough to be considered as a best practice for other projects?	✓ Addressed No, I don't think this can be considered as a best practice. But it is an interesting result of the project. (see paragraphs 114 & 115)