Evaluation report on the Skilled Young Palestine – Improving Resilience and Job opportunities for Youth Project (SYP)

PZA1804411

Palestine

Particip GmbH

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enabel.be

This evaluation was carried out as part of the cooperation between Palestine and Belgium.

The report was drawn up by independent external experts.

The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors and are not necessarily shared by Enabel, the Belgian Cooperation or the authorities of the countries concerned.

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Acronym list

CTA	Complex task approach
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVET	Continuous Vocational Education and Training
DFID	Department for International Development
DCDC	DigComp Digital Competence (Framework)
ECIB	Enhancing Capacities for Institution Building
EJ	East Jerusalem
Enabel	Belgian development agency
ETE	End-term evaluation
ECEC	EntreComp Entrepreneurship Competence (Framework)
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FCCI	Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FPCCIA	Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GS	Gaza Strip
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LET	Local Employment and Training (Councils)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoFP	Ministry of Finance and Planning
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MSME	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
MTR	Mid Term Review
NEET	Not in Employment Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	National Policy Agenda
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OJT	On the job training
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics
PWDs	Persons with disabilities
PFESP	Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection of Workers
PITA	Palestinian Information Technology Association
PMDP	Palestinian Market Development Programme
PSUO	Private Sector Umbrella Organisation
PTC	Project Technical Committee
PwDs	People with Disabilities
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDF	SDF Skills Development Fund
SSD21	Stations for Skills Development 21
STE(A)M	Science Technology Engineering (Arts) and Mathematics
SYP	Skilled Youth Palestine
TFF	Technical & Financial File
TFP	Technical and Financial Partner
THs	Training Hours

ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WB	West Bank

Cooperation project/programme sheet

Indicative Cooperation Programme

ICP	PSE / 2012 – 2015
Partner country	Palestine
Priority sector(s)	DAC Sectors • 113 - Secondary education • 11330 - Vocational training Enabel Sectors • Education, Training and Employment

Intervention form

Title of the intervention	"Skilled Young Palestine – Improving Resilience and Job opportunities for Youth"
Navision code of the intervention	PZA1804411
Intervention zone	Palestine (West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem)
Total budget	7,500,000 EUR
Partner institution	PSE - Ministry of Finance and Planning PSE - Ministry of Labour
Starting date of the Specific Agreement	27/05/2019
Closing date of the Specific Agreement	27/05/2024
Starting date of intervention – Opening steering committee – SMCL 0	01/01/2020
Duration of the intervention and expected closing date of the intervention	31/12/2023 48 months
Impact	To contribute to increasing resilience of Palestinian youth in vulnerable areas in Palestine
Outcome	Improved transition of youth to employment and self-employment through improved skills and competences
Outputs	• Increased labour market opportunities for youth by technical skills development. • Young people have gained 21st Century skills for work and life

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Evaluation team

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Summary

The 'Skilled Young Palestine - Improving Resilience and Employment Opportunities for Youth' (SYP) project aims to strengthen the resilience of Palestinian youth in vulnerable areas by improving their employability and entrepreneurship skills. **The project, spanning from May 27, 2019, to May 27, 2024**, with a budget of €7.5 million, aims to empower **2,800 young individuals**. It involves **30 partners:** 23 private sector umbrella organisations (PSUOs) across the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip; the Palestinian Employment Fund (PEF); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); and 5 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and academic institutions. The project was executed in collaboration with key strategic partners, including the Ministries of Labour, Finance, and Higher Council for Youth and Sports (HCYS). Additionally, implementing partners comprised PSUOs, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres, and NGOs overseeing the innovation hubs. The ultimate beneficiaries of the programme were young men and women.

The evaluation is conducted at the end of the project implementation aiming at: guiding future strategic and operational decisions with evidence-based recommendations, facilitating a comprehensive learning process by analysing ENABEL's performance and extracting valuable insights, and ensuring accountability to donors, partners, and ENABEL's staff. The end-term evaluation **(ETE) drew its findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations mainly** from a comprehensive desk review, including annual reports, final report and the mid-term evaluation report. Qualitative data was also gathered through interviews with stakeholders and focus group discussions involving young beneficiaries. These data sources were used to verify and triangulate the findings. **The duration of the ETE** had to be adjusted several times because the mission has been conducted during the ongoing Israeli war on Gaza and Ramadan month. Unfortunately, interventions in the Gaza Strip were excluded from the assessment due to these challenging circumstances.

End-term Evaluation Findings and Conclusions

The final evaluation report, **consistent with the Mid-Term Review (MTR),** confirms the project's relevance is highly satisfactory **as it aligns with national and international strategies**, particularly in addressing youth employment needs. It also aligns with Enabel's strategy at the international level, earning a satisfactory evaluation grade.

The SYP closely aligns with key national agendas such as the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 (NPA), the National Employment Strategy 2021-2025, and the Labour Sector Strategy (2021-2023). It focuses on improving the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system and nurturing a skilled workforce, reflecting alignment with the TVET Strategy developed in 2010.

The project's design is rooted in the local context and builds upon successful experiences to enhance skills development and create employment opportunities in Palestine. Its implementation methods are pertinent, adaptable, and tailored to local and national needs, reflecting a focus on economic growth, gender equality, and improving education-to-employment transitions.

In terms of internal coherence, it can be considered highly satisfactory as in MTR. The project has greatly benefited from Belgian financing for Palestinian territories, which has supported several projects aligned with its objectives, notably the YEP project. Internationally, it aligns with initiatives funded by other donors in the Palestinian territories, fostering collaboration and synergy.

Within the **Enabel Portfolio, strategic alignment** and substantial funding have played key roles in amplifying the impact of the SYP project, ensuring coverage of key objectives and global challenges while adhering to development priorities and engaging in synergic collaborations.

The **coordinated efforts between SYP and YEP** further booster economic empowerment initiatives in Palestine, **leveraging expertise and strategic additions** to achieve sustained positive outcomes. The close relationship highlighted in the end-term evaluation underscores cohesive strategies addressing challenges and enhancing self-employment initiatives. Initiatives within YEP complement and amplify SYP's impact on skills development and employment opportunities.

Externally, SYP aligns with programmes such as the Dual Studies Program, DWP, PALM project, TTT project, DO TVET initiative, TVET4Future project, and Capacity Building of PSUOs, streamlining efforts to boost employment opportunities and refine vocational training without redundancy in Palestine. Collaborative efforts among international agencies like ILO, UNESCO, and GIZ show a concentrated approach to addressing youth unemployment and skill development challenges in Palestine, avoiding duplications and amplifying efforts.

The efficiency of the project can be considered satisfactory, consistent with findings from the MTR and SYP Annual Report 2024. Despite some obstacles (amendments to the timeframe, insufficient human resources at Enabel, Lack of capacity of implementing partners, delays in launching the SDF grant program, etc.), outputs were delivered within an extended timeline and without significant budget adjustments.

The SDF allocates funds to private sector umbrellas and NGOs to provide tailored skills development training aligned with market demands, enhancing participants' access to employment opportunities.

PSUOs successfully delivered comprehensive training courses crucial to the Palestinian labour market across various fields in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza, however challenges in budget coverage, delayed payments and limited adherence to WBL approach were regarded as challenges. Innovation hubs operated by NGOs and academic institutions facilitated resilience and employability training using tailored manuals, although delays impacted the complementarity between R1 and R2. A specialised team of trainers ensured the efficiency of 21st-century skills training.

Human resource limitations within Enabel affected efficiency, with staff turnover impacting monitoring and evaluation. Delays in announcing and finalising grants, challenges in financial procedures among private sector umbrellas, and external factors contributed to overall project delays. However, strategic management via the steering committee offered consistent guidance throughout the project's lifecycle.

The project effectiveness has also been satisfactory, successfully achieving six out of seven indicators at the output level. However, it faced challenge in meeting specific indicator: the number of beneficiaries trained falling below targets for Results 1 as planned. Two indicators (% of selected innovation hubs budget co-financed by private sector/other sources and % of SDF budget co-financed by private sector/other sources) became non-contractual and were excluded from this evaluation. At the outcome level, the project's performance was moderately effective in achieving specific indicators, as outlined below

- % of trained youth who became self-employed: Achieved 28% compared to the 4% target.
- Number of WBL graduates conducting more than 30% structured field training: Underachievement: 1,227 WBL graduates compared to the target of 1,600.
- Level of satisfaction of youth with services provided in the TVET track: Achieved 90% compared to the 80% target

- % of trained youth that are employed: Underachievement: actual achievement is 63% compared to the 77% target.

The implementation of the SDF-grants fund proved effective through capacity building efforts and clear grant management procedures, fostering collaboration between strategic and implementing partners and ensuring smooth training outputs. Innovation hubs positively impacted youth engagement and skill development, yet strategies are needed to enhance participation, especially among young women. TVET centres significantly improved employability skills, although challenges like inadequate tools, delays at checkpoints, and limitations in learning environments impacted some participants' training experiences. Delays in the 21st century manual development affected training utilisation in Result 1.

Work-based learning (WBL): Twenty-three PSUOs (4 in East Jerusalem, 12 in the West Bank, and 7 in the Gaza Strip) were contracted to implement work-based learning in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Additionally, the PEF implemented a wage incentive scheme targeting 75 young men and women working in the IT sector in the West Bank. However, the effectiveness of the WBL programme was somewhat hampered by some private companies' practices and socio-cultural barriers, including poor adherence to the practical training procedures and conditions.

21st Century Training: Master trainers received instruction at the Innovation Hubs using a Training of Trainers (TOT) methodology led by Enabel. The manual was praised by the trainers for its comprehensive, step-by-step coverage of various topics, and effective and continuous support from the master trainers was provided during the implementation phase. Concerns about the insufficient number of days allocated to each youth group to address important topics such as entrepreneurship were raised.

Beneficiaries highly praised the 21st-century skills training, attributing it to their successful entry into the labour market. They suggested improvements such as tailored specialised training, post-training grants or incentives, and ongoing follow-up and support mechanisms after training completion.

Challenges highlighted in FGDs included unequal access to equipment, limited post-training follow-up, and gaps in practical training in private companies. Despite these, the project's effectiveness in skill development and job opportunities for Palestinian youth is evident, with clear avenues for continued improvement and impact.

The evaluation report categorises the sustainability of the project as moderately satisfactory. **Challenges persist in maintaining financial and human continuity efforts within PA institutions, the non-governmental sector, and the private sector**. These entities have acknowledged the constraints they face in sustaining training programmes at the same level of quality. Promising areas for continuity include the ongoing use of training manuals by ministries such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, as well as adoption by the private sector and NGOs. Furthermore, sustainability relies **on beneficiaries utilising the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their current or future work endeavours**.

It is anticipated that the **21st Century manual will continue to be utilised within innovative hubs** facilitated by trained instructors. However, ensuring sufficient funding is imperative for maintaining the quality of training programmes. Collaboration between private sector organisations and the MoL in sharing information is crucial for developing young people's work skills and facilitating their market entry initiatives after the project's completion

The impact assessment of the project indicates a fairly satisfactory outcome, as it has contributed to supplying the Palestinian labour market with skilled and trained workers despite unstable security and economic conditions, marking a notable improvement. Structural factors should also be addressed. These

include boosting investments in the Palestinian market to enhance job opportunities across various sectors, as well as enhancing the work environment by tackling external factors influencing the labour market and its foundational elements, including the Israeli occupation. Such factors include Israeli occupation practices that impede imports and exports, restrict labour movement, and control the prices of raw materials, among others.

The project utilised two main indicators to measure impact. First, the Proportion of Youth Unemployed (NEET) Indicator marked a decrease from 35% in 2020 to 29% in 2022 with total (4273 beneficiaries[1]). While this reflects improved youth engagement in education, employment, or training, it should be attributed to collective impacts from various initiatives. Second, the Trainee Satisfaction Indicator indicates high levels of satisfaction, surpassing the ambitious target of 90%, reflecting the quality and significance of the training provided.

The project's performance in addressing transversal themes is mixed. The performance around **Gender integration, Environment and Climate Change, Communication and visibility is deemed satisfactory**, while regarding **Disability Inclusion it fell short of expectations**, with the percentage of participants with disability below 1%, as outlined in the MTR. The cross-cutting themes were effectively integrated into project interventions, both during the grant application process and the implementation of training programmes.

However, despite these efforts, **societal barriers persist, hindering women's participation across R1**, which did not exceed 35% and remained in line with the project's target. On the other hand, in 21st-century skills training, female participation surpassed that of young males, indicating greater societal acceptance of such programmes among girls.

An unintended effect of **women's engagement in** TVET was the change in mindset within the private sector regarding the importance of women's engagement and the benefits they would gain from hiring qualified women.

In contrast, as outlined in the MTR participation among **persons with Disabilities (PWDs) remained minimal**, largely due to significant obstacles such as inadequate infrastructure, limited societal awareness and a shortage of trained vocational trainers equipped to cater to PWDs.

Regarding the **communication and visibility of the project**, data collected from implementing partners confirmed that they used the Enabel logo during the training. For instance, during field visits to the Innovative Hubs, the evaluation expert observed banners that included the name of the project and its logo, as well as in the 21st Century Skills training manual. Respondents did not express any concerns about displaying the Enabel logo, even during times of conflict, as Enabel is regarded as a donor that respects Palestinian priorities and rights.

Communication officer was hired by the project and conducted communication field visits and workshops to grantees in West Bank and Gaza to deliver trainings under both results on communication, logos guidelines and procedures, and the use of social media, coordinate the documentation of training, and develop success stories. Videos and success stories were also developed to promote the project among Palestinian stakeholders.

[1] Enabel monitoring tracer version 24 May 2024

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Future programme designs should place greater emphasis on gender integration, particularly for women in the TVET sector, by creating safe working environments in male-dominated sectors. Overcoming societal barriers that hinder women's enrolment can be achieved through advocacy campaigns to raise community and private sector awareness about women's rights in training and employment across all sectors. Enhance the rights and inclusion of vulnerable individuals, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), in project interventions. Recruit gender equality and inclusion expert to be part of the project staff	**Conclusions:** CO6 and CO13 **Targeted actors:** Strategic (Enabel, MoL, MoE) and operation partners (NGOs and PSUOs) **Priority: Medium-** and long term **Type:** Strategic and operational **Criteria:** Efficiency, transversal themes (gender, inclusion and environment)
Recommendation 2 Establish a follow-up mechanism by creating a sector working group comprising representatives from the government, private sector, and NGOs involved in training and employment. This group will enhance and continually adjust collaborative efforts among all training and labour stakeholders in addressing youth empowerment, skills development and entrepreneurship in Palestine. Additionally, strengthen ongoing partnerships between international and local agencies to effectively tackle youth unemployment and address skills mismatches by ensuring sufficient funding to cover any gaps.	**Conclusions:** CO5-C11 **Targeted actors**: Enabel, national actors (relevant ministries, NGOs and PSUOs) and international agencies **Priority:** Medium- and long term **Type:** Operational **Criteria:** coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability
Recommendation 3 Develop a simplified grants management manual in Arabic that aligns with the English version of Enabel grants manual. The translated Arabic version should be customised to include the items that Enabel deems important to share with implementing partners (grantees).	**Conclusions:** CO5 and CO8 **Targeted actors:** Enabel and SDF national partners (PSUOs and NGOs, MOL, MoE, National TVET commission) **Priority:** Medium-term **Type:** Operation **Criterion:** Efficiency
Recommendation 4 Enhance work-based learning policies and procedures by raising private sector awareness about adhering to work-based learning conditions and procedures. Incentives should be provided to companies that comply with these standards.	**Conclusions:** CO6 and CO10 **Targeted actors:** Enabel, strategic and implementing partners (PSUOs) **Priority:** Medium- and long-term **Type:** Operational and strategic **Criteria:** Efficiency and sustainability
Recommendation 5 Enhance the internal monitoring and evaluation system of the Enabel project by allocating more effort to field follow-up through the recruitment of a field officer. Additionally, build the capacity of the project's implementing partners in monitoring and evaluation.	**Conclusions:** CO6 **Targeted actors:** Enabel and implementing partners **Priority:** Short term and medium-term **Type:** Operational **Criterion:** Efficiency
Recommendation 6 Integrate 21st-century skills into vocational training centres to enhance trainees' capabilities and boost their employability prospects. Additionally, provide small grants for entrepreneurship to expand the likelihood of trainees successfully establishing their own businesses.	**Conclusions:** CO5, CO8 and CO10 **Targeted actors:** Implementing partners **Priority:** Medium-term **Type:** Operational **Criteria:** Effectiveness, sustainability

Lessons learned

SDF grants modality and approach: One of the practices implemented by the project is the selection of the implementing agency for the Operating of the SDF grants. After internal consultations among Enabel management and with the steering committee, the project decided to implement the grants directly through Enabel. This approach proved largely successful, as evidenced by the implementation of these grants without adjusting the budgets, only requiring a timeframe extension. Enabel and its partners learned from this direct grant implementation approach the need to further simplify procedures and

enhance capacity building to support private sector organisations, many of which were first-time grant managers from a donor.

Activating the Work-Based Learning Methodology: The project implemented the work-based learning methodology, which provided trainees with a significant opportunity to develop their practical skills. However, during this practice, it was found that a considerable number of private sector institutions do not adhere to the working conditions, mistreating trainees or assigning tasks outside of their areas of expertise. Due to weak follow-up and supervision from some institutions that hold grants, employers were not required to change their policies regarding work-based learning. One of the lessons learned from this practice is the necessity of having an agreement that includes binding procedures and conditions for both the employer and the trainee, engaging representatives from the Ministry of Labour as witnesses to encourage compliance with the terms of the agreement. Monitoring and follow-up during practical training would also increase the effectiveness of the work-based learning program, solving issues before they escalate.

Flexibility Approach in Implementing the 21st Century Skills Program: The coverage of 21st Century Skills was expanded to include five innovation hubs and a well-prepared manual was developed and utilised, outlining the training stages and the topics for each stage. Under the flexibility approach, each institution was allowed to assess the needs of its trainees and provide what it deemed appropriate. However, the end-term evaluation revealed that while the flexibility approach is beneficial, it needs to be carefully planned to ensure the adequate development of the skills required by the job market. Moreover, financial incentives to cover the trainee's transportation and daily expenses should be introduced and the number of trainees should be reduced to deepen the benefits and increase effectiveness.

1 Background and context

1.1 A challenging context

1.1.1 The war and its socio-economic impact

The project evaluated and the evaluation itself took place in a particularly challenging context. The Palestinian territories, particularly the Gaza Strip, have been facing a persistent state of conflict, characterised by decades of Israeli military occupation, disregard for international humanitarian and human rights laws, internal political divisions, and recurrent outbursts of violence. In 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak further exacerbated the protection risks faced by Palestinians, with movement restrictions, school closures, job losses, and widespread socioeconomic distress.[2] Gaza experienced in early May 2021 eleven days of intense hostilities between Israel and Hamas, resulting in significant casualties and infrastructure damage.[3] Additionally, between 5 and 7 August, Israeli forces conducted targeted airstrikes in multiple locations in Gaza, the escalation of hostilities resulted in the death of 49 Palestinians, and damage to approximately 2,000 housing units, among others.[4]

Additionally, the situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem remains highly volatile, marked by continuous aggression from Israeli occupation forces and settlers against the Palestinian population. According to the 2023 OCHA report, approximately 4,000 Palestinians were displaced in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, due to policies and practices by Israeli authorities and settlers.[5]According to OCHA, between 7 October 2023– 24 April 2024, 469 Palestinians, including at least 112 children, have been killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Consequently, Enabel revised the end-term evaluation reference document to exclude the Gaza Strip, narrowing its focus solely to the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Since the outbreak of the war in Gaza, there has been a significant contraction of gross domestic product (GDP) in the Gaza Strip by more than 80% in the fourth quarter of 2023, accompanied by an increase in the unemployment rate to 74%. Similarly, in the West Bank, there was a sharp drop of 22% in GDP and an unemployment rate of 29%, resulting in a drop of 33% in GDP across in the fourth quarter of the 2023 in Palestine [6].The near-total collapse of economic activities in the Gaza Strip has precipitated a significant decline in the Palestinian economy, all economic sectors in Palestine experienced declines in 2023 compared to 2022. In the fourth quarter of 2023, the added value of all economic sectors in Palestine experienced a sharp drop compared to the same quarter of the previous year. Construction activity witnessed the most substantial decline, plummeting by 39% (27% in the West Bank and 96% in Gaza Strip), followed by agriculture with a decline of 38% (12% in the West Bank and 93% in Gaza Strip), and services activity by 33% (21% in the West Bank and 77% in Gaza Strip). Industrial activity also saw a notable decrease of 28% (24% in the West Bank and 92% in Gaza Strip).[7]

Based on an ILO report, the unemployment rate in Palestine increased from 24% in the 4th quarter of 2022 to a staggering 46.1% in the fourth quarter of 2023, which is set to compound the already devastating humanitarian and economic situation especially in Gaza.[8] There have also been wide

[2] OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview OPT 2021, Issued December 2020.
[3] EBRD / World Bank, Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, June 2021.
[4]https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-impact-gaza-escalation-hostilities-immediate-needs-and-funding-requirements-august-2022
[5] https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/about-4000-palestinians-displaced-west-bank-2023
[6] https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post
[7] https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post
[8] Impact of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: 1 Bulletin No. 2, source ILO and PCBS

variations in unemployment rates by sex, with the female unemployment rate in Palestine (40.8%) twice as high as that of males. Average daily wage levels in the Gaza Strip (NIS 50.6) are little more than a third of those in the West Bank (NIS 138.9).[9] Israel's restrictions on movement between and within governorates in the West Bank have caused significant disruptions to trade routes, supply chains, and the mobility of workers. These measures compound the closure of the Israeli labour market to Palestinian workers and the withholding of Palestinian customs duties collected by Israel. In addition, ILO reported on 31 January 2024, 507,000 jobs have been lost across the OPT as a result of the hostilities, compared to an earlier job loss estimate of 468,000. This comprises 201,000 jobs lost in Gaza Strip and 306,000 jobs lost in the West Bank.[10]

The implications of the ongoing hostilities on the OPT economy are grave. The PCBS estimated a sharp contraction of the OPT's gross domestic product (GDP) by a third during the fourth quarter of 2023, compared to the same quarter of 2022 (a decline of more than 80 per cent in the Gaza Strip and by 22 per cent in the West Bank). The decline in GDP is driven by a contraction in value added in all sectors (construction, industry, services and then agriculture), with critical repercussions for standards of living and labour market outcomes, including employment, working hours and incomes.[11]

1.1.2 Sectoral context

Already before the war in Gaza, the **Palestinian economy had been stagnant**, with persistent high poverty[12] and unemployment rates.[13] It struggled to generate sufficient employment opportunities for the past two decades,[14] and the **labour market participation and outcomes have been low**, especially for **women**. [15]

In order to respond to the skills mismatch between workforce qualifications and Palestinian businesses' needs, efforts have been geared toward improving the quality and relevance of **Technical and Vocational Education and Training** (TVET), while governance remains fragmented and weak, hindering effective implementation. A unified accreditation aimed to harmonise the different types of certifications issued by several institutions and quality assurance system is lacking, limiting recognition and flexibility to meet local skills demands. Partnerships between the private sector and training providers are crucial to identify and address relevant skills gaps. Updating legal frameworks and policies is necessary to Enabel the private sector's involvement in training and evaluation, and to **institutionalise Work-Based Learning** (WBL) frameworks and TVET financing. To better align with the labour market needs, specialised technical skills are specifically important, notably in the digital and green economy sectors.

1.1.3 Description of the intervention

The Palestinian private sector is vital for economic growth and job creation, but still faces challenges due to political instability and restrictions. To respond to these challenges, the project **"Skilled Young Palestine – Improving Resilience and Job opportunities for Youth" (SYP)** was designed to "increase the

[9] Impact of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: 1 Bulletin No. 2, source ILO and PCBS
[10] Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: 1 Bulletin No. 3, ILO, March 2024
[11] Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: 1 Bulletin No. 3, ILO, March 2024
[12] Estimated poverty rate of 29.7% in 2020, translating into translate to approximately 1.5 million people living in poverty.
[13] World Bank, Palestinian Territories' Economic Update — April 2022.
[14] International Monetary Fund, Palestinian labor market outcomes, dynamics, and policies. April 2023.
[15] https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4559

resilience of Palestinian youth in vulnerable areas in Palestine" and specifically "to improve the transition of youth to employment and self-employment through improved skills and competencies".

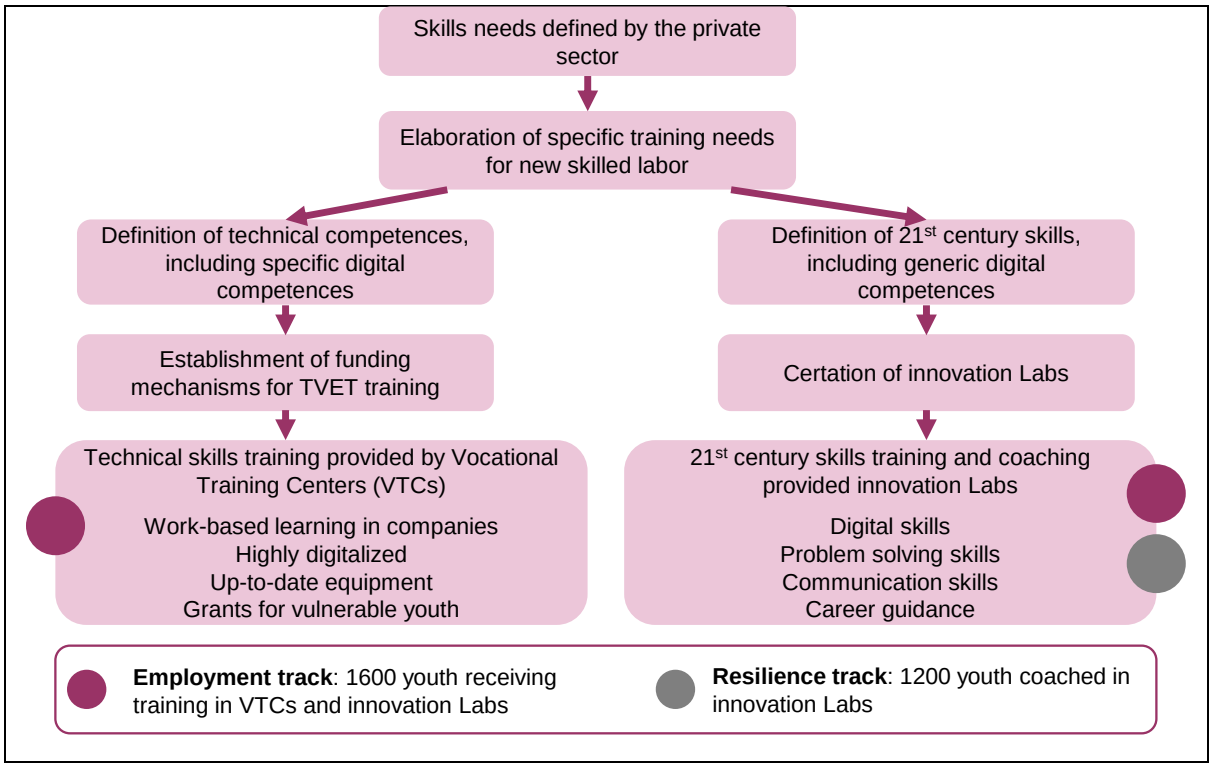
This project, spanning from May 27, 2019, to May 27, 2024, is in line with the objectives outlined in the **Palestinian government's National Policy Agenda** (2017-2022). It aims to tackle the pressing issues of high unemployment rates among women and youth, along with the substantial gender gap in labour participation. The project focuses on promoting economic independence and fostering social justice as key strategies to address these challenges.

The project, **implemented by Enabel, operates in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza** within the Palestinian areas with a budget of EUR 7.5 million. It aims to enhance youth resilience by providing skills development, with a particular focus on young women. This includes public-private partnerships and technical training in entrepreneurship, essential life skills, and digital proficiency.

SYP sought to achieve two main results:

- **Result 1:** Increased labour market opportunities for youth by supporting technical skills development demanded by the labour market;
- **Result 2**: Young people have gained 21st-century skills for work and life.

Figure 1 SYP intervention logic



Source: Evaluation team, based on the Mid-term Review of the SYP Palestine, 2022.

A thorough assessment was undertaken to identify skills gaps within the Palestinian labour market. Subsequently, a **dual-track approach** was implemented to cater to the needs of 2,800 young people, who could select for either the "employment track" or the "resilience track." Under the "employment track," 1,600 young men and women were targeted to receive training at vocational training centres, focusing on contemporary technical skills. The "resilience track" is being carried out through innovative hubs, targeting 1,200 youth from vulnerable communities. This track also extends its reach to 1,200 partially at-risk youth, offering them the opportunity to enhance their 21st-century skills outside of regular school or university hours. SYP covered three regions of Palestine (West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip).

During the implementation, R1 actives were implemented through the Palestinian Employment Fund (PEF) and Private Sector Umbrella Organisations (PSUO); in R2, the activities were implemented by 5 NGO-innovation hubs and UNESCO.[16]

The project focused on young adults who have completed secondary education but are currently unemployed, typically aged between 18 and 29 years old. They are enrolled in the "employment track" to receive support. The second target group comprises vulnerable local adolescents and young adults, including those in or out of school, ideally aged between 16 and 20 years old. They participate in the "resilience track" to receive targeted assistance.

1.1.4 Governance of the intervention

The project governance structure is composed of the Steering Committee (SC), led by the Ministry of Labour (MoL), and includes representatives from Enabel, the Ministry of Finance (MOF), and the Higher Council for Youth and Sports. The SC oversees strategic management, ensuring adherence to quality standards, and timely achievement of project objectives.

Box 1 Project Governance: steering committee (SC)

The roles and responsibilities of the SC have remained consistent with those outlined in the Transitional Reference Document, which delineated the terms of reference governing the Committee's activities. The inaugural SC commenced its operations on January 21, 2020. To date, nine Steering Committee meetings have been convened, and no significant challenges have been encountered. The Steering Committee comprises Enabel, MoL, Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Higher Council for Youth and Sports (HCYS). They are dedicated to their strategic roles, hold continuous meetings, and provide inputs related to strategic issues concerning SDF grants implementation. The MoF has confirmed that Enabel is one of the most flexible for aligning the fund to national priorities and supportive donors in the TVET and employment sector.

The Project Unit (PU) comprises key personnel specifically: the Intervention Manager, two National Skills Development Experts (one each for Gaza and the West Bank), a Skills Development Fund Expert, a Skills Development Officer, a Contracting Expert, a Communication Officer, a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Officer, a Financial Controller, an Accountant, and Support Staff (driver and cleaner). The PU handles daily management, coordination, communication, relations with stakeholders, procurement, finance management, and reporting. It has demonstrated efficiency in managing project activities from preparation to implementation and follow-up.

[16] Enabel (n.d.) Executive Summary of the Mid-term Evaluation of the Skilled Young (SYP) – Improving Resilience and Job opportunities for Youth.

2 Objectives and methodology

2.1 Purpose of the End-Term Evaluation

Enabel has commissioned an **End-Term Evaluation (ETE) of the SYP project**. The mission, managed by Particip and conducted by an evaluation team assigned by the company, consists of a lead expert and a senior local expert, ensuring an independent and evidence-based assessment. The ETE complements the Mid-Term Review (MTR) by analysing achieved results against set objectives, extracting project lessons, and formulating strategic orientations to support operational policies and strategies.

The evaluation addresses three main objectives: 1. **guiding future strategic and operational decisions** by facilitating learning on Enabel's performance. 2. identifying and highlighting **lessons learned**. 3. **Ensuring accountability** to Enabel's donors, partners, and personnel.

The mission identifies areas for improvement and suggests focus areas to enhance results achievement. It aims to formulate realistic and concrete recommendations, considering feasibility and necessity within the new context and the reduced scope of the exercise. Additionally, the ETE generates valuable lessons learned throughout the project's implementation.

The table below presents a list of **primary and secondary users** of this ETE. Primary users are individuals or entities with a vested interest in the evaluation's outcomes, as they are likely to make decisions directly impacted by the evaluation's findings. They are also concerned with the implications of the conclusions, recommendations, and ensuing actions. Secondary users, on the other hand, are parties who will be informed of the evaluation's results and have an interest in the evaluation, but are not directly affected by its outcomes.

Table 1 List of primary and secondary users of this evaluation

Level	Users and Roles	Interest in the ETE
Main users	Project steering committee: Steer the intervention towards the achievement of development results (outcome) by taking strategic decisions based on data and evidence.	Interested in the strategic lessons and recommendations.
Main user	Project team: Responsible for the implementation. Take operational decisions and implement the strategic decisions taken by the steering committee.	Assess the performance of the projects objectively, to take evidence-based decisions to determine the relevance of their own governance and to guide new projects.
Main user	Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Finance and Planning of the Palestinian Authority: Strategic partners and beneficiaries. Responsible for providing the necessary strategic guidance to all implementers and assures that the project objectives are timely achieved according to the defined quality standards.	Accountability: interested by the recommendations
Main user	TVET Commission and TVET providers (public or private): Body in charge of managing the Skills Development Fund (SDF).	Implementing partner interested by the recommendations.
Main user	Enabel (Brussels), Delegation of the European Union, incl. thematic and sectoral experts: Enabel Brussels office of evaluation will facilitate the evaluation process.	Interested in the evidence and recommendation of the evaluation, the success and failure factors of the projects.
Secondary users	Technical and financial partners actives in Palestine and intervening in the sector concerned. BMZ (through GIZ) and Belgium (through Enabel). Norway Embassy, the KfW, the Islamic Relief. In the field of 21st century skills, besides the GIZ and the EU there is also UNESCO.	Interested in the evidence and recommendations that emerge from the analysis of the evaluation.

2.2 Evaluation criteria

The ETE **covered all OECD-DAC evaluation criteria** (relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability). To minimise overlap with the MTR, which provided more evidence on relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness in the first years of the project, the ETE put stronger weight on effectiveness and impact (in terms of effects generated).

Coherence and complementarity were considered in the light of **impact**, by analysing the extent to which others interventions could have contributed to achieving the project outcomes. In contrast, relevance, efficiency and sustainability were covered in a relatively light manner, largely relying on the MTR and exploring whether those findings continue to hold at this later stage. The assessment of sustainability also considered the impact of the current Gaza war.

2.3 Scope and focus of the ETE

The team adopted the **evaluation grid** outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex 1, and proposes an **evaluation matrix** included in the inception report, refined through the documentary review conducted during the inception phase before the field phase. The sub-questions were tailored to respond to the need to assess overall intervention performance, as well as the specific questions identified in the ToR, with particular emphasis on gender and vulnerability as **crosscutting issues**. Gender equality and inclusivity are explicitly emphasised within the project, prompting the team to examine its influence on different genders, identify potential discriminations and disparities, and recognise the unique needs and contributions of women and men.

Given that the Mid-Term Review (MTR) primarily focused on result 1—"Increased labour market opportunities for youth by supporting technical skills development demanded by the labour market"—this End-Term Evaluation (ETE) **concentrated on assessing the performance of result 2**—"Young people have gained 21st-century skills for work and life." Special attention will be directed towards evaluating the performance of the innovation hubs.

2.4 Data collection and analysis

2.4.1 Data collection approach

The end-of-term evaluation adopted a **mixed-method approach**, incorporating both **qualitative** and **quantitative** analysis. With a primary focus on effectiveness and impact, the evaluation placed greater emphasis on qualitative data. This involved facilitating **17 focus groups** with selected beneficiaries across the two main project themes and conducting **25 interviews** with strategic stakeholders and implementers. Qualitative data was also gathered through a desk review of project documents, including annual reports and the updated indicators database.

A detailed timeline was established for the data collection phase. However, due to the commencement of Ramadan, the timing of interviews was extended to accommodate stakeholders' availability. Following each interview, a note documenting key insights and discussions from both interviews and focus groups was promptly developed.

The end-of-term evaluation programme embraced a **participatory and inclusive approach**, engaging a diverse array of partners and stakeholders at both national and district levels, along with the ultimate beneficiaries. These stakeholders contributed valuable insights by responding to the evaluation questions, thereby enriching the assessment process. **Special emphasis was placed on gender sensitivity and inclusivity**, ensuring the active participation of young women and men, persons with disabilities, and

particularly those from vulnerable and marginalised communities, especially during the focus group discussions.

Box 2 Stakeholders and beneficiaries consulted

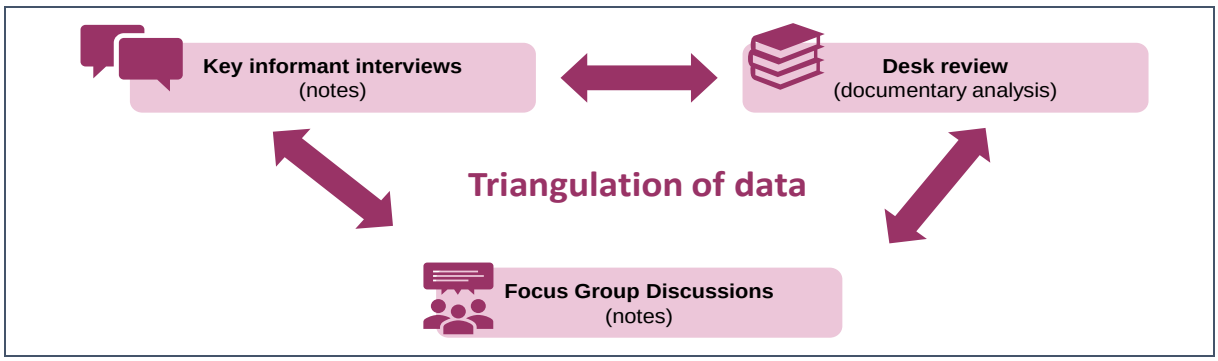
Information and data were gathered through **25 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Interviews** involving diverse stakeholders, including the Project Team, Steering Committee, Project YEP, and implementing partners from the first and second Results. Additionally, **8 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** were conducted with **trainees from the innovative hubs**, **and 9 Focus FGDs were held with trainees from TVET and WBL**. In total, 83 individuals participated in these interviews, comprising 55 young women and 28 young men. While preparing for data collection, the team reached out to over a hundred individuals, however some young beneficiaries were hesitant to participate due to work commitments and challenging road conditions that hindered their ability to take part.

2.4.2 Data analysis

The expert employed a trained Excel sheet analysis, utilising a Tally sheet, to derive quantitative data from the analysis of FGDs and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The process for using the tally sheet is as follows:

- Design a statistics sheet with a column listing all the questions outlined in the evaluation matrix.
- Display the KIIs codes and FGDs codes horizontally.
- Compile interview notes: After each interview or focus group, prepare detailed notes summarising the respondent's answers to each question.
- Summarise initial findings: Once all interview notes or group discussions are documented, fill in a summary section for each question, highlighting any recurring findings.
- Utilise the interview notes and focus group notes to assess if the respondent answers align with the listed findings. Assign a score of 1 for agreement and 0 for disagreement.
- Utilise statistical totals to identify patterns, trends, or commonalities across responses. Percentages can be calculated to compare the relative frequency of different topics or categories. This analytical approach aids in drawing conclusions and making interpretations based on the qualitative data collected. If additional clarification on specific responses is necessary, the report writer refers back to the interview notes.

Figure 2 Triangulation of data



The **findings from KIIs and FGDs** have been corroborated with secondary data alongside information sourced from various organisations and partners. Data obtained from diverse sources, methods, and tools have been cross-referenced, and rigorous efforts have been made to validate the data through continuous communication with the SYP programme staff.

The desk review commenced at the inception stage and continued through the information collection and final report drafting phases. The project team supplied all relevant project data.

2.4.3 Limitations

The evaluation team encountered security challenges while traveling between cities in the West Bank to gather data and conduct interviews. Consequently, the team leader spent several days conducting field interviews in the northern and eastern of West Bank and visiting innovative hubs in Zababdeh-Jenin, Tubas, Jericho, and Nablus, while another expert conducted interviews with officials in the southern West Bank (Hebron and Bethlehem). Due to restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on entering East Jerusalem, the ETE team, with approval from Enabel, conducted the evaluation online.

During Ramadan, when stakeholders were too busy or hesitant to attend face-to-face meetings, interviews were conducted online. Additionally, some beneficiaries initially hesitated to participate in focus groups, citing their involvement in another project-related study (Tracer study).

High transportation costs further discouraged participation, particularly for trainees from Nablus and Ramallah governorates who live in nearby villages. This issue was addressed by transitioning to online interviews. Annex 7 presents the updated and final field schedule.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the team leader took over some of the workload, completing the fieldwork, analysis, and report writing. Despite these challenges, the team successfully conducted 25 interviews, 17 focus group discussions, and analysed various project documents.

To keep Enabel informed of the encountered difficulties and their resolutions, a field report detailing the progress of the data collection process was provided. All the above limitations required extending the data collection timeframe to approximately 8 weeks.

Enabel demonstrated understanding of these security challenges, which affected the mobility of both national stakeholders and beneficiaries, by extending the data collection timeframe and facilitating both online and in-person meetings. Additionally, Enabel emphasied that ensuring the safety of all individuals during travel is paramount.

2.4.4 Ethical considerations and standards

A key ethical concern for this evaluation was the protection of the evaluation participants, particularly the beneficiaries. Interviewers were accountable for the protection of participants in FGDs and KIIs and all data collection was based on informed consent, voluntary participation, do no harm (physical/physiological) and confidentiality. Confidentiality implies that informants' identifying information (personal data) is made available only to the evaluation team and is treated as strictly confidential. Guidelines for interviews and FGDs were formulated in a way that painful questions about these traumatising events were avoided to the extent possible.

3 Findings and Analysis

3.1 Relevance

Global evaluation of relevance	A	Highly Satisfactory

QE1: 1.1 To what extent are the execution modalities relevant and flexible to respond to local and national context

The end-term evaluation aligns with the desk review, confirming that the execution design of the SYP remains **highly relevant and adaptable to address both local and national contexts**, as previously noted in the Mid-Term Review, Annual Project Report, and End-Term Evaluation Report. These modalities encompass various components such as the Skills Development Fund, grants to PSUOs, grants to innovative hubs managed by NGOs, financial and procurement procedures, skills development and employment training, as well as M&E systems, and feedback and complaints mechanisms.

At the national level, **the project closely aligns with the National Policy Agenda** 2017-2022, focusing on priorities such as economic independence, social justice, rule of law, and quality education for all. Specifically, it supports strategies for economic growth, gender equality promotion, and improving education-to-employment transitions. The SYP also corresponds to objectives outlined in the National Employment Strategy 2021-2025, meeting the second policy priority to "Accelerate the improvement process of the TVET System in Palestine." Additionally, the SYP aligns with the **Labour Sector Strategy (2021-2023, goal 2),** emphasising TVET system enhancement and skilled labour force preparation. Furthermore, the project is in harmony with the TVET Strategy developed in 2010, addressing issues like social inclusion and labour market relevance enhancement. Its goal is to improve TVET graduates' employability through unified quality standards implementation.

Meta-Analysis of the Labour Market in Palestine: The project's design is informed by a comprehensive analysis of the local context, including a meta-analysis of labour market dynamics, to ensure identified risks are adequately mitigated during project design. One of them concerned a meta-analysis of the labour market in Palestine giving an overview of sectors, trades, and corresponding demand for vocational and 21st century skills, that hold potential for (self-)employment for youth and vulnerable groups in Palestine. The study showed the effect of the challenging political situation and Covid-19 and its impact on the economic situation in Palestine and on the needs of the private sector. The result of this study was the starting point for setting up the Skills Development Fund (SDF) and rolling out the pilot, focusing on demand-driven training programmes.

Regarding the **alignment of project modalities with the perspectives of strategic partners** and **implementers**, the end-term evaluation confirmed that 22 out of 24 respondents, including members of the steering committee, project team, innovative hubs, civil society organisations (CSOs), and private sector umbrellas, agreed during the evaluation that the project's interventions remained suitable for the country's context and the labour market dynamics in Palestine, both pre- and post-war in Gaza. The project adopted various approaches that consistently met the needs and priorities of implementing partners. These included SDF support for PSUOs and TVET centres, support for Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to utilise 21st-century skills development, and collaboration. The SDF significantly enhanced TVET relevance by aligning training programmes with local labour market needs through demand-driven partnerships, although challenges persist in fully engaging the private sector due to concerns over skilled graduates' migration.

All respondents at strategic and implementation levels confirmed the project's alignment with the demands of the Palestinian labour market. Consequently, the Skills Development Fund (SDF) directed its grants towards key sectors such as IT, smart technology, agriculture, electricity, solar energy, tourism-hospitality, and light industries like jewelry design and production, furniture, garment and textile, wood carving, engraving, elevator installation and maintenance, car maintenance, wall and floor tiling.

Moreover, nineteen out of 24 stakeholders observed that the project's alignment with the Palestinian labour market was evident in its efforts to bridge the gap between labour supply and demand. This was achieved by encouraging private sector engagement in identifying technical and vocational education needs, aiming to equip the workforce with essential skills for competitiveness and growth. Consequently, the project's activities primarily focused on skill enhancement to improve employability, particularly addressing the elevated unemployment rates among university graduates and workers.

Additionally, the SYP is consistent with PSUOs' strategies, aiming to enhance youth capacities, bridge skills gaps, and improve living conditions for Palestinian youth.

QE1: 1.2 To what extent are the execution modalities relevant to respond to international context and SDGs

The implementation modalities have been relevant and adequate to the international context. The project aligns with Enabel's 2030 strategy, specifically targeting the reduction of social and economic inequalities. This includes efforts to ensure equal access to basic services, provide sustainable business opportunities and decent jobs, and address discriminatory practices and gender stereotypes. Furthermore, the alignment of programme interventions with several SDGs will be described as part of a comprehensive analysis, consistent with the human rights approach used in this evaluation.

UNESCO highlighted that the execution of the TVET for the Future project represents a strategic and appropriate initiative in addressing TVET priorities. The project has successfully aligned with numerous objectives outlined in national employment strategies and priorities. UNESCO's activities included extensive training of TVET staff on transversal skills, development of manuals for integrating new skills into curricula, and guidance for career counselling, all aimed at enhancing the quality and relevance of TVET impact. These measures were designed to ensure that TVET programmes are closely aligned with market needs and support innovation and entrepreneurship among youth.

QE1: To what extent are the execution modalities relevant to respond to with beneficiaries needs

The vocational training and education modality covered training topics tailored to address the needs of both trainees and the demand of labour market. Sixteen training topics were offered to participants at TVET centres across the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, aligning with the requirements of trainees and the Palestinian labour market. These topics were addressed in a total of 22 training courses, with 6 courses conducted in Gaza and 16 in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Some of the topics included were: Electricity, Automotive (car maintenance), Culinary arts, restaurants, and hospitality, Elevator installation and energy optimisation, Agriculture: hydroponics, organic farming production, ornamental plants, Fashion design, Gold jewelry design and manufacturing, Upholstery training, Plumbing, Smart homes and modern technology, Wall and floor tiling, Solar energy, Animation, Website development, Graphic design, Big data, Business analysis, E-marketing, Wood carving and engraving, and Sewing.

According to the beneficiaries' point of view, the project interventions (skills development and 21st century skills) were mostly appropriate. Findings from focus group discussions involving 70% of respondents across three hubs in Jenin, Tubas, Jericho, Hebron, and Jerusalem revealed that they received training equipping them with basic skills necessary for employment. However, 30% felt the

training only partially met job market needs, especially given the high demand for employment, particularly among recent graduates. Discussions at nine TVET centres showed that 75% of participants felt the vocational training aligned well with their needs. 25% noted that some programmes lacked encouragement for women to enter the job market due to social barriers, particularly in male-dominated professions like carpentry, blacksmithing, and maintaining water and electricity networks. Additionally, participants in 7 focus group discussions, who attended the 21st Century Skills training, highlighted a deficiency in the comprehensive coverage of topics related to entrepreneurship and practical marketing skills, despite their significance. This points to a flaw in the design of the training programmes. Moreover, the participants reported the limited opportunities for internships in private companies after completing the training in the innovative hubs, since this need was not part of the project design.

Box 3 Motivations driving the trainees' participation

Participants emphasised the importance of training to meet their needs, particularly in obtaining certification to enhance job prospects. They sought guidance and support for job searches to navigate the employment landscape effectively. Many trainees aimed to start entrepreneurial ventures, viewing training as a pathway to income generation and potential business ownership, especially in fields like solar energy and hydroponic farming, which contribute to sustainability efforts. They also valued the integration of TVET training with university education to improve employment opportunities, particularly in sectors like hospitality, where both practical and theoretical experience are crucial for today's job market. Additionally, trainees expressed interest in learning about online job platforms and digital literacy for modern job searches, along with acquiring skills to expand startups and market products effectively online.

Source: Focus Group Discussions

3.2 Coherence

Global evaluation of relevance	A	Highly Satisfactory

Internal coherence

QE 6: Do other interventions as the EU-funded Youth Economic Empowerment in Palestine (YEP) contribute to strengthen the positive effects generated by the SYP?

Enabel's portfolio exhibits a high degree of synergy with the SYP project. Funded by Belgian resources totalling 12.5 million Euros (2022-2026), Specific Objective 3 under Enabel has developed a new Cooperation Portfolio for the same period, with a budget of 70 million Euros. This portfolio comprises two main pillars and two overarching objectives that directly address global challenges while fully aligning with SDGs, national strategic priorities, and Belgian Minister of Development Cooperation directives. Notably, projects under Specific Objective 3 are implemented by the same team responsible for executing the SYP.[17]

SYP has fostered productive **collaborations with various third-party initiatives within the Enabel portfolio,** such as the EU-funded 'SAWA' project, set to conclude in 2022 (with SAWA II receiving additional approval in 2022). Primarily targeting start-ups in Gaza, the SAWA project aims to enhance the capacity of selected Community Based Organisations and PSUO to identify and mentor aspiring entrepreneurs in Gaza, guiding them towards sustainable start-up ventures. Young individuals in Gaza who complete the SYP training programme and express an interest in self-employment are encouraged to participate in the SAWA program. The intervention by SYP has effectively guided promising young talents towards the incubator programme facilitated by SAWA.

The SYP project has built upon the successful experience of a previous programme, where the WBL method was integrated into all TVET trainings. Enabel implemented a project from 2014 to 2018 titled

[17] Final SYP report 2024

'Enhancing Capacities for Institution Building' (ECIB), focused on youth skills development with the main aim of improving employment opportunities in Palestine.

The EU-funded **Youth Economic Empowerment in Palestine** (YEP) project, amounting to 5 million Euros for the period of 2022-2024, has significantly complemented the positive outcomes generated by SYP. YEP, implemented by Enabel, was formulated in 2021 and formally initiated in December of the same year. The project commenced its activities in early 2022, employing a team already engaged in SYP implementation, bolstered by the addition of one international expert and one local officer. The end-term evaluation, conducted through desk reviews and interviews with Enabel staff, revealed a **strong interconnectedness between SYP and YEP**. This coherence is evident through grants provided to support self-employment initiatives, specifically targeting practical challenges in Palestine. Several initiatives within YEP contribute to strengthening the positive effects generated by SYP, including:

- Capacity building for implementing partners.
- Utilisation of the 21st-century manual within the YEP project to train school students and recent graduates.
- Adoption of the structural framework of the SYP project, including the establishment of a steering committee and regular team meetings.
- PEF's commitment to sustaining collaboration with Enabel, leveraging existing networks with private companies to enhance their capacities and yield positive outcomes.
- Establishment of partnerships between YEP, PSUO, and CSOs to ensure continued skills development and employment opportunities.
- Integration of WBL methodologies and 21st-century skills into YEP, facilitated through the Polytechnic University hub.
- Reservation of WBL opportunities for trainees with lower skill levels or those seeking skills from a basic level, excluding those already employed.
- Inclusion of training on 21st-century skills and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), utilising Enabel's high-quality manual, currently in the implementation phase.

External coherence

QE 7 To what extent the innovation hubs have benefited of contributions from the actions implemented by other partners (international and local)?

The following programmes, funded by various donors and international agencies, complement the SYP interventions.

Increasing Job Opportunities for Palestinian Youth:[18] The Dual Studies Program, funded by BMZ and executed by GIZ, aims to enhance employment prospects for Palestinian youth post their completion of labour market-oriented training. The synergies are manifested through:

- Dual approach and apprenticeship schemes for graduates
- Private sector involvement in the training process
- Enhancing the quality and relevance of training programmes at various educational levels

Led by GIZ, the Enhancing Job Opportunities for Palestinian Youth (PALM) project endeavours to enrich employment prospects for Palestinian youth through training programmes aligned with labour market demands. The synergies arise from the enhancement of youth employment opportunities via vocational

[18] SYP-Final report 2024

training initiatives, active participation of the private sector in training endeavour's, and collaboration with the Employment Fund to further support employment initiatives.[19]

The **Pre-service and In-service Training for Vocational Education Teachers/Train the Trainers** (TTT) project, managed by GIZ and concluded in 2021, aimed to improve the skills of vocational training professionals. It focused on developing formal regulations, providing ongoing training for staff, and establishing a qualification system for in-company trainers. The subsequent DO TVET project strengthens the TVET system in Palestine by supporting the TVET Commission. The synergies found in the following interventions:

- Enhancing youth employment opportunities through vocational training
- Private sector involvement in the training process
- Improving the quality and relevance of training programmes across different educational levels
- Collaborating with the TVET Commission

From May 2021 to November 2023, UNESCO implemented the "Increasing TVET Competencies for Youth in the Palestinian Labour Market" project,[20] known as TVET4Future. Funded by the Government of Belgium through Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency, this project aimed to enhance vocational skills among youth in marginalised areas of Palestine, including Area C in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. It focused on supporting women, youth with disabilities, and economically marginalised groups to improve their access to the labour market.

The project had synergies and complementarities with the SYP programme in terms of:

- Creating an enabling environment to enhance TVET contributions to youth employment.
- Enhancing TVET competencies among youth and reducing the skills mismatch between the supply and demand sides of the labour market.
- Bridging the skills gap in the labour market, minimising the mismatch between supplied and demanded skills. Emphasis was placed on promoting 21st-century skills, which are essential for quality and inclusive learning, and lifelong learning that facilitates workforce entry, especially for TVET learners.
- Developing innovative hubs: Creating a procedural manual for mainstreaming needed skills to support innovation, business, and start-up development in the TVET field (such as 21st-century skills, entrepreneurship, and green skills).
- Developing a national procedural manual for the creation of TVET innovation hubs.
- Contributing to SDG 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030, by increasing the number of youth and adults (with and without disabilities) who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.
- Contributing to SDG 5: Eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable girls and women, including girls with disabilities, refugees, and children in vulnerable situations.

Additionally, the **Capacity Building of PSUOs** by the Cologne Chamber of Crafts, as part of the TVET Partnership Palestine initiative, fosters collaboration between CCIs, the Ministry of Labour (MoL), and private sector entities. This initiative aims to establish a robust TVET system, promote demand-driven training initiatives, and strengthen overall coordination for improved employment prospects in Palestine.

[19] SYP-Final Report 2024
[20] TVET4 Future, Project Assessment Report, December 2023

Implemented by ILO-Palestine, the Decent Work Programme (DWP) 2023–2025 aims to expand access to employment and economic opportunities, social services, social protection, and rights-based, accountable governance institutions and processes.

3.3 Efficiency

Global evaluation of Efficiency	B	Satisfactory

QE.1: 1.2 Have the execution modalities (methodology of implementation, and bilateral agreements, monitoring system etc) been elaborated so as to ensure an efficient use of resources available to the intervention and facilitating the delivery of outputs from the inputs injected?

Skills Development Fund (SDF) modality

Under SDF, the project signed 23 grant agreements with Palestinian private sector organisations[21], 5 grants[22] with NGO Innovation centres in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, and an agreement with the Palestinian Employment Fund. These organisations were selected based on a grant application process, and the grants were evaluated according to criteria outlined in the grant application announcement to ensure transparency throughout the project.

During the end-term evaluation and desk review, Enabel's team noted that in 2020, the SDF did not select the National TVET Commission (NTC) to manage the skills grant programme due to incomplete legal endorsement by the Cabinet and insufficient staff capacity. Enabel then partnered with private sector umbrella organisations (PSUOs) to implement the SDF, recognising the strain on the limited project team and thus building capacity within the private sector. Feedback from eleven implementing partners, including private sector organisations and NGOs affirmed the efficiency of project implementation modalities. Most implementing partners from the PSUOs praised the flexibility of the grants provided by the Belgian Development Agency through SDF in addressing the challenges and difficulties encountered during implementation. This flexibility allowed for solutions such as extending the time frame and permitting courses to attract trainees older than 29 to meet the required number of participants and commence the training. The SDF-grants also enabled the implementation of the twenty-first century guide in each innovation hub according to its specific needs.

Initially, financial and purchasing procedures, along with monitoring and reporting systems, posed challenges for implementing partners. However, efforts by the SYP team to explain these procedures and monitor project implementation significantly bolstered PSUOs' and NGOs' capacity to execute SDF grant modalities efficiently. During the end-term evaluation, five implementing partners expressed concerns about inadequate grant budgets covering necessary inputs and activities, particularly affecting institutions in Jerusalem. This shortfall reflects private sector umbrellas' deficiency in grant budgeting expertise, especially regarding salaries or procurement.

Box 4 Employment sectors covered by the SDF

Fifteen PSUOs out of twenty-four stakeholders[23] interviewed during the ETE reported that the project issued an open call to various entities, including the private sector, professional and technical unions, and NGOs in specific sectors such as IT, modern agriculture, renewable energy and climate change, and light industry. These entities were instructed with clear guidelines and procedures for preparing and submitting grant proposals.

Source: Key Informant interviews

[21] 24 grants were given to PSUOs and PEF to achieve Result 1 Increased labour market opportunities for youth by supporting technical skills development demanded by the labour market

[22] 6 grants provided to NGOs and UNESCO to achieve result 2: Young people have gained 21st Century skills for work and life

[23] Stakeholders met during the ETE (SYP staff, SC, implementing partners)

During the implementation phase, five PSUOs out of the eighteen implementing organisations interviewed during the ETE expressed concerns about the **complexity of financial and procurement procedures**. These complexities led to challenges in comprehension, causing delays in implementation. Consequently, these organisations sought clarification and guidance from the financial empowerment team before proceeding. During the **call for proposals**, the project team organised workshops aimed at clarifying grant procedures, as well as finance and procurement processes. Sixteen out of twenty-four stakeholders interviewed during the ETE confirmed that during the implementation phase, the Enabel team supported implementing partners. While no significant technical challenges were encountered, financial difficulties arose and respondents highlighted that they struggled with understanding procurement policies, contracting with training centres, vendors, and trainers, as well as providing required supporting documentation for payments.

Unclear financial procedures also affected training implementation, resulting in insufficient availability of raw materials and educational equipment during sessions. One implementing partner noted that the project finance team, comprising former and current finance managers, introduced unclear procedures to resolve payment issues at a vocational training centre associated with a university in the West Bank. This lack of clarity led to a failure to process a financial payment of 13 thousand euros to the implementing institution from the project funds. Seventeen out of eighteen implementing partners reported that they lacked management and financial expertise and experience in reporting. However, Enabel made significant efforts to address these gaps in IPS capacity by conducting visits and providing in-person and online coaching. **Enabel staff offered implementing partners sufficient and clear guidance on reporting and monitoring requirements**. Some project staff names were mentioned during the end-term evaluation, and these individuals' provided assistance in Enabel's procedures, whether financial, technical, M&E, or reporting.

Box 5 Efficiency to the SDF grants budget

Twelve out of eighteen implementing partners reported that the financial resources received through the SDF grants were utilised properly, with flexibility in adapting to training needs, thereby enhancing the quality of implementation. On the other hand, six out of eighteen implementing partners interviewed during the ETE did not prepare the budget adequately to cover all costs (such as trainers' fees, transportation, and catering), which affected the satisfaction of both trainers and trainees. Additionally, some implementing partners complained about delayed payments, which sometimes caused problems.
Four respondents out of eighteen reported that the lack of sufficient equipment and raw materials limited participants' capacity to apply the knowledge gained during training. Some trainees were dissatisfied with the lack of allocation of part of the grants budget for trainees' transportation.

Source: Key Informant interviews and focus group discussions

Direct Grant for the Pilot of the First Employment Facility (FEF)

A direct grant agreement was established with the Palestinian Employment Fund, yielding significant accomplishments[24]:

- Bridging the skills gap for 97 young graduates by facilitating their entry into the workforce and fostering dialogue between private sector entities and higher education (HE) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.
- Advocating for inclusive employment practices and promoting awareness of decent work principles among private sector enterprises.
- Enhancing the capabilities of PEF personnel (employment officers) and beneficiaries in 21st-century skills.
- Establishing a centralised repository of labour market information and internship opportunities.

[24] KII with PEF+ SYP final report 2024

- Providing support to private sector firms, particularly those in manufacturing and information and communication technology (ICT) sectors, to alleviate the impacts of COVID-19 through job placements with wage subsidies.

The grant concluded by the end of 2022. Expansion efforts are underway within the Youth Employment Programme (R1), which involves widening the target demographic, extending geographical reach, and institutionalising the FEF. This entails the development of an Operations Manual and a skills-based matching platform.

Corporation agreement with UNESCO

The implementation of skills prediction models by UNESCO has been instrumental in ensuring that TVET systems adapt efficiently to the changing demands of the labour market. This adaptation enhances the relevance and efficacy of vocational training programmes. With support from Belgium through UNESCO, key national partners such as the NTC, MoL, and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) have enhanced their capacities to employ these models effectively. Consequently, these stakeholders are proficient in generating forecasts based on available data.

Although the Belgian Cooperation officially signed the cooperation agreement with UNESCO in July 2021, there were delays in implementing project activities. These activities were carried out during 2022 according to the revised timeline stipulated by the agreement, concluding in September 2023.

Collaboration with UNESCO contributed to enhancing vocational training programmes' relevance and efficiency, though delays were encountered. The Cooperation Agreement with UNESCO initiated in July 2021 faced delays in activity implementation, but these issues were resolved in 2022, allowing activities to proceed as per a revised timeline.

Cooperation Agreement with Syntra West

The Cooperation Agreement with Syntra West faced limitations in delivering activities due to insufficient human resources at the time. As a result, the agreement was amended to reduce the scope of activities.

Efficiency of training modalities (TVET and 21 century skills)

Efficient communication tools used by implementing partners for trainee recruitment: This finding relates to the communication tools utilised by project partners for recruiting trainees from both TVET and the 21st Century. Trainees acquire information about training through various channels: Implementing partner Facebook pages or websites, registering for training via career.com and Show Me Online platforms, word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and relatives, and recommendations from university professors, colleagues, and trainers.

Trainees' selection criteria: 70% of focus group participants indicated in the end-term evaluation that training implementing organisations efficiently utilised selection criteria tailored to the 15-18 age group, especially evident in tracks like Resilience for the 21st Century, Vocational Skills Development, and Employment targeting young graduates aged 18-29. However, some criteria were not effectively applied according to 25 percent of respondents. For instance, gender considerations were neglected in courses traditionally perceived as male-dominated, discouraging female participation. Accepting trainees from diverse educational and professional backgrounds also posed challenges, requiring adaptation of training methodologies.

Number of days and hours of training for R1 and R2:[25] The duration of training varies depending on the training topics. Generally, trainees received 3-5 days of training on topics selected from the 21st Century Skills Manual. Professional skills development spans from 3 months to a year, totalling up to 600 training hours in some subjects.

Table 2 Number of trainees attended TVET training (Result 1)

Training interventions	# of young women from WB and Jerusalem	# of young men from WB and Jerusalem	# of young women from Gaza	# of young men from Gaza	Total
16 training courses for WB and Jerusalem	103	233	0	0	336
6 training courses	0	0	132	270	402
Total					738

Table 3 Number of trainees attended 21st Century Training (Resilience and Employment) (Result 2)

Training interventions	# of young women and men from WB and Jerusalem
Trainers	176
Nr. Of trainers for resilience training	958
Nr. Of employment tracker	1062
Nr. Of Startups supported	23
Total number of trainees Total number of Trainers Total number of Startups supported **Total**	2996 176 23 **3195**[26]

Training materials provided to participants under skills development and 21 century training: 37.50% of the FGD participants confirmed that the training materials provided were comprehensive and in sufficient detail. However, 62.50% of the participants reported that the training materials were not provided adequately.

Under Result two - SYP, trainees attend one of the specified subjects for 20-30 training hours on basic life skills or entrepreneurship. However, delays in the availability of the 21st Century Guide affected some graduates' access to these skills. Yet, some partners managed to integrate 21st-century training into TVET centres despite delays**.**

Master training and TOT sessions were conducted, with master trainers leading TOT sessions for trainers responsible for delivering training directly to youth. Challenges faced by some hubs affected the efficiency the training to limited extent due to staff turnover, limited understanding of financial procedures, and legal difficulties, impacting grant management and operations.

Training monitoring and follow-up mechanism used by implementing partners (PSUOs and innovative hubs): Out of the 18 implementing partners (IPs) interviewed during the ETE, 14 indicated their utilisation of efficient training monitoring and follow-up tools to ensure adherence to training quality and efficient use of timelines. This included regular evaluation of trainer performance, ongoing monitoring of trainee progress, and solicitation of feedback for improving future courses. Evaluation forms were administered at the conclusion of each training course to gauge trainees' satisfaction with various aspects such as venue, training methods, and the clarity of training materials. Pre- and post-tests were also employed by trainers to assess trainees' knowledge levels throughout the program. Feedback from trainers was systematically incorporated into training reports, documenting the training process comprehensively.

[25] SYP monitoring tracker-reviewed on May 04, 2024
[26] Enabel-Monitoring tracker version 24 May 2024

Trainers also analyzed pre- and post-tests to gauge training effectiveness as confirmed by stakeholders during the end-term evaluation. Implementing partners utilised WhatsApp effectively as a cost-effective tool to maintain connectivity with trainees, monitor attendance, assess commitment levels, and gather feedback on training progression. Additionally, WhatsApp was used post-training to follow up with graduates and assist them in job placement by sharing relevant vacancies. Follow-up efforts extended for a period of at least 6 months, with some partners extending support for up to 9 months.

Despite the positive feedback mentioned above, several challenges have impacted the efficiency of training, particularly in the context of 21st-century skills:

- Unequal access to equipment: Disparities in access to equipment were observed, with some participants relying on personal devices while others had access to equipment suitable for digital training. This inequality affected the acquisition of practical skills, as those with limited access encountered difficulties during practical training sessions.
- Limited follow-up after completion of training: Participants expressed concerns about the lack of adequate follow-up after completing the training, which reduced the expected support in their job search efforts. This issue arises from the understaffing of technical and vocational support offices

Work-based learning (WBL)

WBL experts from MOL and Enabel Palestine aimed to improve work-based learning in Palestine through a local team of 9 experts developing tools and conducting workshops for private sector entities. Delays occurred due to disagreements over payment structures. Despite attending workshops, many private sector partners lacked clarity and written documentation on WBL implementation. Strategic stakeholders affirmed the program's financial and capacity-building support but expressed uncertainty on effective WBL application. Collaborative efforts led to significant improvements in streamlining procedures, though challenges persisted due to limited capacities in PSUOs and partner coordination issues.

Human resources and operational challenges

Human resource constraints and turnover: Enabel's limited human resources impacted field visits, follow-up activities, and overall project efficiency. Staff turnover further exacerbated challenges in monitoring and evaluation, hindering effective partnership management. However, strategic oversight by the executive management by the Enabel Manager provided consistent guidance throughout the project lifecycle, helping to address the challenges encountered during implementation.

Delays from implementation partners were linked to beneficiary selection, staffing issues, limited capacity to manage grants, and deficiencies in monitoring and reporting (desk review and survey questionnaires).

Insufficient funding affected the implementation of interventions, with 13 out of 20 PSU organisations surveyed noting these effects.

Access to the 21st Century manual during the project implementation period was restricted due to delays, resulting in its limited use in vocational training centres.

Monitoring and Evaluation System

The end-of-term evaluation findings align with those of the mid-term evaluation in assessing Enabel's M&E system throughout the project's duration. Overall, the M&E system demonstrates satisfactory performance, focusing on the following areas:

Establishment of M&E System: Initially, the project set up a basic M&E system, enhancing planning, monitoring, and result management capabilities. Additional refinements were made, such as clarifying indicators, setting target values per year, defining responsibilities, and updating risk factors. These adjustments ensured the system's relevance and efficiency.

Regular Analysis of the Results Framework: The SYP team consistently analyzes progress on activities and indicators to ensure alignment with higher-level objectives. Results-based monitoring, in collaboration with partners, involves continuous data collection, analysis, and comparison of actual versus expected results. Internal workshops further facilitate discussions on project progress and outcomes.

Monitoring tracker: the end-term evaluation noted that the Project MEL officer **developed a monitoring tracker in Excel format** that presents progress on each indicator per year. Additionally, the monitoring tracker documents the number of training days conducted by each implementing partner and the number of beneficiaries segregated by gender, type of training course, and location.

The monitoring tracker adds value by ensuring the actual number of beneficiaries per training course. The system records the ID number of each beneficiary to avoid duplication in counting, particularly when a person takes multiple training courses. This approach increases data accuracy and reliability, updating the results chain indicators effectively.

Efficient Operating Modalities: Clear operating modalities were outlined for M&E activities, including:

- Identification of performance indicators, baselines, and realistic targets.
- Definition of indicators and measurement units, enhancing M&E efforts.
- Baseline study and Theory of Change (ToC) development to guide project activities.
- Orientation workshops with implementing partners to ensure understanding of the results framework.
- Provision of forms and templates for data collection to implementing partners.
- Engagement of implementing partners in data collection and analysis to inform reports.
- Regular monitoring visits conducted by Enabel's team (MEL, business technical, and financial teams).
- Pre and post-assessments conducted by TVET and Hub trainers in agreement with Enabel to assess knowledge gained.
- Annual project reports and a final report were produced and shared with donors and the steering committee.
- Alignment with Global Indicators: Enabel now incorporates Key Development Indicators at the global level, aligning them with local programmes such as those in Palestine. This progress in Enabel's evaluation system occurred after the mid-term evaluation.
- Two types of external evaluation have been conducted for the project: a midterm evaluation held in 2022, and a final evaluation held between February and May 2024.

Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms

To enhance **the transparency accountability of the project towards the project beneficiaries** and as a response to the recommendation from the MTR, the project (SYP) established a complaints and feedback mechanism. During the End-term evaluation interview with the MEL officer, it was revealed that **the officer received 7 complaints** from trainees or implementing partners, such as non-payment of transportation fees and inadequate practical training. These complaints were investigated further based

on the feedback mechanism procedures and **resolved in cooperation** with the technical team and relevant organisations, without causing harm to the complainant.

The implementing partners were well-**acquainted with this transparency tool**. Nonetheless, during the end-term evaluation, **one of the cases interviewed** voiced apprehension over a missed final payment, attributing it to murky procurement and financial procedures within the project. They opted against filing a complaint to prevent any strain on their relationship with Enabel.

Furthermore, **three trainees from a West Bank governorate disclosed spending** over three months in pursuit of a secure email platform to address concerns about certain training sessions' efficacy and the inadequacy of equipment supplied by implementing organisation. Their reluctance stemmed from fearing potential repercussions.

3.4 Effectiveness

Global evaluation of effectiveness	B	Satisfactory

QE 2: To what extent the tools and approach-es proposed and developed (capacity building of the master trainers, etc) have contributed to improve the 21st century skills quality in the targeted area of intervention

QE.3: To what extent are the innovation hubs able to adapt their operationality towards resilient tracks and 21st century skills?

This criterion evaluates the extent to which the intervention has achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and results, considering any disparities across different groups.

Achieved Indicators at outcome level

The overall outcome is an enhanced transition of youth to employment and self-employment through improved skills and competencies. the following indicators shows that: 3 indicators were effectively achieved, one under achievement, one not achieved and 2 indicators were cancelled, because the SDF was piloted by Enabel and not implemented as SDF-blueprint by national body.

Table 4 Achievement of outcome indicators

Indicators	Progress Status
Percentage of Employed Youth Among Training Graduates	Underachievement. Evidence from Tracer Study: Figure 13: Employment Status of Graduates by Training Modality – Are you employed (Yes or No): The value reached in 2023 before October 7th , as mentioned in the monitoring tracker, is 68% compared to the target value of 76%. The result is good; however, the target value was not realistic for the Palestinian context, which is unstable and affected by various security shocks.
Percentage of Self-Employed Youth Among Training Graduates	Overachieved. Among graduates, 21% of 21st-century skills graduates, 16% of Wage Support training graduates, and 28% of WBL training graduates reported engagement in freelance or self-employment, overachieving this indicator. 22% is the average achievement between the three modalities compared to 4% target value = 18% increase over the target.
Number of WBL graduates completing over 30% structured field training in workplaces	Underachieved in terms of the number of graduates, with only 1,227 out of the targeted 1,600. However, the graduates completed over 30% of their training hours in workplaces.

Indicators	Progress Status
Satisfaction Level of Youth with TVET Services	Overachieved. Participants in WBL training exceeded expectations with a 90% satisfaction level, exceeding the target by 6.9%.27
Percentage of Graduates with Established Relations for Clear Follow-Up Plans (Apprenticeship)	Not contractual indicator
Percentage of Innovation Hubs' Budget Co-Financed	Not contractual indicator.
% of Skills Development Fund budget that is co-financed by private sector and/or other sources of income.	Not contractual indicator
As outlined in the SYP final report for 2024, three indicators, namely the percentage of graduates with established relations for clear follow-up plans (Apprenticeship), and the percentage of the selected innovation hubs budget co-financed by the private sector and/or other sources of income, and the percentage of the Skills Development Fund budget co-financed by the private sector and/or other sources of income, were cancelled by the project. This decision was made due to the fact that the support provided to private sector umbrellas by the Skills Development Fund was implemented by Enabel rather than a national actor such as NTC, due to the reasons explained efficiency criterion.	

Achieved Indicators at output level

Table 5 Achievement of indicators under Result 1

Indicators for R1	Progress Status
Number of Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and companies capacitated in WBL:	Overachieved. 212 companies and TVET centres capacitated, surpassing the target of 196.
Percentage increase in VTCs' capacity in the concept of WBL:	Achieved. The WBL concept was introduced to 23 Public Sector institutions in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. PSUOs and the PEF contacted 113 companies to host trainees for WBL in the West Bank and Jerusalem.
Number of PSUOs establishing the SDF	Achieved, with 23 grants provided to PSUOs.
Number of WBL trainings organised	Overachieved, with 55 training sessions, workshops, coaching, and follow-ups provided, exceeding the target of 20.
Number of youth trained in TVET	Underachieved, with only 1227 out of the targeted 1,600 graduates achieving this indicator.

Table 6 Achievement of indicators under Result 2

Indicators for R2	Progress Status
Number of innovation hubs supported:	This indicator was reached through the provision of grants by the SYP to five innovative hubs located in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem. I addition to three e-TVET innovation hubs supported by UNESCO[28]
Number of master-trainers and/or coaches capacitated in 21st-century and digital skills for use in innovation hubs:	This indicator is underachieved, as the project reached 15 master trainers compared to the target of 21.
Number of trainers and/or coaches capacitated in 21st-century and digital skills for use in innovation hubs (by master trainers and coaches):	This indicator is overachieved, with 118 Training of Trainers (TOT) participants capacitated in green skills, 21st-century skills, entrepreneurship, and digital skills.
Number of youth (aged 16-29) benefited from or used the innovation hubs:	This indicator is overachieved, as the target value was 2800, and the actual achieved was 2996 (these figures from 8 hubs-SYP and UNESCO).[29]

[27] Tracer study -Enabel, March 2024
[28] SYP final report 2024
[29] SYP-Monitoring tracker for the project indicators version 23 May 2024

Indicators for R2	Progress Status
Percentage of satisfaction among youth aged 16-29 who utilised the innovation hubs.	Based on Figure 29 in the 2023 tracer study results, 83% of participants were satisfied with the training provided through the 21st Century Innovation centres, 13% were very satisfied, and the remaining 4% were either neutral or dissatisfied. Feedback gathered from participants in focus group discussions during the end-term evaluation indicated satisfaction with their access to the hubs. This was particularly emphasised by young women in Jericho, Tubas and Station-J, who expressed visiting the innovative hubs to attend training, socialise with friends, engage with trainers, utilise computer labs, and seek job opportunities. In Zababda-Jenin, some young graduate trainees regularly visited the hub to inquire about job opportunities. Two women shared success stories of securing short-term employment with support from the innovation hub.

Effectiveness of project interventions under Result 1

SDF-blueprint: The project team and strategic partners have confirmed that the blueprint document is a valuable tool for securing grants funding. It offers guidance for proposal submissions, implementation, and grant monitoring. However, some grantees face challenges with financial and procurement procedures, especially those with limited capacity and accessing grants for the first time.

The implementing partners overlooked the long-term vision of the SDF-SDG scheme, which aims to establish a sustainable financing and technical support system for skills development in Palestine. Instead, their focus was solely on evaluating the effectiveness of the grant modality awarded to 23 skills and 8 innovative, PEF as stipulated by the call for proposals.

Capacity Building: Implementing partners largely agree that Enabel's mitigation measures have significantly improved their understanding and proficiency in SDF procedures. SYP's effective workshop orientations, thorough follow-up visits, on-the-job learning experiences, and consistent communication have strengthened partners' capacities in financial management, procurement, monitoring, and reporting protocols. Eight partners specifically noted that the SYP programme enhanced their capabilities in grants implementation, enabling them to pursue funding from various donors like USAID (e.g., Forsa), Mercy Corps, Japan, and the YEP-EU project.

Relationship with implementing partners: Key strategic partners successfully established effective relationships with implementing partners during the project. Among the 18 evaluated implementing partners at the end of the implementation phase, eleven reported fostering productive collaborations with TVET centres and other PSUOS companies. These collaborations notably improved project outcomes, particularly in skilled development training, selection of WBL companies, and maintaining agreed-upon standards for practical training.

Effectiveness of Skills development training: Vocational training provided by TVET centres significantly enhanced trainees' employability skills. Feedback from participants in nine focus group discussions highlighted the effectiveness and value of the training across various domains such as cooking, aquaculture, carpentry, jewelry manufacturing, and clothing design. Moreover, 60% of participants noted the effectiveness of WBL, which provided practical experience in private companies for a minimum of three months. This hands-on approach deepened their understanding of business operations, management practices, and labour-related aspects, enhancing training quality and employability. The remaining 40% suggested allocating more time to work-based learning to align with effective WBL standards. Partner institutions also confirmed the training's effectiveness in meeting Palestinian market needs, providing both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Pre- and post-test results demonstrated significant improvements, with certain courses like electricity network installation and elevator

maintenance adopting rigorous examination standards set by professional organisations like the Syndicate of Electrical Engineers and Technicians for certification.

During the end-of-term evaluation, a significant percentage (40%) of participants in nine FGDs identified challenges that impacted the training's effectiveness, specifically:

- Inadequate Tools and Equipment: Vocational training centres and learning sites faced shortages of tools and equipment, notably in areas such as jewellery and fashion design, graphic design, and digital training. This inadequacy limited the development of participants' practical skills and led to a decrease in practical training hours.
- Limited WBL: Certain private companies hesitated to offer specialised training during WBL, opting instead for secondary tasks unrelated to core specialisation areas like elevator installation and jewellery engraving. Private sector institutions made efforts to address these concerns by communicating with company owners, resulting in mixed responses.
- The diverse academic and technical backgrounds of trainees presented challenges in certain courses. For example, varying levels of experience in electronic publishing among trainees required trainers to adopt more effective training methods. However, some trainers lacked experience in addressing this challenge.
- Trainee Withdrawals: Withdrawals from courses offered by organisations such as PalTrade, the Jerusalem Station, the Palestine Foundation for Vocational and Technical Training, and the Hebron centre had a detrimental impact on training outcomes, hindering the project's goal of preparing trainees effectively. The withdrawals were primarily due to trainees being employed either within Israel or in the West Bank and Jerusalem, making it impossible for them to attend the training courses.
- Checkpoint Delays: Delays and extended waiting times at checkpoints had a negative impact on the effectiveness of training for some participants, resulting in missed sessions or partial attendance.
- Socio-Cultural Restrictions: A small number of trainees encountered socio-cultural restrictions that impacted the effectiveness of training in specific courses, particularly those involving the preparation of alcoholic beverages.

The project staff noted that Result 1 did not fully leverage the benefits of the 21st-century training skills manual. Delays in the manual development, as outlined in the efficiency section, were cited as the reason for this shortfall. As per the original SYP training approach, Result 1 participants were supposed to delve into specific topics from the manual. These topics were designed to impart vital skills in communication, information technology, and life skills, thereby creating an engaging learning environment.

Effectiveness of project interventions under result2

Under Result 2, the SYP developed a 21st-century training manual and conducted sessions to strengthen youth resilience and employability skills. The creation of the 21st Century Skills Guide expanded the range of topics related to 21st-century skills, elevating training standards through increased participation, discussions, and practical applications. The guide is notable for its comprehensive approach, with training topics carefully chosen to meet local market demands and global standards, ensuring trainees possess relevant and current knowledge. Additionally, its structured format supports trainees' progression and practical experience, aiding in employment readiness.

The Master Training Approach utilised by SYP staff proved effective in providing innovative hubs trainers and coordinators with the necessary tools and methods for implementing 21st-century topics and phases tailored to the needs of trainees.

Using the Training of Trainers (TOT) approach, master trainers utilised the trained methods and approach to conduct TOT sessions for 181 trainers from the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, including NGOs supported by UNESCO. Following the training, TOT participants received the manual and proceeded to conduct training sessions directly with youth in their respective governorates. Throughout the implementation phase, master trainers maintained communication with trainers to ensure effective delivery of training in accordance with the methods outlined in the manual, while allowing for some flexibility to adjust topics as needed.

To enhance the effectiveness of the manual in fostering youth resilience and employment skills, master trainers and training of trainers suggested certain modifications to existing methods or the inclusion of additional topics. These recommendations were accepted by SYP experts, who agreed to incorporate the feedback into the expansion of the 21st-century skills manual. The updated manual will place greater emphasis on digital literacy, green economy concepts, and entrepreneurship, aligning with the evolving needs and trends in today's job market.

The project effectively supported five innovation centres run by three academics in the West Bank and Jerusalem, as well as two others in Gaza. During the evaluation, the team visited centres in Jericho, Tubas, Zababdeh, and Hebron. A notable outcome of this support was the renovation and maintenance of infrastructure in these centres to enhance trainee accessibility. Essential training equipment, particularly computers, was provided to improve learning capabilities. PARC emphasised the significance of this investment in infrastructure, highlighting its role in creating efficient, environmentally friendly learning spaces equipped with effective computer labs.

Effectiveness of training on 21 century skills from young men and women views

In eight (FGDs held at innovative hubs across the West Bank and Jerusalem, 87.5% of participants praised the effectiveness and benefits of 21st-century skills training. They emphasised its role in enhancing their knowledge, skills, and capacities, leading to increased resilience and engagement in the labour market. Participants noted improvements in personality development, self-confidence, problem-solving abilities, time management skills, life skills, digital marketing expertise, entrepreneurship capabilities, and more. The training also helped participants make informed career decisions.

Among trainees in 21st-century topics, 62.50% reported that the training significantly contributed to their entry into the labour market. Furthermore, 37.50% of participants in the 21st-century training mentioned that it facilitated their immediate job placement either upon completing the course or within several months thereafter.

37% of FGD participants expressed a need for specialised training tailored to individual requirements. These include psychological training, language courses, entrepreneurship, handling persons with disabilities, statistical analysis, the Al Shamel program, e-marketing, accounting, production projects, proposal writing, as well as management and financial inclusion. Additionally, 63% of FGD participants advocated for small grants or incentives post-training to support small business initiatives.

The implementing partners of the hubs did not effectively cover some crucial topics essential for enhancing the professional capabilities of young men and women, thereby facilitating their entry into the labour market. These topics include skills related to climate change and greening, proficiency in Microsoft Office, entrepreneurship, and specialised training across all sectors as reported by beneficiaries. However, the specialised training is not part of the 21-century manual.

75% of participants stressed the importance of post-training follow-up and support mechanisms for at least one year, suggesting various channels such as mobile applications, phone calls, LinkedIn, and other

communication tools. Conversely, the remaining participants found the follow-up support received from implementing partners to be sufficient and effective.

The innovation hubs significantly contributed to achieving higher results and outcomes, leading to long-term benefits.

- 73% of participants felt the training enhanced their job search skills, and 37% successfully acquired additional training through their involvement in the project. 52% of the FGD participants at the innovative hubs encountered challenges in securing employment after the training, primarily due to the high number of graduates in the field and limited job opportunities, especially following the war in Gaza. The remaining 23% reported obtaining a three-month job opportunity, while 12.50% secured permanent employment in certain cases. Additionally, 12.50% of participants established start-up projects as a result of the training.
- 80% of the FGD trainees found the training highly effective and beneficial, especially for preparing them for work in the private sector and initiating small projects. All participants affirmed that the training effectively boosted their self-confidence. Regarding the effectiveness of decent work and salary satisfaction: 25% of participants who obtained jobs were satisfied with their salary. Another 25% of jobholders were dissatisfied with their salary. The remaining 50% felt satisfied to some extent.
- As for the effectiveness of networking to find job opportunities, participants in the 8 focus group discussions utilised various methods to secure employment, including leveraging linkages with other projects, utilising connections with IPS and hubs for job opportunities, networking through WhatsApp group colleagues, obtaining job opportunities from local companies after completing training, exploring online job platforms and websites, and networking among participants via WhatsApp groups.
- Trainees acknowledged that the training centres provided a conducive work environment, contributing to a positive training atmosphere. Some facilities were highly praised for their excellence, characterised by friendly and cooperative staff and well-equipped, comfortable spaces

3.5 Sustainability

Global evaluation of Sustainability	B	Satisfactory

QE5: To what extent the SYP model has been owned by the public and private sector partners and integrated to im-prove the labour market offer?

Sustaining relationships between all stakeholders is important to ensure the continuity of activities supporting labour skills development and entry into the labour market. A majority of respondents (19 out of 24) emphasised SDF's importance in securing ownership and collaboration among Public Sector Utilisation Organisations (PSUOs), TVET institutions, the Ministry of Labour (MoL), and NGOs. This collaborative framework not only ensures sustainable support for TVET and 21st-century training but also facilitates knowledge exchange, addresses market challenges, and promotes employment opportunities. However, two implementing partners voiced discontent with their ties to vocational training centres linked to MoL. They see this connection as obligatory due to grant terms and plan to terminate its post-grant. Their dissatisfaction arises from equipment retention by the centres, imposition of underqualified trainers, and a lack of observed catering services despite funding allocated for hospitality services.

MoL remains dedicated to preserving the program's benefits post-completion, emphasising the finalisation of the Work-Based Learning (WBL) approach and partnerships to enhance vocational training

quality. MoL's active role in the Steering Committee reflects its commitment to sustaining programme impacts, which includes refining the WBL approach and leveraging achievements in the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) and Digital Platform with partners like Enabel and other donors. Furthermore, ongoing collaboration with the Palestinian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry highlights MoL's efforts to elevate vocational training standards, ensuring lasting positive outcomes for programme participants and the workforce. MoL remains dedicated to utilising the 21st-century training manual in TVET centres and has made it available on their website for use by the private sector and individual experts.

Stakeholders stress that although TVET centres involved in the project have the necessary equipment and training materials, they struggle to maintain the intervention model due to insufficient human and financial resources. This challenge is worsened by the Palestinian government's fiscal deficit, which is further strained by the withholding of tax funds by the Palestinian Authority. To ensure the sustainability of skills development and employment initiatives, PSUOs play a crucial role as intermediaries between TVET centres, beneficiaries, and workplaces through the **establishment of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)**. These agreements are designed to secure employment opportunities for the workforce, emphasising the importance of mutual interests between signing parties in providing skilled trainees across sectors. PEF plays a vital role in assessing private companies to guarantee safe and respectful work-based learning environments for trainees. PEF's effective assessment methodology identifies suitable organisations for training or employment opportunities, contingent upon companies' commitment to and compliance with decent work standards.

Efforts to institutionalise work-based learning (WBL)have progressed with feedback from partners, yet **resource constraints hinder full integration**. External financial support is crucial for sustaining WBL effectively. Ensuring continuity of practical training under decent conditions is a challenge due to exploitative practices in some private companies, impacting skilled workforce development and relationships. Collaborative efforts with stakeholders like PSF, NGOs, and CSOs are vital to address these challenges and ensure long-term success in fostering employment opportunities and ethical workforce practices.

Trainees emphasised the importance of maintaining their knowledge and skills from training to pursue compatible job opportunities effectively.

Additionally, private sector institutions' experience in grant management and training ensures they can sustain their expertise by actively seeking new funding sources, as demonstrated by some PSUOs and innovative hubs that sustained similar interventions by securing funding from additional programmes such as YEP and Mercy Corps, with funding from USAID.(QE 7.1).

Respondents emphasised the importance of improving innovative hubs infrastructure through rehabilitation, maintenance, and equipment provision to ensure consistent training delivery on twenty-first-century skills and specialised topics for university graduates entering the job market. However, securing financial resources remains critical to cover expenses like trainers' fees, trainees' transportation, and hospitality, especially since these courses are offered free to economically disadvantaged youth.(QE 7.2)

The successful First Employment Facility (FEF) Pilot with the PEF led to an expanded programme under the EU-funded YEP project, highlighting scalability and sustainability. The positive impact of the SDF pilot was notable, strengthening public-private partnerships and expanding work-based learning opportunities, thereby enhancing the TVET sector's relevance and quality. The project's innovative approach elevated the private sector's role in ensuring training relevance and quality through demand-

driven Grant Agreements, a first in Palestine. The project gained a strong reputation in skills development and entrepreneurship, evident from high registration numbers and active participation across various levels.

3.6 Impact

Global evaluation of impact	B	Satisfactory

Analysis of impact indicators

QE4: (Successes and failures) What are the factors of success and failures to be taken into account for the further phases of the intervention?

Impact at the general objective level was assessed to measure the extent to which the project increased youth resilience in vulnerable areas in Palestine. The overarching objective of SYP is measured by two key indicators:

1. NEET Youth Percentage: This indicator focuses on the percentage of youth (aged 16-24 years) not engaged in education, employment, or training (NEET). The baseline value was 35%, and the target value is 1%. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) is the primary data source. Due to the absence of 2023 data, the project used 2022 data, where 29.1% of Palestinian youth fell into the NEET category (24.3% males and 34.2% females). This highlights hesitancy among Palestinian youth, especially females, to engage in economic activities despite being disengaged from education or training.

A comparison with the SYP baseline percentage shows a 5% reduction in youth engaged in TVET. 5% of this reduction is attributed to interventions by various programmes, including SYP. The programme positively impacted 3490 individuals aged 16-29 through internships, WBL, TVET, wage subsidies, and 21st-century skills development.

The comparison with the SYP baseline percentage shows a 5% reduction at the national level in the percentage of youth not engaged in training, education and work. This reduction is attributed to SYP's interventions and may be other similar programmes aimed at promoting and empowering Palestinian youth to obtain training opportunities leading to employment. The programme positively impacted 4223 people aged 16-29 through vocational training, vocational education, wage subsidies, and 21st-century skills development, enhancing their resilience and employability.

As a result, 40% of trainees secured job opportunities (both temporary and permanent), which is a notable achievement in an unstable labour environment subject to numerous challenges and external shocks beyond the project's control. The tracking study found the following employment rates among graduates: 10% for 21st-century skills training, 29% for wage subsidy training, and 39% for vocational training.

The project had a positive impact on graduates' employability by enhancing their acquisition of key skills and knowledge, which facilitated youth employment. Additionally, the programme significantly improved the capacity of training and vocational education service providers by offering skilled trainers, thereby enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the training provided to young men and women.

2. Youth Training Satisfaction Level: This indicator assesses trained youth's satisfaction with TVET-WBL, wage support, and 21st-century skills training. While lacking a defined baseline, it has a predetermined target, measured through final evaluation data (focus group discussions). The effect of the training showed that the majority of trainees were satisfied with the training and its quality. They reported

increased knowledge that helped them enter the labour market, with some securing permanent or temporary jobs.

The final evaluation study also highlighted personal and professional changes among trainees. They reported increased self-confidence, expanded social networks with peers, and enhanced life skills gained through the training. These changes facilitated their job search and application process, making it easier to secure employment.

Additionally, a tracking study completed by the project in March 2024 provided data on the high level of satisfaction among trainees: 94% for vocational training and 90% for wage support training and 21st-century skills training. Furthermore, 64% of 21st-century skills programme graduates, 56% of wage support training graduates, and 53% of vocational training graduates indicated that the high quality of the training significantly increased their practical experience, which is in demand in the labour market.

Moreover, 42% of graduates effectively used social networking platforms for job searches, underscoring social media's role in networking and job discovery. Interestingly, only a minimal percentage (1%) relied on traditional print media like newspapers for job hunting.

While satisfactory level of the graduates from all training modalities initially secured jobs, some lost these opportunities due to various factors, including heightened political tensions in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) after October 7th, impacting the economic environment.

Success factors and challenges

QE4: (Successes and failures): What are the factors of success and failures to be taken into account for the further phases of the intervention?

Considerations of key success factors and challenges for the subsequent phases of the intervention is key to implement appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the impact of these limiting challenges. Success factors within innovation centres include **improved infrastructure**, and the development of a comprehensive 21st-century skills **manual** covering various stages from personality development to advanced job-seeking skills. This manual, regularly updated and available in Arabic and English, has been adopted by local and national organisations focused on youth empowerment. Efforts have also focused on training master trainers and field trainers for efficient implementation, with potential integration into MoL and MoE curricula. The adoption of the 21st Century manual by two key ministries will enhance its sustainability among TVET schools and centres.

The establishment of an **online job portal** by UNESCO through Enabel funding has been crucial for job seekers, simplifying registration processes and connecting individuals with PEF and private companies, thus expediting job searches.

Enhancements in vocational training centre capacities, both government and non-governmental, have significantly improved the learning environment through equipment upgrades and trainer empowerment. Collaboration with professional bodies like the Syndicate of Engineers and Electricians has updated training manuals, improving service quality and facilitating knowledge exchange.

Collaboration with strategic partners, particularly MoL and private sector entities, will further develop vocational training services, aligning them with market demands and creating employment opportunities for young people. **Successful partnerships** with experienced NGOs, academics, TVET centres and universities like Hebron Polytechnic College and the Lutheran Federation have delivered high-quality training programmes, enhancing youth skills in additional skills relevant to their needs and to market demands contributing significantly to project success. Partner management and capacity building efforts

significantly enhanced the capabilities of partner organisations, receiving positive feedback during the MTR for the support and partnership provided. **Community of Practice Workshops** facilitated peer learning, improving coordination among stakeholders and fostering a culture of shared knowledge and practices.

A **culture of learning and adaptation** was evident, with insights from past interventions informing successful design and implementation of subsequent projects, demonstrating an adaptive learning approach. Social acceptance was evident in various training courses, as reported by FGD participants. Courses such as 21st-century training in Zababdeh, Jerusalem, and Jericho, along with bio-agriculture in Nablus, fashion design, and gold jewellery design and manufacturing, fostered an inclusive social atmosphere where both genders cooperated effectively. Women outnumbered men in certain courses like agricultural projects and graphic design, while men dominated sessions such as electricity, solar system installation, and elevator installation.

QE8: To what extent does the support and improvement of the VET services/strategies, as implemented by the SYP proposed model, make it possible to improve employment offer on the labour market, the institutional capacity to planning and the private sector to re-act/respond to the needs highlighted?

SDF has strategically fostered partnerships, notably linking training organisations and industry stakeholders to enhance long-term relationships. These alliances, while successful, face **challenges in fully engaging the private sector** due to profit-centric perspectives and concerns about skilled graduates migrating to other markets. SDF has upgraded the quality of skills provision by aligning training programmes with market needs through its partnerships. Innovative training methods, such as complex learning approaches and work-based learning, have been implemented, ensuring practical skill acquisition. Quality assurance mechanisms within these partnerships have maintained high training standards. Furthermore, the alliances have fostered collaborative skills training projects, bringing fresh insights and practices from the private sector and developing quality curricula responsive to market demands.

The technical and vocational education and training environment has developed thanks to qualified trainers, the availability of comprehensive training manuals, and the availability of modern equipment that has enhanced practical application and contributed to learners obtaining high-quality education to prepare them effectively for the labour market.

Empowerment of the Private Sector: SYP has empowered the private sector to play a proactive role in vocational education initiatives. By engaging businesses and industries in training programme development, SYP ensures vocational education aligns closely with industry needs, fostering stronger partnerships between the education sector and employers.

Contribution to Labour Market Connectivity: Enabel's model has demonstrated a noteworthy contribution to connecting young men and women to the labour market. While improvements are needed, the model has shown promising results in facilitating pathways to employment by offering tailored training programmes and fostering partnerships with employers, enhancing youth employability and bridging the gap between education and employment opportunities.

SDF approaches and mechanisms significantly enhanced the employability of target groups and their integration into the local labour market. Alliances facilitated by the SDF show sustainability, with key factors including tailored training programmes, a market-driven approach, WBL, and strong industry connections. These alliances also contributed to the continuation of good practices like WBL and inclusive

skills training. However, obstacles such as inflexibility hindered the SDF's effectiveness, making rapid resource reallocation and adjustments difficult to meet changing needs.

Contributions of the SYP model to building and retaining skills in response to labour market requirements: The series of policy papers published in November 2023 comprehensively analyze the SDF's impact on TVET in Palestine. They delve into relevance, quality, equitable access, effectiveness, and internal efficiency within the TVET framework, emphasising strategic partnerships with training organisations and industry stakeholders fostered by the SDF. The SDF has notably improved the relevance of TVET by aligning training programmes with local labour market needs through demand-driven partnerships.

QE9: To what extent the war in Gaza out-break has affected the results achievements or generated disruption on the initial changes pro-moted?

The Impact of the war on Gaza on achievements and initiatives: Enabel's collaborative measures in West Bank and East Jerusalem: The project lacked measures to mitigate the war's impact on private companies, occurring beyond its control during the project's final quarter. The war significantly affected the economy and profits of private companies, particularly impacting electricians in the West Bank. Many trained electricians lost their jobs in Israel, leading to reduced demand for their services. Similarly, numerous trainees across sectors faced challenges finding or retaining employment in both Israel and the West Bank.

High unemployment rates persist among skilled workers due to restrictions on working in Israel. The war on Gaza has exacerbated job availability challenges, especially for skilled workers and university graduates. Limited data is available, but estimates suggest approximately 507,000 jobs lost across the oPt as of January 2024, with projections of a 57% unemployment rate by March 2024 if the conflict continues.

While the project's activities concluded in 2021 and were not directly impacted by the 2023 war on Gaza, the destruction of the UCAS hub in Gaza resulted in the loss of four key staff members. Additionally, economic and political/security conditions in the West Bank hinder business start-ups, with the private sector facing liquidity issues, delayed payments, and reduced employee income, leading to reduced working hours to cope with war-related effects.

3.7 Transversal themes

A range of cross-cutting issues including gender and inclusion, decent work, environment and climate change, were assessed as part of this ETE. This section discusses how effectively Enabel and the partners have met the project's goal in relation to cross-cutting issues.

SYP supports Enabel's 2030 strategy by addressing social and economic inequalities, in line with various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including SDG1 (No Poverty), SDG4 (Quality Education), SDG5 (Gender Equality), SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities).

3.7.1 Gender equality and inclusion

Global evaluation of Gender integration	**B**	**Satisfactory**

QE 11: Have appropriate measures to improve access of young women and vulnerable groups to TVET provision been adopted? Have necessary measures to improve access of young women and vulnerable groups to 21st century skills development (in the innovation hubs) been adopted?

QE 12 What are the effects promoted by SYP with regard to the women's and vulnerable groups' access to the labour market?

Based on SYP-TOR Gender as crosscutting theme should be evaluated by assessing four dimensions: design, allocated resources, achieved results and sustainability

Design dimension

The project included gender analysis during the amendment of the design phase[30], which reviewed the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022, the EU-Joint Strategy with PA 2017-2020, and the impact of the pandemic on women's social and health status, additionally identified significant gender disparities in the TVET sector.

In alignment with right based approach, the project design proposed strategies to promote gender equality and empower women within the project interventions as follows:

- Gender considerations will be applied throughout all activities, especially in Calls for Proposals. This includes promoting gender-neutral professions and female employment.
- The project aims for a minimum of 50% NEETs and 35% female trainees in all training programmes. It also promotes the inclusion of People with Disabilities (PWD).
- Facilitating Real Work Experience: Specific actions will be developed to provide female trainees with real work experiences. This aims to boost their confidence and reduce employer biases against hiring women.
- Enhancing Access to Innovation Hubs: initiatives have been analyzed to improve women's access to mixed-gender innovation hubs.

Inclusion: As part of the right based approach, the project design focused on inclusion of vulnerable groups mainly for persons with disabilities and young people from remote areas, poor and other minorities in training and job placement.

Allocated resources dimension

The project allocated a budget as part of the grants to engage young women, men, and vulnerable groups in TVET and 21st-century skills training. However, it did not include plans to hire a gender officer at Enabel to build the capacity of implementing partners for integrating gender in their grants and to follow up on how partners could maximise gender integration. The technical team provided modest gender guidance during implementation, focusing on increasing engagement percentages, but this was insufficient to build partners' experience in gender concepts and practices.

The project design aimed to ensure an inclusive approach by developing strategies and materials for better access to training and employment for vulnerable groups. To enhance this approach, the project planned to hire a Junior Expert (expected to start in January 2021) to work on inclusion in education, training, and employment in the Palestinian Territories. The proposal also included incentives (such as scholarships or equipment) to encourage participation in remote training and learning for vulnerable groups through implementing grantees. These incentives ranged from small investments for purchasing laptops or internet connections, which would be made available through innovation hubs and by the implementing grantees.

[30] Supplementary Technical and Financial file-Intervention: Skilled Young Palestine – "Improving Resilience and Job opportunities for Youth" – addendum for bridging programme (SYP+) October 2020

However, during implementation, the expert for the inclusion approach was not hired. Instead, the project provided equipment like computers and internet connections in the innovation hubs and tablets to some trainees in remote areas, as well as coverage for transportation.

Achieved Results dimension

Gender integration has been successfully introduced into traditionally male-dominated TVET courses. Although the project initially set a target of 35% female participation, it achieved an inclusion rate of around 40% (Results 1) and more than 50% of women involvement in 21 century training (Result 2).

The majority of participants, including implementing partners and the project team, reported that there were no instances of discrimination against men or women during the training sessions. However, there are no internal gender protection procedures in place to ensure that implementing partners are aware of when and how to use these procedures.

During the implementation the ETE found that a consistent emphasis on gender equality and the inclusion of PWDs across project modalities. Both the Skills Development Fund (SDF) and the blueprint document strongly emphasised designing grants and training exercises to accommodate women and PWDs. The 21st Century Skills Manual, developed with a gender-sensitive approach, has gained widespread acceptance among stakeholders, as confirmed by the project team and implementing partners.

The project successfully engaged women and men from vulnerable and remote areas in the north and south of the West Bank, Jericho, and the Jordan Valley. While the project encourages the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs), their participation remains limited, as confirmed by the End-Term Evaluation (ETE). This is due to unsuitable environments and insufficient awareness of rights among institutions. The tracer study confirmed the presence of graduates with disabilities, with results showing that 7 out of 760 participants reported having a disability.

The selection criteria developed by the implementing partners prioritise gender-sensitive and inclusive work-based learning environments, promising improvements in the future. However, the project faced challenges in ensuring practicality, especially concerning physical, visual, and hearing disabilities. Interviews revealed that although the centres generally provided safe environments for women, many girls were apprehensive about working in private companies, preferring to work in the government sector or small women enterprises. Mixed-gender training is generally accepted, but its acceptance depends on the type of course. For example, male-dominated courses are not attended by women because they are not socially acceptable.

Gender inclusion is hindered by societal norms that discourage women from participating in certain training fields such as furniture making or elevator repair. These obstacles are compounded by factors such as long training hours, limited public transport, and household responsibilities that limit their availability. These challenges discourage women from enrolling in these professions, and the frustration of limited job opportunities is exacerbated after marriage, as women often become preoccupied with family tasks and raising children.

UNESCO prepared the Gender Equality and Inclusiveness Handbook, which includes detailed mechanisms for implementation within ministries. Training sessions on the handbook were conducted by UNESCO. However, the manual's implementation faced challenges such as a lack of human resources and insufficient measures during the selection of grantees and the assessment of centres. This resulted in inadequate facilities for persons with disabilities in many training centres. Although the new

constructions are promising, they remain underutilised due to deficiencies in the selection process and institutional inexperience in addressing diverse needs.

Sustainability of gender dimension

The implementing partners reported their commitment to encouraging young women in all training courses. However, they showed less interest in engaging persons with disabilities (PWDs) for various reasons, the most important being a lack of awareness on how to integrate PWDs and benefit from their experience.

The continued use of the UNESCO Gender Equality and Inclusion Handbook will not be possible without operational mechanisms to implement gender and inclusion policies within ministries, governmental institutions, the non-governmental sector, and the private sector. Additionally, adequate resources must be provided to implement these policies in all interventions and actions of these organisations.

3.7.2 Environment and climate change

Design phase: Skilled Young Palestine operates within a context where environmental concerns are increasingly significant for both Palestinian and Belgian authorities. When collaborating with local organisations such as TVET centres, private sector companies, or civil society, initiatives that promote green solutions in training will be given special consideration. The selection criteria and Guidelines for the Call for Proposals prioritise this theme. Moreover, green procurement will be promoted during procurement processes. Capacity building in environmental matters will be strongly supported for both public bodies and private partners. Encouragement will be given for exchanges and contacts with stakeholders involved in green issues to facilitate network creation and draw synergies. The new intervention of green municipalities (funded by the Belgian Government) and the ongoing SAWA intervention (EU-funds), both implemented by Enabel, will serve as inspiration and sources of exchange, alongside other relevant initiatives in the green sector.[31]

The MTR reported that Enabel has extensive experience in incorporating environmental considerations into its initiatives, providing solutions to address climate change challenges. Within its Strategic Plan, Enabel prioritises mainstreaming adaptation and mitigation measures to enhance effectiveness. However, a review of the SYP's Technical Focal Framework (TFF) reveals that Enabel **did not adequately incorporate environmental and climate change aspects into the project's design**. The TFF lacks clarity on how the SYP project intends to tackle environmental issues or address climate change, and it lacks a specific cross-cutting environmental objective. Additionally, Enabel's risk analysis matrix does not encompass climate and environmental concerns. Nevertheless, Enabel remains committed to environmental protection throughout project operations, engaging stakeholders and beneficiaries in these efforts. [32]

However, the ETE found that Enabel has taken significant steps to strengthen and integrate environment and climate change themes into project interventions such as:

- Collaboration with local organisations such as TVET centres, private sector companies, or CSOs prioritise initiatives that promote green solutions in training programmes. Additionally, green procurement practices and digital submission of procurement files are encouraged while adhering to established procedures.
- Green competition innovation hubs: Under the SYP's green component, the project conducted orientation sessions in Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem to educate project partners about

[31] Amendment technical and financial proposal-Enabel
[32] SYPE-MTR page 47

climate change and environmental concepts. Following these sessions, an assessment survey was administered to gauge partners' capacities in integrating climate action and eco-friendly activities across various organisational levels (strategies, interventions, staff, beneficiaries, etc.).

- Within the framework of the green component, the five SYP-supported innovation hubs were invited to submit proposals for green and environmental initiatives. These proposals aimed to align with objectives centered on integrating green economy and climate change concepts into Enabel interventions.
- Green sessions in the SDD21 manual: Four new sessions about the Green Economy were added to the SDD21 manual based on feedback collected from trainers at the innovation hubs. UNESCO, in cooperation with Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU), implemented two awareness-raising workshops (in Hebron and Gaza) on the importance of green TVET as a Future Pathway for Youth empowerment and resilience in Palestine. The workshops aimed to promote green skills and practices in TVET and included 54 participants (23F, 31M) from the TVET sector, youth, and relevant experts. They covered fundamental ideas about Green-TVET, the process of implementing transformative measures, and the strategies needed to achieve its objectives. Additionally, the workshops addressed roles and duties of staff, administrators, and those interested in TVET to effectively promote environmentally sustainable practices. They also provided tangible examples from global regions as sources of inspiration and guidance. The objective was to enhance sustainability in vocational education and training, contributing to a green and sustainable future.
- Enabel has prioritised environmental protection in its operations and activities, leveraging technologies such as virtual servers, hybrid work models, SharePoint, and digital filing systems. Currently, they operate at a 95% paperless capacity. Enabel has also worked to strengthen partners' understanding of green economics and integrating good environmental practices into their interventions.
- At the project level, environmentally friendly procedures have been consistently followed, including: Using a virtual server and adopting a flexible, hybrid work approach, leveraging tools such as SharePoint and digital filing systems; and implementing environmentally conscious practices within the office environment, such as eliminating the use of plastic disposables. All staff members have been provided with reusable drinking bottles and cups.

Decent Work principles:

As part of the right based approach, the integration of decent work principles into training programmes has shown progress but faces challenges that must be addressed for effective implementation. While the SDF aligns with decent work through collaborations with private sector companies, oversight responsibility lies with the Ministry of Labour, necessitating regular inspections to ensure compliance. Despite efforts by some implementing partners to monitor educational facilities and work-based learning initiatives, full adherence to decent work principles remains a concern, encompassing training content, hours, fees, and the work environment.

Trainees' awareness of safety measures during training indicates positive steps, yet discrepancies exist in the implementation of decent work standards by private sector organisations used for practical training. Feedback from focus group discussions (FGDs) indicates both successes and shortcomings in upholding decent work principles among these companies. The Private Sector Umbrella Foundation (PEF) stands out for its operational procedures to monitor and ensure adherence to decent work standards across governorates, setting a commendable example for others. However, the absence of standardised procedures for selecting compliant companies within most consortia highlights a critical gap.

4 Conclusions

ETE criteria and # of Conclusion (CO) and QE#	Descriptions
CO1-Relevance QE 1.1	National context, priorities and strategies: the SYP's execution modalities are relevant and adaptable for local and national needs. The project aligns well with national agendas and strategies, focusing on economic growth, gender equality, and improving education-to-employment transitions. Its design considers local context and previous successful experiences to enhance skills development in TVET sector and 21 century skills and employment opportunities in Palestine. Additionally, the project's interventions align with Enabel's 2030 strategy to reduce social and economic inequalities. It also supports key SDGs related to poverty reduction, quality education, gender equality, decent work, and reduced inequalities.
CO2-Relevance QE 1.2	The project implementing modalities (SDF-grants) align well with the views of strategic partners and implementers. The end-term evaluation shows strong agreement among stakeholders that the interventions suit Palestine's context and labour market needs. Efforts to bridge skill gaps and enhance youth capacities demonstrate alignment with key stakeholders' strategies and priorities. According to feedback from beneficiaries, the project's initiatives in vocational and 21st-century skills development have garnered mixed but predominantly positive responses. While most participants acknowledged the alignment of the training with their professional requirements, concerns were raised regarding gender inclusivity in certain topics and notable gaps in the inclusion of people with disabilities.
CO3-Internal coherence QE 6	The Enabel Portfolio's strategic alignment and substantial funding significantly amplify the SYP project's impact, ensuring comprehensive coverage of key objectives and global challenges while maintaining alignment with national and international development priorities. SYP's strategic collaborations within the Enabel portfolio, particularly with projects like SAWA, demonstrate a synergistic approach towards fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable start-up ventures among young talents in Gaza, effectively bridging training initiatives with real-world opportunities. The interconnectedness between SYP and YEP, highlighted in the end-term evaluation, underscores the cohesive strategies employed to address practical challenges and enhance self-employment initiatives. The identified initiatives within YEP complement and amplify the positive impact generated by SYP, ensuring a robust continuum of skills development and employment opportunities in Palestine.

	Leveraging existing expertise and strategic additions to the team emphasises a commitment to sustained positive outcomes and continued progress.
CO4-External coherence QE 7	Collaborative efforts among **international agencies such as GIZ, UNESCO, and ILO exemplify** a targeted approach to addressing youth unemployment and skill development challenges in Palestine. Furthermore, the SYP initiative demonstrates external coherence by **harmonising with programmes like the Dual Studies Program, DWP, PALM project, TTT project, DO TVET initiative, TVET4Future** project, and Capacity Building of PSUOs. Through effective collaboration, these initiatives refining vocational training, and fortifying Palestine's TVET system prevent redundancy, pursue shared objectives, and amplify the impact of endeavors aimed at enhancing youth employability and skills in Palestine.
CO5- Efficiency QE 1.1 and 1.2	**In the absence of a suitable national partner to oversee SDF- grants**, the project selected 23 PSUOs, 5 NGOs, PEF, and UNESCO through a call for proposals and collaboration agreements. These entities then provided long-term TVET and essential 21st-century skills training for the labour market, specifically targeting economically marginalised trainees. **Direct management of the SDF by SYP posed administrative and technical challenges due to limited resources** and insufficient expertise within private sector umbrellas. This led to delays in implementing the SDF, necessitating amendments to the project timeline until December 2023. Despite employing a transparent grant application process to build capacity within selected PSUOs and NGOs, some organisations **found the training and mentoring inadequate and struggled** with financial and procurement procedures. Most implementing partners effectively utilised the SDF grants, which enhanced the quality of implementation. However, concerns were raised about budget coverage and delayed payments. **Both strategic and implementing partners acknowledged the project's funding flexibility in extending the timeline**.
CO6- Efficiency QE 2	The PSUOs successfully delivered **22 TVET training courses across 16 fields crucial** to the Palestinian labour market, including electricity/solar energy, organic farming, digital technology, hospitality, and fashion design. These courses combined theoretical and practical components, conducted both in training TVET centres and within over 62 Work-Based Learning (WBL) private sector companies. Despite overall efficiency, many **WBL companies struggled to effectively implement practical training to improve** trainee expertise. Male withdrawals, particularly in Jerusalem where many men are engaged in work within Israel, and societal norms **obstructing women's enrolment in male-dominated fields** like plumbing, electricity, elevator maintenance, and automotive repair significantly impacted the targeted number of trainees. Social restrictions led to women's non-participation in 8 out of the 16 training topics.

	While **the 21st-century skills** training was efficiently implemented, some trainees noted limitations compared to employer requirements. **Women's participation exceeded men's due to their demanding work schedules**. NGOs in the West Bank effectively conducted resilience and employment training using a comprehensive 21st-century manual. This manual covered 36 main topics, from personal development to job searching and entrepreneurial skills, and the project's flexibility allowed organisations to tailor topics to trainee needs. **The capacity of the innovation hubs was good**, although Station J faced numerous challenges during implementation, the most significant being employee turnover. Navigating the legal environment required substantial effort to comply with both Palestinian and Israeli laws, as the institution is registered with both authorities.
CO7- Efficiency QE 1	**Most of the deliverables were achieved within the amended timeframe and without significant budget adjustments**. When delays occurred, two main factors were identified. **At the Enabel level, delays related to** the selection of SDF partners, releasing SDF calls, procurement processes, staff recruitment, and finalisation of the 21st-century manual. The delay in the 21st-century manual impacted the complementarity between R1 and R2. Human resource limitations within Enabel impacted field visits, monitoring, follow-ups, and overall project efficiency. **On the implementation partner side, delays occurred due to issues** such as beneficiary selection, inadequate staffing, limited capacity in grants procurement and finance procedures, **follow up, monitoring and reporting**. Initial delays prompted a revision of the timeline. Additionally, the Cooperation Agreement with UNESCO and Syntra West faced constraints in delivering activities due to inadequate human resources, leading to an amendment to the time frame and reduce the scope of activities for Syntra West. Enabel's establishment of **a global evaluation unit marks a significant step forward, allowing for the hiring of external evaluation** service providers. This move enhances project accountability and facilitates improvements in project design and implementation. The project has **effectively addressed the MTR recommendation by establishing** a complaints and feedback mechanism. Through this mechanism, the MEL officer received several complaints, all of which were successfully resolved by the project. However, the end-term evaluation revealed that not all stakeholders were aware of this mechanism. **SYP has successfully designed and implemented an effective results framew**ork, including a results chain, indicators at various result levels, indicator definitions, baseline values, target values, responsibilities, sources of verification, and risk factors. The accompanying monitoring tracker facilitates regular data collection for indicator updates. **Communication and visibility for** the project were clearly demonstrated through various channels, including project social media platforms, banners, photos from training sessions, and printed materials featuring the Enabel logo.

CO8- Effectiveness QE 2 and 3	**At the outcome level, the projects effectively achieved two indicators**: • % of trained youth who became self-employed: 28% compared to the 4% target. • Level of satisfaction of youth with services provided in the TVET track: 90% compared to the 80% target. **At the outcome, the following other two indicators showed underachievement:** • Number of WBL graduates conducting more than 30% structured field training: 1,227 WBL graduates compared to the target of 1,600. • % of trained youth that are employed: Underachievement: actual achievement is 63% compared to the 77% target. At the output level, the project has shown a satisfactory level of effectiveness in Result 1, with 3 indicators surpassing expectations and one meeting their targets. However, the number of youth trained in TVET fell short of expectations, with only 1,227 out of the targeted 1,600 graduates achieving this indicator. **Effectiveness of results 2 output**: the support to innovation hubs is deemed effective with SYP granting funds to 8 innovative hubs in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem, and enhancing opportunities for youth engagement and skill development. The project has also exceeded expectations on the capacitation of trainers and coaches in 21st-century, it reached 176 trainers represent SYP and UNESCO hubs. While data on the satisfaction levels among youth utilising the innovation hubs is currently unavailable[33], feedback from end-term evaluations and FGDs indicates positive experiences, particularly among young women in Jericho, Tubas and Zababda.
CO9-Effectivness QE 3	**21st century training-Innovative hubs**: Under Result 2, the SYP formulated an effective 21st-century training manual and conducted sessions aimed at strengthening youth resilience and employability skills. The Master Training Approach utilised by SYP staff proved effective in equipping innovative hub trainers and coordinators with the necessary tools and methods for implementing 21st-century topics. Master trainers conducted effective TOT sessions for 176 trainers from 8 hubs in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, including NGOs supported by UNESCO. The majority of beneficiaries consulted during ETE (87.5%) considered the 21st-century skills training highly effective and beneficial.
CO-10-Sustainability	**Partnerships among a wide range of stakeholders** are crucial for supporting labour skills development, 21st-century training, and private sector initiatives. The success and continuation of project partnerships rely on private companies' ongoing dedication to upholding decent

[33] Data is not available on the monitoring tracker shared by Enabel on 24th of May 2024

QE 5	work principles, ensuring sustained support for WBL, application of the 21 century manual, internship, financial support to job opportunities, seeds fund to small individual or collective projects. The Ministry of Labour's commitment to post-programme sustainability is evident through the utilisation of qualified trainers and training manuals at public TVET centres and NGOs. Ensuring the continuity of knowledge and experiences among trainees is crucial for providing the private sector with skilled workers. The sustainability of the SDF hinges upon a national vision and strategy that garners consensus among all Palestinian stakeholders, including relevant ministries, private sector representatives, Enabel, and donors invested in this sector. The National Commission for Vocational Training has been designated to manage the fund and is currently partnered with the YEP project. However, ensuring the NCT's sustainability requires reinforcing its management, governance, and transparency mechanisms. Strengthening these tools is pivotal to garnering financial support from other donors and securing contributions from the Palestinian private sector. Given the limited trust in the performance of Palestinian public institutions by private sector organisations and civil society, building trust, transparency, and accountability is paramount.
CO11-Sustainability QE 5	**The limited human and financial resources** of TVET centre and innovative hubs, coupled with the Palestinian government's fiscal challenges, underscore the need for sustainable funding models for intervention programmes. Allocating adequate financial and human resources to TVET centres and innovative hubs are critical to support long-term tracking efforts, ensure better insights into graduates' career pathways, assess the effectiveness of training programmes, and sustain the incorporation of 21st-century skills. **External funding remains essential** for sustained success, and collaboration with stakeholders is crucial to address these challenges and sustain employment opportunities and ethical workforce practices, including the provision of free vocational training courses for economically disadvantaged youth.
CO12-Impact QE 4	Overall, the project's results are satisfactory, as both indicators were achieved. The impact criterion was measured by using two indicators: 1.Proportion of unemployed youth (NEET) indicator: The SYP project has significantly enhanced the resilience and employability of Palestinian youth in vulnerable areas. Notably, the project achieved a notable decrease in the NEET rate from 35% to 29% in 2022, surpassing its target and demonstrating a clear impact on youth engagement in education, employment, or training. The comparison between the baseline set by the TVET Support Programme and the 2022 national percentage reveals a 5% decrease in the number of youth engaged in TVET, with 5% of this decrease attributed to interventions like those by the SYP programme. The SYP programme,

	utilising interventions specifically: TVET, WBL, and 21st-century skills development, has positively impacted 4273 individuals aged 16-29 years. 2.Youth Training indicator: The Youth Training Satisfaction Level provides valuable insights into the satisfaction levels of young individuals trained across various modalities such as TVET, wage support, and 21st-century skills. Tracer studies serve as the primary data source for updates, revealing an important trend: Graduates of the 21st Century Skills programme displayed the highest levels of satisfaction with their knowledge acquisition, showing a significant 95% increase in perceived knowledge acquisition. Participants who underwent wage support training reported a satisfaction rate of 94%, while those in WBL training also reported high levels of satisfaction, at 90%. This consistent pattern of high satisfaction underscores the effectiveness of the training programmes in meeting the needs and expectations of young trainees.
CO13-Gender and Inclusion QE 11 and 12	The project successfully integrated gender considerations, particularly through the 21st-century skills training, which was widely accepted by participants, students, and recent graduates without jobs. Enrolment in the programme reached 2,996, with over 60% being young women, while the percentage of men decreased due to their involvement in temporary or permanent jobs. Despite these efforts, societal norms continue to limit women's equal participation in the male-dominated fields of technical and vocational education and training, highlighting the need to address both material requirements and societal obstacles. Nevertheless, the project achieved a 40% participation rate for women in training courses, exceeding the planned indicator of 35%. However, the participation of persons with disabilities remained very limited, showing no improvement compared to the results of the mid-term evaluation.
CO14- Transversal theme environment and green economy QE 12	The SYF project prioritises green solutions through collaborations with local organisations and encourages eco-friendly practices like digital procurement and reduced plastic use. Its green component includes capacity-building sessions and initiatives from innovation hubs aimed at integrating climate action and green economy concepts into project activities. The ended version of the 21 manuals includes four new sessions on the Green Economy, reflecting input from innovation hub trainers and emphasising sustainability. UNESCO's workshops with PPU focused on promoting green TVET for youth empowerment and resilience, highlighting key strategies and global examples for a sustainable vocational education landscape.

5 Recommendations

Recommendation 1	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
Future programme designs should place greater emphasis on gender integration, particularly for women in the TVET sector, by creating safe working environments in male-dominated sectors. Overcoming societal barriers that hinder women's enrolment can be achieved through advocacy campaigns to raise community and private sector awareness about women's rights in training and employment across all sectors. Enhance the rights and inclusion of vulnerable individuals, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), in project interventions. Recruit gender equality and inclusion expert to be part of the project staff	CO6 CO13	Strategic (Enabel, MoL, MoE) and operation partners (NGOs and PSUOs)	One and two	Medium- and long-term	Strategic and operational

Criteria: efficiency, transversal themes (gender, inclusion and environment)

Description of the recommendation on suggestions to improve future programme design

- During the design phase, conducting a gender analysis is essential to identify needs and priorities related to gender equality, vulnerability, and disability inclusion. This analysis will guide the development of practical interventions aimed at enhancing the participation of women, vulnerable individuals, and persons with disabilities in the program. Moreover, it's crucial to collaborate with gender units within strategic partner organisations, such as government ministries overseeing labour and education, to raise awareness among private sector leaders and operational staff about these issues.
- Establish safe spaces within both public and private sector entities/ centres to facilitate training and work opportunities for women. These initiatives are integral to promoting and supporting women's involvement in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as electricity, solar energy, the green economy, and innovative and smart industries.
- Develop interventions targeting societal barriers that obstruct women's entry into male-dominated fields, ensuring their inclusion in training programmes.
- Integrating women in training programmes, especially in emerging sectors such as alternative energy, digitalisation, the green economy, and organic agriculture, innovative industries, and smart industries.
- Implement training for trainers and stakeholders on gender equality, inclusion of persons with disabilities, and addressing societal norms in TVET fields.
- Recruit a gender and inclusion expert to participate in the design, implementation, and evaluation of any future programmes.
- Improve the TVET and innovative hubs training and learning environment(basic construction works and equipment)
- Strengthen implementing partners capacity in gender equality and inclusion, and ensure its accepted to be part of their policies and procedures.

- Results framework should include key indicators to measure gender, inclusion and environment interventions.

Recommendation 2	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
Establish a follow-up mechanism by creating a sector working group comprising representatives from the government, private sector, and NGOs involved in training and employment. This group will enhance and continually adjust collaborative efforts among all training and labour stakeholders in addressing youth empowerment, skills development and entrepreneurship in Palestine. Additionally, strengthen ongoing partnerships between international and local agencies to effectively tackle youth unemployment and address skills mismatches by ensuring sufficient funding to cover any gaps.	CO5-CO11	Enabel, national actors (relevant ministries, NGOs and PSUOs) and internation al partners	One and two	Medium- and long-term	Operational

Criteria: coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability

Description of the recommendation

- Strengthen collaborative efforts among SYP and related programmes to maximise impact and sustainability through deeper integration of activities, sharing best practices, and aligning objectives for cohesive youth empowerment and economic development.
- Foster ongoing collaborations between Enabel and international agencies like ILO, UNESCO, GIZ, and local partners to effectively address youth unemployment and skills development challenges.

Recommendation 3	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
Develop a simplified grants management manual in Arabic that aligns with the English version of Enabel grants manual. The translated Arabic version should be customised to include the items that Enabel deems important to share with implementing partners (grantees)	CO5 CO8	Enabel and SDF national partners (PSUOs and NGOs, MOL, MoE, National TVET commission)	One and two	Medium-term	Operational

Criteria: efficiency

Description of the recommendation on grants design and management

- To optimise the efficiency of the SDF-grants modality, Enabel and strategic partners recommend creating a grants management manual in Arabic, aligned with the English version, that:
- Specifies implementation guidelines and procedures. timeframes, considering trainees' job commitments and Palestinian territories' security situation. Also to ensure efficient

utilisation and timely disbursement, addressing concerns raised by implementing partners regarding budget coverage and delayed payments.

- Outlines technical, financial, follow-up, and evaluation procedures in a simplified booklet or online format for grant applicants.
- Assigns evaluation of call for applications to a neutral entity for transparent assessment.
- Conducts explanatory workshops during grant announcements to clarify requirements and conditions.
- Provides ongoing capacity-building workshops for partners particularly in grants financial, procurement procedures, monitoring and evaluation and reporting to effectively implement grants.
- Provide training materials in Arabic, particularly workshop materials related to Enabel staff training in grants management and finance.

Recommendation 4	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
Enhance work-based learning policies and procedures by raising private sector awareness about adhering to work-based learning conditions and procedures. Incentives should be provided to companies that comply with these standards.	CO6 CO10	Enabel, strategic and implementing partners (PSUOs)	1	Medium-term and long-terms	Operational and strategic

Criteria: efficiency and Sustainability

Description of the recommendation on promotion and effective implementation to WBL approach:

- Furnish implementing partners with written instructions detailing the concept and application of the 'work-based-learning' programme and how private companies can integrate this approach.
- Enhance the terms of the work-based-learning programme through formal agreements between implementing partners and private companies.
- Review and refine work-based learning methodology and establish clear procedures to ensure ministries and the private sector strictly adhere to these guidelines.
- Strengthen partnerships with diverse industries to provide a broad spectrum of internship opportunities across various sectors, including those witnessing growth and demand for skilled labour.
- Develop detailed training plans during project implementation and ensure that partners uphold a robust monitoring and follow-up system, particularly to monitor training progress.
- Encourage private sector partners to dedicate a portion of training hours to include additional topics on 21st-century skills crucial for future employment, including self-employment.
- Explore the possibility of providing financial support to certain trainees to cover for practical training sessions and for entrepreneurship ventures post-training. The Enabel programme could offer a modest financial support for a minimum of three months to participants enrolled in work-based-learning pathways.
- Ensure inclusivity in training and Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities by catering to individuals with varying skill levels and backgrounds. This inclusive approach will maximise

participation and skills development across diverse segments of the Palestinian youth population, contributing to economic resilience despite challenging circumstances.

Recommendation 5	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
Enhance the internal monitoring and evaluation system of the Enabel project by allocating more effort to field follow-up through the recruitment of a field officer. Additionally, build the capacity of the project's implementing partners in monitoring and evaluation.	CO6	Enabel and implementing partners	One and two	Short- and medium-term	Operational

Criteria: efficiency

Description of the recommendation:

- Establish strong monitoring systems to ensure consistent adherence to decent work standards, gender and inclusion, especially among implementing partners (PSUOs and NGOs).
- Develop an evaluation manual to measure the effectiveness and impact of the training courses delivered by implementing partners with support from Enabel.
- Collaboratively develop detailed training plans between implementing partners and trainers, including training topics, methodology, duration, timeline, and indicators plan. Ensure trainee involvement in discussing and understanding the training plan.
- Build the capacity of implementing partners in the field of MEL by developing a project monitoring plan, collecting lessons learnt and success stories, and creating a database of beneficiaries.
- Monitor and evaluate trainers' performance during the training period using four levels of evaluation: Level 1 - measure the reaction, Level 2 - measure the knowledge gained, Level 3 - measure training application, and Level 4 - measure the impact of the training on beneficiaries and the organisational level.
- Allocate sufficient human resources for monitoring, reporting, and disseminating lessons learned and success stories through various communication channels.
- Encourage the use of a complaints and feedback mechanism to ensure stakeholders and beneficiaries that their complaints are treated confidentially and receive timely responses.
- Elaborate on M&E requirements in the grant manual by specifying the need for a simplified results framework and monitoring plan in grant applications.

Recommendation 6	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
Integrate 21st-century skills into vocational training centres to enhance trainees' capabilities and boost their employability prospects. Additionally, provide small grants for entrepreneurship to expand the likelihood of trainees successfully establishing their own businesses	CO5 CO8 CO10	Implementing partners	1 and 2	Medium-term	Operational

Criteria: efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability

Description of the recommendation

- Integrate the 21st Century Guide into TVET centres.
- Expand the 21st Century training manual to include additional topics such as psychological training exercises, statistical analysis systems, e-marketing, proposal writing, and management.
- Offer mentorship programmes, career counselling services, and networking opportunities to help participants transition smoothly into the workplace.
- Provide small grants to support small-scale projects initiated by trainees, fostering entrepreneurship and the practical application of skills learned during training.

6 Lessons learned

QE 10: Are there any lessons learned from successes and failures observed and reported regarding the SYP implementation model and results obtained?

The end-term evaluation suggested lessons learned based on the revision of the lessons highlighted during the mid-term evaluation and the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the final evaluation.

SDF grants modality and approach:

One of the practices implemented by the project is the selection of the implementing agency for the Operating of the SDF grants. Due to the slow start in establishing the National TVET Council by the Palestinian Authority, which was beyond the project's control, the project faced two options: either to wait for the council to be established by the competent authorities—a process that could extend beyond the project's duration—or to implement the grant programme directly, With prior knowledge of the difficulty of this decision due to the lack of human resources and the limited capabilities of private sector institutions in grant management and implementation.

After internal consultations among Enabel management and with the steering committee, the project decided to implement the grants directly through Enabel. This decision was based on Enabel's regional and international experience with grant procedures, the availability of a detailed grant manual in English, discussions of the manual with strategic partners, the increase in Enabel staff to effectively manage the grants, and the commitment to build the capacity of private sector organisations that won their applications by explaining procurement, finance, reporting, communication, monitoring, and evaluation procedures.

This approach proved largely successful, as evidenced by the implementation of these grants without adjusting the budgets, only requiring a timeframe extension. Enabel and its partners learned from this direct grant implementation approach the need to further simplify procedures and enhance capacity building to support private sector organisations, many of which were first-time grant managers from a donor.

Activating the Work-Based Learning Methodology

The project implemented the work-based learning methodology, which provided trainees with a significant opportunity to develop their practical skills. However, during this practice, it was found that a considerable number of private sector institutions do not adhere to the working conditions. In fact, they sometimes mistreat trainees and assign them tasks that are not within their areas of

expertise, such as loading work or other minor tasks that are not closely related to the training subject.

Due to weak follow-up and supervision from some institutions that hold grants, employers were not required to change their policies regarding work-based learning.

One of the lessons learned from this practice is the necessity of having an agreement that includes binding procedures and conditions for both the employer and the trainee. It is also essential to involve representatives from the Ministry of Labour as witnesses to these agreements to encourage employers to adhere to the terms of the agreement. Additionally, monitoring and follow-up during practical training lead to the resolution of any issues before they escalate and increase the effectiveness of the work-based learning program.

Successful experiences can also be shared on social media to encourage companies to comply with the conditions. Furthermore, providing some incentives, such as paying part of the trainee's salary for three months, for example, could serve as a motivating factor for implementing this methodology.

Flexibility Approach in Implementing the 21st Century Skills Program

The 21st Century Skills were implemented in five innovation hubs, in addition to three innovative hubs supported by the UNESCO project. A well-prepared manual was developed and utilised, outlining the training stages and the topics for each stage. It began with personally preparing the trainee by imparting basic work skills, followed by more advanced training in computer programme design and entrepreneurship. Under the flexibility approach, each institution was allowed to assess the needs of its trainees and provide what it deemed appropriate.

However, the end-term evaluation revealed that while the flexibility approach is beneficial, it needs to be carefully planned to ensure that the skills provided to trainees adequately prepare them for the job market. The training provided over 3-4 days was insufficient. Additionally, beneficiaries learned that training should be complemented with practical training lasting no less than three months to solidify the trainees' expertise. It is preferable to include financial incentives to cover the trainee’s transportation and daily expenses.

To further enhance the effectiveness of the flexibility approach in implementing 21st Century Skills, it should be combined with expanded entrepreneurship and self-employed topics. In this case, the number of trainees should be reduced to deepen the benefits and increase effectiveness.