# End-Term Evaluation report on the Skills, Attitudes, Governance and Anti-Corruption (SG+) Project

UGA1900311

Uganda

Technopolis Africa

Final Report

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Belgian development agency

enabel.be

This evaluation was carried out as part of the cooperation between Uganda 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 Uganda

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# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **CD** | Country Director |
| **DAC** | OECD's Development Assistance Committee |
| **GO** | General Objective (Impact) |
| **MTR** | Mid-term Review |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| **RM** | Regional Manager |
| **SO** | Specific Objective (Outcome) |
| **ToR** | Terms of Reference |
| **ENABEL** | Belgian Development Cooperation Agency (formerly BTC) |
| **CD** | OECD's Development Assistance Committee |
| **CRF** | Corruption Reporting Facility |
| **DAC** | Development Assistance Committee |
| **EGP** | Electronic Government Procurement system |
| **EU** | European Union |
| **EUD** | EUD European Union Delegation |
| **GAC** | Governance and Anti-Corruption |
| **GoU** | Government of Uganda |
| **GreenUP** | Inclusive Green Economy Uptake Programme |
| **HQ** | Headquarters |
| **MoFPED** | Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development |
| **MoGLSD** | Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development |
| **MTR** | Mid-Term Review |
| **NDP** | National Development Plan |
| **NITA-U** | National Information Technology Authority Uganda |
| **PPDA** | Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority |
| **PSFU** | Private Sector Foundation Uganda |

| | |
|---|---|
| **SB4U** | Sustainable Business for Uganda |
| **SG+** | Skills and Attitude, Governance and Accountability Project |
| **RM** | Regional Manager |
| **SO** | Specific Objective (Outcome) |
| **ToR** | Terms of Reference |
| **TWG** | Technical Working Group |
| **WRP** | Work Readiness Program |

# Cooperation project/program sheet

| | |
|---|---|
| Title | Skills and Attitude, Governance and Anti-Corruption Project (SG+) |
| Project code | UGA1900311 |
| Intervention zone | Nation wide |
| Priority sector(s)<br><br>Global Challenge(s) | Education, training and employment<br><br>Governance and accountability Cross cutting issues (gender, environment, digitalization and decent work) |
| Partner country | Uganda |
| Partner institution(s) | Private Sector Foundation Uganda |
| Total budget | EUR 5, 000,000 |
| Start date & end date of the specific agreement | 8th December 2020 - 7th July 2025 |
| Start date & expected end date of implementation | 8th December 2020 - 7th December 2024 |
| Impact | To help make Uganda's business environment more conducive to inclusive and green investments through increasing the supply of qualified workers, establishing private sector-led initiatives to fight corruption and strengthening the private public sector dialogue." |
| Outcome | i. Graduates entering the labour market are equipped with adequate skills and attitude leading to further productivity of companies engaged in green economy.<br>ii. Practices, evidence-based dialogue and advocacy within the public and private sector are improved to combat corruption. |
| Outputs | 1.1 A private sector led Work Readiness Program is accessible to young graduates<br>1.2 Support to public private dialogue with Education actors<br>2.1. The capacities in e-procurement of private sector companies are enhanced<br>2.2. Digitalization and integration allow for the exchange of data between institutional databases to fight corruption.<br>2.3. Fostering Corporate governance through awards and other corporate governance tools.<br>2.4. Corruption reporting mechanisms are implemented to feed evidence-based advocacy and support the public private dialogue on corruption. |
| Period covered by the evaluation | 8th December 2020 - 7th December 2024 |

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Finally, we wish to thank the entire team at **Enabel**, particularly **Sara Sangiuliano** for her ongoing support and guidance, which was essential to the success of this mission.

The collective efforts of all involved have made a significant impact, and we look forward to future collaborations

# Evaluation team

The evaluation team was led by **Francie Sadeski**, Managing Director of Technopolis Africa and Lead Evaluation Expert and **Stephanie Abogne**, Senior Consultant (Non-Lead Evaluation Expert), who both travelled to the field to oversee data collection and analysis. They were supported by **Paul Delivet, Consultant**, who assisted with the team by providing essential logistical and technical assistance throughout the mission, ensuring the smooth operation of all activities.

# 1 Background and context

## 1.1 Uganda's socio-economic situation

Uganda, a landlocked country in East Africa[1] has an estimated population of 49.6 million, of which 8.5 million live in the capital Kampala. The Ugandan economy has shown significant economic growth over the last decade, with a growth rate of 6.1% in 2018. However, this momentum has been slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, with growth falling to 3% in 2020. In 2023, the economy is slowly recovering, but still faces major structural challenges, such as the predominance of the informal sector and a low level of industrialization.

Uganda’s private sector is dominated by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), representing around 1.1 million businesses employing nearly 2.5 million people. However, these businesses operate in an environment often characterised by low productivity and limited access to finance, a high level of informality and a lack of skills adapted to market needs. Corruption is a major obstacle to Uganda's economic and social development. The country is ranked 116th out of 190 economies in the Doing Business 2024 report[2] with corruption identified as one of the main obstacles to improving the business environment. According to the latest Transparency International report[3], Uganda is ranked among the most corrupt countries in the region, which deters foreign investment and weakens confidence in public institutions. Approximately 40% of Ugandan companies have reported facing demands for bribes while doing business.

It is also important to note that the informal sector accounts for a preponderant share of the Ugandan economy, i.e. 80%, leaving the burden of paying taxes to only 20% of the formal sector. As a result, many young people find refuge there for lack of prospects in the formal economy.

Education in Uganda[4] is still marked by significant disparities between the supply of training and the needs of the labour market. Although primary education is free, drop-out rates at secondary and tertiary level remain high[5]. According to UNESCO, almost 40% of children leave school before reaching secondary level, due to factors such as poverty, distance from schools and lack of school infrastructure. Around 800,000 young people enter the labour market each year, but most are ill-prepared to meet the demands of the formal sector. Over 41% of young people aged 15-24 are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

## 1.2 Actions taken by the government

In line with Vision 2040, Uganda has set the goals of becoming a modern and prosperous country, reduce inequalities and promote an environmentally sustainable economy[6]. To achieve this, critical challenges need to be addressed, including increasing the number of decent jobs and improving economic competitiveness.

The Ugandan government has developed technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs to bridge this gap (The TVET Policy 2019[7]), but the results remain limited. Most instructors lack practical

[1] https://www.afd.fr/fr/page-region-pays/ouganda - :~:text=les zones rurales-,L'Ouganda est un pays enclavé d'Afrique de l,et les services soient dynamiques.
[2] https://www.worldbank.org/en/businessready
[3] https://data.worldbank.org/
[4] https://www.banquemondiale.org/fr/topic/education/overview
[5] https://www.globalpartnership.org/fr/where-we-work/uganda
[6] The national green growth strategy https://www.ccacoalition.org/fr/partners/uganda#:~:text=Votre%20Stratégie%20de%20développement%20de,une%20période%20de%2015%20ans
[7] https://www.education.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FINAL-TVET-POLICY_IMPLEMENTATION-STANDARDS_IMPLEMENTATION-GUIDELINES_19TH_MAY_2020.pdf

skills, and educational infrastructure is insufficient to cope with growing demand. Only 30% of students enrolled in TVET institutions go on to find jobs in their fields of study. This low rate can be explained by the main difficulties facing the Ugandan education system, which the authorities, together with their partners, are trying to resolve: the lack of qualified trainers with practical industrial experience, the inadequacy of modern equipment in training centres, and the low level of funding for the sector, which accounts for less than 3% of the national education budget. According to the World Bank, the annual creation of 70,000 to 100,000 formal jobs is clearly insufficient to absorb the growing workforce. To address youth employment levels, the government is implementing the Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) which targets young NEETs by offering them grants to start small businesses, although their impact is still limited by management and monitoring issues. The project aims to improve the alignment of employment and training policies, enhance the skills and attitudes of young people, reduce the NEET rate, and promote employability by aligning training with industry needs. It also seeks to establish private sector-led initiatives to combat corruption and strengthen public-private sector dialogue.

The Ugandan government has also introduced several initiatives to reduce corruption. The creation of the Inspectorate of Government (IGG) and the Office of the Auditor General aim to improve transparency and accountability. In addition, national campaigns such as Zero Tolerance to Corruption raise public awareness of the negative effects of corruption. Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of the reforms is often called into question because of the prevailing impunity. According to a World Bank report, less than 20% of reported cases of corruption result in convictions. This highlights the importance of strengthening judicial systems to support anti-corruption efforts.

## 1.3 Interventions of the EU and Enabel

The Ugandan government and its international partners have adopted a multidimensional approach to tackling the challenges of employment, governance and the fight against corruption. Within this framework, the EU is playing a crucial role through its Multi-Annual Indicative Program (2021-2027)[8], aligned with Uganda's National Development Plan (NDP) III. This program supports initiatives such as the creation of green jobs, the fight against corruption and the improvement of technical and professional skills. With the Team Europe SB4U (Sustainable Business for Uganda) Platform[9] it aims at supporting Uganda’s business environment to become more conducive for inclusive and green investments. In this context, Enabel’s strategy in Uganda (2023–2027) is structured around strengthening the synergies between skills development, employment creation, and governance. It prioritizes a demand-driven approach to skilling, focusing on aligning TVET systems with labor market needs, while also promoting accountability and improved service delivery through public sector reforms. The strategy explicitly promotes partnerships with the private sector as a means to enhance both employment outcomes and institutional governance.

The Skills and Attitude, Governance and Anti-Corruption (SG+) project, implemented by ENABEL and the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), contribute to Enabel’s objectives by 1) fostering public-private cooperation to address and resolve bottlenecks to private sector investments (lack of skilled labour, corruption issues, access to finance, etc.) and improving business environment in Uganda ; 2) establishing private sector led initiatives to fight corruption and strengthen the private-public sector dialogue.

[8] https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/213dd708-12ab-4cc0-b7ec-d754f36cd7eb_en

[9] The SB4U Platform assesses, proposes and executes measures to make the regulatory and enforcement environment more conducive and to initiate new innovative approaches which are likely to improve the investment climate and the business environment.

## 1.4 SG+ project intervention logic and strategic approach

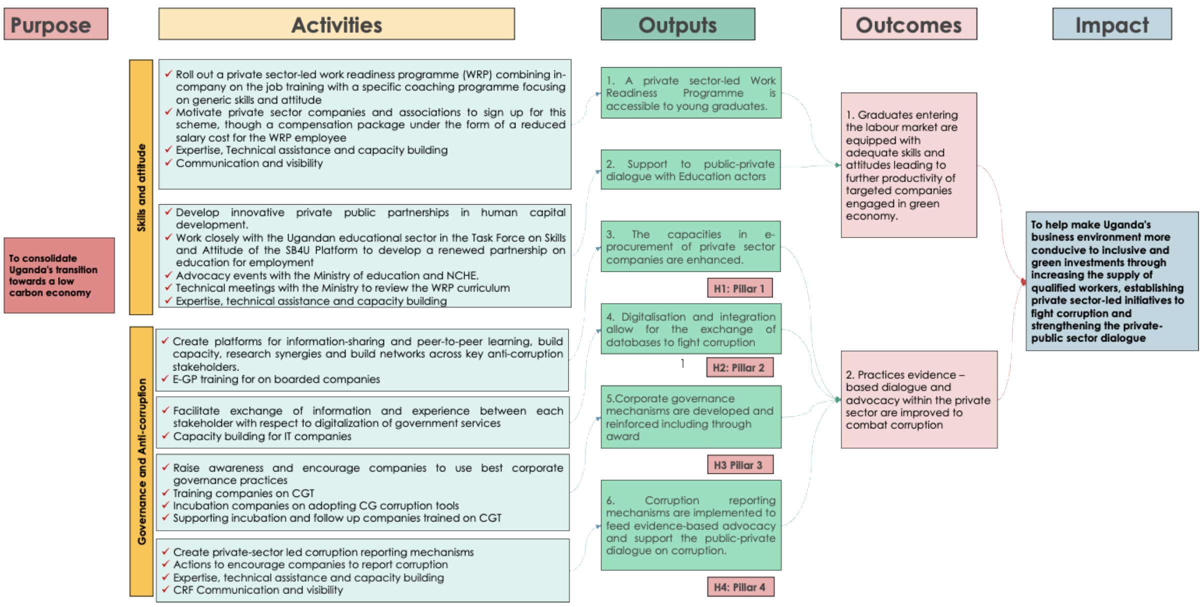
Launched in December 2020, the SG+ was initially designed as a three-year pilot project which aimed at improving work readiness among recent graduates and strengthening governance and accountability of companies across the country. Due to delays resulting from economic and health situation, the project was extended by one year and is now set to conclude in November 2024.

The SG+ project consisted of two components: the “Skills and Attitude” and “Governance/ Anti-Corruption”. It was defined upon the following building blocks: i) addressing National and EU development policies concerning skills development, economic growth, investment, governance and corruption and green growth; ii) building upon previous support and actions undertaken and defined by the EU-PSFU's partnership. Additionally, SG+ aimed to be linked with green sectors as part of the selection criteria and training program for graduates and companies.

Using the outcomes and recommendations of the first EU-Uganda Trade Forum held in Kampala in March 2020, the intervention was built to be fully aligned to the SB4U approach and to provide specific remedies to investment and business constraints and bolster a constructive dialogue on economic reforms and tools. It was also focused on piloting new instruments and services, to document the successes of the approaches and factors that influenced the business environment in Uganda.

Small successes were foreseen to increase the stakeholders’ support for the approaches and to attract additional co-funding and investment from traditional and new donors/partners as well as the Uganda’s, European and global private sector in the next stage.

*Figure 1 SG+ Logical framework*




## 1.5 The SG+ Governance

The governance of the program is based on a Grant Agreement Contract established by the European Union with Enabel, which is responsible for the implementation of the project. Under the signed financing agreement, a third local stakeholder was included in the framework as a co-implementation partner: PSFU, a semi-public body responsible for promoting investments in Uganda.

This three-pronged governance structure had also to align with the other European Union programs mentioned earlier to ensure coherence and synergy within the Green UP program framework.

In addition to these core governance bodies; the project has aimed to fully involve key stakeholders from the private and public sectors by integrating them into a monitoring and evaluation committee. This committee being responsible for overseeing the project's achievements and providing recommendations to enhance its effectiveness.

**The main governance stakeholders:**

- **The European Union:** The SG+ project is financed under the Inclusive Green Economy Uptake Program (GreenUP). It is part of the Business Environment component of the program. As the main donor, the European Union chairs the steering committee and ensures the project's coherence and synergy with other ongoing initiatives in Uganda: GreenUp and SB4U
- **Enabel:** sole beneficiary and signatory of the Contribution Agreement with the EU Delegation. This legal structure ensured clear and coherent resource management, allowing Enabel to oversee and coordinate all project activities while ensuring the achievement of set objectives. Enabel also maintained continuous liaison with other stakeholders and ensures the synergy of ongoing initiatives
- **The PSFU (Private Sector Foundation Uganda):** Uganda's leading private sector body, the. PSFU is a focal point for private sector advocacy, as well as capacity-building for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through training and business development services. PSFU is involved at different levels in the program and in the SG+ structures. Being part of the steering structures but also sole implementing partner of the intervention.
- **Private Stakeholders:** Companies involved in the program (eg. Buganda Cultural Development Association; Echo Link Technology; HRN Business Services limited, etc.); professional associations (e.g. Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Association Limited; African Women Agribusiness Netword, etc.); consultants involved in the due diligence processes for companies to be enrolled in the WRP; and partners responsible for implementing the activities (trainings, workshops, etc.): friends consult, Makerere Business School (MUBS)
- **Public Stakeholders:** Public Institutions and Ministries: (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; National Information Technology Authority, etc.)

**The main governance bodies:**

- **Program steering committee[10]:** which relates to the management of the 45M€ general GreenUp Program (which is implemented through separate projects, allocated to different actors). It aimed to give political and strategic steering of the program to ensure full alignment of the action to national development policies and plans.
- **The SB4U Platform[11]** which is governed by three main independent governance bodies.

[10] **Composition of the Program Steering Committeee**: ***Voting members:*** National Planning Authority (NPA); PSFU; European Union Delegation (EUD); Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED); other public and private relevant stakeholders.; ***non-voting members:*** Uganda Local Government association, relevant agencies, international organizations (including Enabel), Civil Society).

[11] **the Board:** governing body for the SB4U PPD Platform responsible for supervision and decision making for the PPD process; **the Secretariat**: the "hub" or the "engine" of the PPD, responsible for mobilizing, coordinating and facilitating constructive dialogue; **the Taskforce:** responsible for animating and supporting the Skills and Attitude Task Force, the Governance and anticorruption Task Force under the auspices of the SB4U Platform and in close collaboration with PSFU

- **The Project Steering Committee**[12]**:** highest management level of the project. It was responsible for providing the necessary strategic guidance to all project implementers and stakeholders. It supported the project management in view of reaching the project outputs and objectives. The PSC acted as the organizational, technical and financial auditor of the project.
- **The project Management Unit**[13]**:** operational level in the intervention, responsible for taking operational decisions and actions on a day-to-day basis to ensure that intervention strategy is fully implemented, in time and within budget, as approved by the PSC.

**Other operational committee:**

- **The Evaluation Committee**[14]**:** The evaluation committee was a structure introduced by PSFU to ensure fairness and transparency of company selection. They supported the final decision making on company admissibility/suitability to partner in the programme using the information in the due diligence reports generated by the due diligence team.

[12] **Composition of the PSC:** The representative of the EU Delegation in Uganda (chair); The Enabel Resident Repentative in Uganda (co-chair) ; the PSFU Representative (co-chair, with voice but without vote) and member of the project management unit (observers). **Added in 2022:** Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Developmen (MOGLSD), Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED) and Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs as members with observer status.

[13] **Composition of the PMU:** intervention manager (IM); Skills and Attitude Officer; Governance and anti-corruption officer; M&E communication officer; financial controller; and other support staff from the PSFU and Enabel.

[14] **Composition of M&E Committee:** Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, Federation of Uganda Employers, Uganda Manufacturers Association, Uganda Small Scale Industries; Association, Uganda Tourism Association, NITA-U. The secretariat of the committee was led by the PSFU

# 2 Objectives and methodology

## 2.1 Objectives of the evaluation

This **end term evaluation** (ETE) of the SG+ Project followed two specific objectives of learning and accountability. It is therefore both *summative* and *formative* with a general purpose to identify the project achievements and challenges of implementation and generate learnings for future programming and next phases of similar interventions. The accountability purpose was to provide an overall assessment of the performance achieved by the intervention.

More specifically, the evaluation mission was mandated:

- To identify lessons learned (ie Strategies, approaches, successes, obstacles and failures) and define which are the best practices that can be adopted and scaled up.
- To understand whether it is necessary to reorient future actions to improve skills of young graduates for the job market addressing needs presented by private sector and policy dialogue to create fair and accessible labour market.
- To guide strategic decision-making of both donors, implementing partners and national partners.

In particular, lessons learned shall:

- Focus on the description of the process that led to the learning, the preconditions and the implementation elements needed to apply the lesson effectively.
- Encompass broader insights and identify practices that are worthy to replicate and that can be applied in different contexts.
- Lead to defining best practices which are scalable.

The users of the ETE are:

- **Main users:**
    - <u>Development and Implementing Partners:</u> Enabel, EU and PSFU: for learning and accountability purposes as they seek to understand how effective the intervention was and formulate future interventions based on the lessons learned.
    - <u>Governmental institutions:</u> Ministries of Gender Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, National Council for Higher Education, as they are interested in learning from this intervention in order to inform their sectoral policies and enhance their alignment with national development plans
    - <u>Private Sector:</u> associations of Business enterprises and companies, as they would like to improve the effectiveness of their actions targeting dialogue with the public sector and explore opportunities to develop collaborations with TVET institutions and public universities.
- **Secondary users**: NGOs, universities, civil society will also be able to consult the main findings of the evaluation for fine tuning and improve their own grass root interventions.

## 2.2 Scope of the evaluation

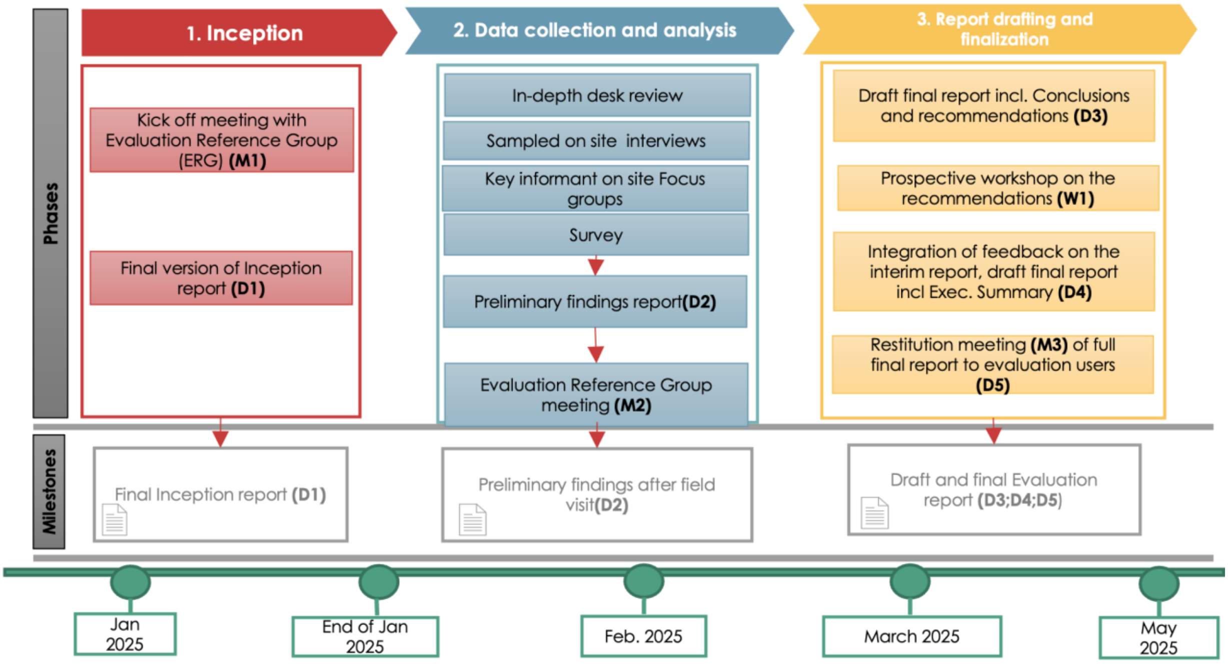
The evaluation will consider all pillars of the Project and its diversity in activities. Therefore, the scope is:

- **Temporal**: the ETE covers the whole implementation period, hence from December 2020 to December 2024, building and complementing on the findings of the mid-term Review (MTR) and Result Oriented Monitoring ROM review.
- **Geographical**: the ETE covers all communities in Uganda where activities took place, notably, Kampala, Mbarara and Wakiso. Field visits notably took place in Kampala, Wakiso and Mukono.
- **Thematic**: the ETE covers all Project intervention areas and outcomes within intervention areas.
- **Stakeholders:** the ETE involved stakeholders from ENABEL and the PSFU, the Project management unit, the steering committee, the EU Sustainable Business for Uganda Platform (SB4U) technical working groups, the Curriculum developers and soft skills trainers, the National Information Technology Authority and companies hosting graduates.

## 2.3 Our evaluation roadmap

The workplan of the ETE is summarised in the figure below and detailed in the following sections.

*Figure 2 Work plan*




## 2.4 Our evaluation approach

Our approach to conduct this evaluation and the methodological tools that we will deploy are presented in the sections below. The methodology was adapted during the ETE inception phase and considered the needs of the primary users of the evaluation to orient key choices and prioritisation.

### 2.4.1 A summative and formative evaluation

The primary focus of the evaluation was to determine whether the project achieved its intended goals and objectives. Second, it aimed to help identify the strengths and weaknesses and areas where improvements can be made in future program delivery, such as in program design or implementation. Third, it aimed to help determine whether the program or project was a worthwhile investment, and whether it met the needs of stakeholders and if it responded to government priorities for the sector. In addition, the summative evaluation also helps to promote accountability and transparency in program or project.

The evaluation of the SG+ project followed the key criteria established by the OECD-DAC namely relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, supplemented by cross cutting thematic of learning (to capitalize and replicate best practices), accountability and potential scaling up. The evaluation's findings and recommendations will support future development of similar EU funded initiative as it will inform the programming cycle from design to implementation.

### 2.4.2 Methods and approaches principles

We conducted the final evaluation of SG+ based on the combination of two core principles, which are prioritising a collaborative and utilisation-focused approach and identification of best practices.

- **Prioritising a collaborative and utilisation-focused approach.** The formative dimension of this evaluation was central, as its findings and recommendations will support future programming aiming at improving the overall business environment. We ensured that the principles of participation, learning, and adopting a practical mind-set were embedded in our methodology. We prioritised collective learning and a collaborative approach that led to the formulation of useful recommendations.

- We adopted a **mixed methods approach** to conduct this evaluation, using a variety of tools to collect and generate credible evidence and respond to the evaluation questions. Notably we **capitalised on existing qualitative and quantitative data & evidence (ie. literature, project documentation, MEL framework,** previous evaluations conducted). We also gathered qualitative primary data thanks to face-to-face interviews and focus groups, as well as a survey to beneficiaries, ensuring that the evaluation took stocks of what has been achieved and identified lessons learned.

### 2.4.3 Evaluation framework

The evaluation questions covered the following OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability** as well as cross cutting thematic including **gender equality environment**, etc.

The evaluation matrix in Appendix 4 also highlights key sources of information, tools for data collection and analysis, limits/points of attention to their collection and potential outcome of the data collection.

### 2.4.4 Limits to the review

While we have diversified as much as possible our sources of data, this evaluation is limited by the following elements:

- **The short time allocated to the inception phase** has not allowed to gather all elements necessary to a preliminary analysis and to better prepare the field visit and the data collection phase.

- **The low mobilisation of partners and beneficiaries in the focus groups** limited diversification in the pool of partners, young professionals and companies which were already interviewed individually.

- **The survey conducted as part of the data collection activities to gather end beneficiaries feedback for both the Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) and Work Readiness Program (WRP) components faced significant limitations in terms of response rate and data consistency**. Only five respondents participated in the GAC-related survey, while the WRP component received responses from just 40 young professionals (out of the 1,000 graduates benefitting from the intervention) and 35 companies (out of around 200 involved). This low participation rate, coupled with inconsistencies in how questions were answered, limited the reliability and representativeness of the survey findings. As a result, the data could not be used to derive statistically significant conclusions. However, **the insights**

**provided were still valuable when triangulated with qualitative interviews and document reviews, helping to enrich the overall analysis.**

# 3 Analysis and findings

## 3.1 Performance analysis

The following paragraphs provide a concise analysis of the evaluation criteria as defined by the OECD DAC guidelines. The score awarded is identified by a letter (A B D C) and by a colour code.

| RELEVANCE | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The project work readiness component demonstrated strong alignment with market demands and proved highly relevant in promoting youth employment in Uganda. By enhancing graduates' technical and soft skills and strengthening employer engagement, it directly addresses barriers to youth employability in line with Uganda Vision 2040 and its appended National Development Plan (NDP III and IV), all of which emphasize the need for a skilled, adaptable, and competitive workforce to tackle some of the key obstacles to a sustainable business environment and investment climate. Stakeholders confirm this relevance: 89% of graduates reported that the skills acquired through the program helped them secure a job, and 89% of participating employers expressed satisfaction with graduates' skill levels (WRP Tracer Study). The project's design, shaped through consultations with key stakeholders (under the SB4U initiative), ensured its activities met both youth and employer needs. Additionally, the financial support provided to companies for hosting graduates helped alleviate recruitment costs, particularly for SMEs, making youth employment more sustainable.<br>Similarly, the governance and anti-corruption component is strongly aligned with the National Anti-corruption strategy (NACS) which underscore the importance of involving the private sector in the design and implementation of fight against corruption activities. It has also fully embedded the key government reform to combat corruption in the business sector which is decentralisation of procurement through digitalisation. However, the lack of a clear logical framework and shifting budget lines led to difficulties in tracking activities and outcomes for specific pillars such as digitalization and data integration and corporate governance. In contrast, the participatory approach adopted for the employment component played a key role in ensuring its sustained relevance. | | | | |

| COHERENCE | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The SG+ Project demonstrated strong complementarity with other employability and governance programs in Uganda, distinguishing itself through its unique positioning and cost-sharing model, particularly within the Work Readiness Program (WRP). The engagement of both private and public stakeholders reinforced the project's coherence, creating synergies through its governance and implementation approach. The project also aligned with sectoral initiatives, such as those led by the Uganda Manufacturers Association with GIZ support under the Access to Employment project (ATE). In addition, a valuable partnership was established with the Mastercard Foundation, whose graduates—meeting the program's criteria—were integrated into the WRP. This collaboration contributed to increasing the number of trained graduates on the portal and reinforced the visibility and scalability of the WRP model.<br>Its collaboration with Enabel-supported programs, including Support to Skilling Uganda and the Social Protection Portfolio, was deemed effective, with recommendations to involve more vocational training institutions. However, a closer collaboration with SB4U, as initially planned in the project design, could have enhanced overall coherence and coordination with other programs in the sector. Nevertheless, | | | | |

some synergies were created, particularly within the GAC component, through contributions to and participation in various multi-stakeholder events and platforms.

| EFFECTIVENESS | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|

The SG+ project has shown partial effectiveness in achieving its core objectives, particularly in promoting public-private dialogue to combat corruption and supporting the integration of young graduates into the labour market. The project succeeded in creating platforms for regular engagement, such as meetings, workshops, and forums which facilitated dialogue between public and private sector stakeholders, fostering collaboration and alignment on youth employment strategies, training offers with market needs and fight against corruption initiatives.
Despite these successes, the project fell short of meeting the expected number of events and structured consultations, limiting the overall depth and consistency of engagement across sectors.

In relation to the objective of enhancing youth employability, the Work Readiness Program (WRP) was notably effective. The program addressed critical skills gaps by combining practical, demand-driven training with internships. According to the WRP tracer study, 89% of graduates reported that the skills gained helped them secure employment, and 89% of participating companies expressed satisfaction with graduate competencies. The inclusion of soft skills, such as communication and teamwork, was particularly impactful, as these were identified by employers as key barriers to employability. In addition, the involvement of companies in curriculum revision and the delivery of capacity-building sessions helped align training with labour market expectations. Graduates also received post-training support, including mentoring and networking opportunities, with several continuing as program ambassadors, further contributing to outreach and relevance.

In contrast, the Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) component face operational adaptation compared to the initial activity planning but also because of the relatively short implementation period and was only partially effective in meeting its intended results. Indeed, the timeframe allocated to this component was not well suited to the ambitious and systemic nature of the expected results. Objectives related to the digitalization and data integration, strengthening corporate governance, and the Corruption Reporting Facility (CRF) were either delayed or not fully achieved. Some of the activities were somewhat sidelined during the project's deployment, due to inherent potential risks already identified at design stage, which were not sufficiently mitigated. The expected results require sustained political commitment, complex inter-institutional coordination, and longer implementation cycles to yield visible outcomes. Furthermore, the governance component was constrained by the lack of a clearly defined M&E framework at the design stage, specifically, the absence of meaningful indicators and a clear results chain, which limited the project's ability to track progress, assess outcomes, and adapt implementation. As a result, while some activities were relevant, with this additional time constraint, the component struggled to demonstrate meaningful contributions to improved governance or anti-corruption outcomes.

Overall, while the SG+ project made notable contributions to graduates' employability and public private collaboration, its overall effectiveness was shaped by the complexity of working across distinct thematic areas, specifically the governance sector. This highlight the need for tailoring intervention strategies to the complexity of each sector, ensuring that governance components are supported by robust M&E systems, adaptive planning tools, and realistic timelines.

| EFFICIENCY | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|

The SG+ program's implementation mechanisms, including the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, played a crucial role in achieving the project's objectives, particularly in the Work Readiness Program (WRP). The financial support provided to companies emerged as a key determinant influencing their decision to participate in the project, particularly among SMEs, by mitigating direct and opportunity costs associated with engagement. The clarity, timelines, and simplicity of the support mechanism contributed to efficient implementation by facilitating smoother engagement, reducing administrative burden, and ensuring optimal use of resources to achieve intended outputs. The program flexibility in adapting to the needs of implementing partners, especially PSFU, strengthened its impact and visibility. The use of residential training and strategic partnerships with outreach-oriented organizations such as Campus Bee enhanced the program's implementation efficiency by leveraging existing platforms and networks to expand reach. These mechanisms streamlined outreach efforts, improved access to target groups, and reduced the need for parallel structures, contributing to perceived efficiency in delivering program activities. On the Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) side, the collaboration with national authorities, notably NITA-U PDDA and Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, was key to enhancing private sector involvement in e-procurement initiatives. The involvement of stakeholders at multiple levels, the Project Steering Committee, ensured transparent and inclusive governance.

However, challenges arose in both components, and in the coordination of two very different projects. On the WRP, the strict selection criteria limited participation to certain sectors, leaving others underrepresented (construction, tourism and hospitality) as a result of mitigation measures introduced to achieve program's targets by including sectors, which were not originally included in the design. This adjustment was made efficiently, without incurring additional costs or delays, thereby broadening the program's reach and impact without compromising its implementation timeline or resource utilization.

For the GAC component, the gaps from the project design and the modification of the implementation approach during the course of the project translated into inability to trace and report effectively progress and adaptively manage resources, ultimately affecting the efficiency of implementation. Ultimately, the difference in scope between the two components also sometimes made coordination work difficult.

In conclusion, the program would have benefitted from additional resources and support to address upper mentioned challenges and ensure its long-term sustainability.

| SUSTAINABILITY | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|

The sustainability of the SG+ model is contingent on its continued integration into Uganda's private sector and the ongoing support from both public and private institutions. While the model was well-received, particularly by businesses, and has prompted initial government interest, there is still a need for a well thought through sustainability strategy to ensure its long-term viability. Despite positive feedback from companies, the model's sustainability lacks clearly defined and integrated sustainability measures to ensure continuity beyond the project's lifecycle. The absence of concrete transition plans, institutional anchoring, or long-term resource commitments raises concerns about the durability of outcomes post-project.

The Government's commitment to expanding apprenticeship frameworks through the National Development Plan is promising, but it will require additional resources and time, as well as cultural shift and enhanced public-private dialogue. Moreover, this framework is not specifically designed for graduates' employability issues. Additionally, while the project developed employability potential by equipping individuals with valuable skills, the lack of an integrated sustainability strategy poses a risk to the lasting benefits for participants and companies alike.

| |
|---|
| The adoption of the Electronic Government Procurement system is a good step toward efficiency, but it is far from being complete (not all government institutions use it, and the physical and E-Systems are coexisting in many institutions still); the data integration, corporate governance, and the anti-corruption components lack sustainability measures.<br><br>Overall, while the project has laid a basis for long-term collaboration between private and public sectors, nevertheless ensuring the full sustainability of its outcomes will require further commitment, resources, and strategic planning. |

| IMPACT | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| By integrating soft skills training into tertiary education, the SG+ program played a significant role in bridging the skills gap between graduates and the labour market by providing graduates with the trainings and practical work experience to enhance their employability. It also impacted the private sector, with companies adjusting their recruitment processes, creating more job opportunities for fresh graduates, and refining internal policies to better onboard new employees.<br><br>Regarding anti-corruption, the creation of the Corruption Reporting Facility represents a crucial step toward enhancing transparency and governance. Moreover, the effective use of e-procurement by companies stands out as one of the project's key impacts, as it contributes to reducing corruption and enhancing private sector participation in the procurement process.<br><br>As a pilot initiative, the program's influence on governance, anti-corruption efforts, and the alignment of graduate profiles with market needs remains somewhat limited. However, through its awareness-raising activities, events, and outreach, the program has laid the foundation for potential future changes. | | | | |

| CROSS-CUTTING THEMES (GENDER EQUALITY AND ENVIRONMENT) | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The SG+ program had a limited focus on gender equality and environmental sustainability. While gender-sensitive training and balanced participation were encouraged, the program did not prioritize specific gender related activities. Similarly, environmental sustainability was not central, though it included elements like greener procurement and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) principles in some training. The promotion of green jobs and environmental practices within the private sector was minimal. However, the program did contribute to social responsibility by ensuring workers' rights, such as health insurance and fair wages, supporting broader sustainability goals. Moreover, the design approach emphasized addressing human rights and working conditions through a thorough due diligence process and training for companies on good business practices.<br><br>Overall, the inclusion of these cross-cutting themes in the project implementation was moderate. | | | | |

## 3.2 In-depth analysis

### 3.2.1 Relevance:

**The SG+ Project has proven to be highly relevant in addressing challenges in youth employment and in Uganda. From the outset, the project aligned its objectives with the critical need to bridge the gap between education and the labour market. However, while having a highly relevant objective, the**

**governance and anti-corruption component intervention logic lacked some robustness, leading to some misalignment with overall project goals.**

- **EQ1: To what extent the SG + project has promoted the initiatives developed in Uganda aimed at improving youth employment and public/corporate governance? How relevant and appropriate was the response provided to the graduates' skills needs for the private sector' demand for employment in Uganda? To what extent were the activities implemented for the governance components relevant to public and corporate needs? Are there any recommended strategies that can be proposed to better meet such skills 'needs?**

The SG+ project was initially designed to support and promote efforts developed by the Ugandan authorities to improve youth employment and public and corporate governance, hence empower youth and stimulate sustainable economic development (see chapter 1.2). Notably, through its objective to reduce youth unemployment and promote skills development, the project is in direct alignment with Uganda's national development priorities - for inclusive economic growth and job creation, as outlined in Uganda's Vision 2040 and related sectoral strategies - and with the strategic goals of the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development on employment, notably the National Employment Strategy newly adopted Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy of Uganda. Additionally, the project supports the principles of accountability and good governance as set out in the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019–2024) led by the Ministry of Ethics and Integrity, and notably the GoU plans to move to an electronic Government procurement system (GPP) also named e-government procurement system (EGP), Digital Vision 20240 and Data integration effort at the NITA level.

The WRP component activities ie. graduates' soft and technical skill development and employer engagement, directly addressed needs of Ugandan youth for accessing sustainable employment opportunities:

- Need for support in landing graduates into the right jobs. WRP created a trusted platform where 'accredited' employers could be matched with graduates, aiming at enlarging recruitment possibilities for companies and alleviating recruitment costs, and allowing youth with no 'connections' in the marketplace to still land themselves in jobs. Several interviewed companies mentioned they face many challenges in identifying and attracting graduates: lack of visibility and knowledge of right job opening diffusion channels, lack of attractiveness of their sectors or their placement localisation.
- Need to derisking graduates' employment by companies. WRP financed part of the salary of the employed youth for the whole probation period, aiming at creating interest from companies, alleviating onboarding/initial training on-the-job costs which have proven to be particularly burdensome for smaller organisations and thus derisking recruitment decisions, and thus sustaining growth.
- Need for graduates to be equipped with the right skills and attitude to add value at the workplace. WRP initiated trainings on a set of skills and attitude that were in demand in professional setting and across the key sectors targeted by the project such as construction, agro-processing and manufacturing, but also the coaching of youth. Youth and employers surveyed and interviewed saluted the relevance of the initial trainings and appreciated having been trained on coaching the youth.

The project stood out for its practical approach of combined “first job” opportunities with hands-on training, aiming to allow young graduates to gain concrete experience and become fully credible in the workforce.

This approach is deemed by stakeholders and the evaluators as highly relevant. Two design features were however assessed as perfectible:

- The content of the training on skills and attitude. Even though stakeholders (employers and youth) much appreciated the training, it was deemed critical that it would be carried out prior to onboarding in the company and that sectoral specific modules would be made available. Additionally, while the program provided foundational skills in modules such as personal development and coaching, Interpersonal Skills, and Professionalism, which are essential for the workforce, feedback from employers and youth revealed that there is also need for content-oriented modules preparing the young workforce for the nuanced interpersonal and problem-solving challenges faced in the workplace, ie. more interactive, scenario-based, and even industry-specific training.
- The duration of the youth job contract and subsidies. Many stakeholders, including employers and graduates, especially in companies of smaller size, suggested that the current placement period is too short for youth to develop the necessary skills in specialized/technical areas, and for companies to generate enough growth to be in a position to hire them on the long-term. As outlined in the end of project report as well as in the WRP ETE workshop, for companies and graduates in remote areas, logistical challenges may hinder the viability of upcountry placements.
- Student counselling/ mentorship emerged as another area for improvement from the graduate’s perspective. Some graduates reported that personalized career counselling and mentorship throughout the program is lacking as youth are left with little skills or options for navigating the complexities of the job market and taking informed decisions about their future careers.
- Initial sectoral prioritisation and the due diligence requirements need further refinement. While the sectoral scope was eventually broadened towards the end of project period to ensure that program targets were met within the remaining project timeline, the initial requirements led to a high concentration of participating companies from the manufacturing and agro-industry as highlighted in the WRP End-of Project Report of the PSFU. This limited sectoral diversity has constrained the program’s ability to fully address broader labour market dynamics and reduced its reach to sectors with strong potential for inclusive, green and gender-responsive job creation, as perceived by key stakeholders in the WRP (partners, beneficiaries, external stakeholders).
- Opening the program to diplomas and degrees holders could increase the pool of workforce needing soft skills and attitude improvements, as they are also needed to fulfil job market demand.

The governance and anticorruption component directly addressed an extremely complex and yet highly important aspect of doing business in Uganda: awareness and trust of companies in engaging with the public sector procurement. However, the context analysis conducted before the program launch was insufficient for some sub-objectives, particularly 2.2 Digitalization and Data Integration and 2.3 Fostering Corporate Governance, which are very ambitious and very dependant to complex and long-term reforms and programmes. Relevance of implemented activities were thus challenged by internal and external factors such as the acknowledged weaknesses in the logical framework (by ENABEL implementation team, by the ETE evaluator) as well as the inadequacy in timing of implementation. More specifically, misalignments in the initial logical framework are found between defined objectives and designed activities, but also between target indicators and designed activities; misalignments between the timing of implementation of the GAC component of the Project and other governance programmes ie. the World

Bank funded e-government programme are about the trainings which were carried out too early in the overall context of government transparency efforts and e-procurement setting up, since as of today the e-procurement system is not yet fully active.

Interviewees acknowledged that the project rightly addressed the use of the e-government procurement tool for some companies (drafting and edition of a user guide, roll out of sensitisation sessions across the country). The early involvement of the private sector in initiatives such as the E-Government Procurement (E-GP) was widely appreciated and recognized as valuable, as it allowed for immediate feedback during the design phase of such initiatives. Nevertheless, interviewees also noted that the core tools forming the axis of this component were not fully operationalized to be effectively used. For instance, many departments and local agencies were still handling public procurement manually, as the E-GP platform had not yet been fully adopted. Additionally, only a few companies benefitted from the whole set of corporate governance training and there has been little motivation by providers to get onto the system and use TOTs services to access the EG-P.

Moreover, the project's outputs, such as the corruption facility report, while useful, were seen as insufficiently tailored to the local context: they were rather focused on high-level governance structures - aiming at fostering dialogue; but they did not adequately address the follow-up measures to ensure identified issues are acknowledged and addressed - which the users see and formalise as a must-have feature of the platform to build long lasting trust in the platform relevance and ability to generate change.

Key informant stakeholders feedback indicates that while the local team had identified misalignments after the start of the project implementation, procedural limitation - where the approved project documents do not allow for significant changes or adjustments once finalized – impeded any major modifications forward. Indeed, the main legally binding document being the Cooperation Agreement, the Project implementation had to adhere strictly to the original framework and objectives, while the reporting tools at both layers of accountability were interrelated.

However, some modifications in terms of intensity of efforts deployed between activities are reflected in the repeated reassessments of the governance budget lines. Originally, the budget of 909 110 EUR had been allocated across four pillars, including Public Procurement, Digitalization and Data Integration, Fostering Corporate Governance and Corruption Reporting Facility. As the project evolved, these areas underwent significant budget adjustments intended to address 'inadequacies' in the initial implementation approach and to accommodate the extended implementation period. According to the implementation team, these shifts did not hinder the execution of activities. However, these changes affected the ability to track activities implementation and outcomes and reduced the clarity of budget utilization.

*Table 1 Evolution of the SG+ budget (GAC component) – Initial vs Final (2024)*

| Activities | Initial Budget Global (EUR) | Final Budget Global (EUR) | Var |
|---|---|---|---|
| R2.1 Public Procurement | 256 840 | 692 910 | **170%** |
| Accompany the PPDA EGP Roll Outs in 10+ MDAs | 226 840 | 655 910 | **189%** |
| Expertise, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building | 30 000 | 37 000 | **23%** |
| R2.2 Digitalization and Data Integration | 97 410 | 38 000 | **-61%** |
| Support to D&I Initiatives | 67 410 | 0 | **-100%** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expertise, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building | 30 000 | 38 000 | **27%** |
| R2.3 Fostering Corporate Governance | 146 630 | 39 000 | **-73%** |
| Support to Good Governance Initiatives | 116 630 | 0 | **-100%** |
| Expertise, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building | 30 000 | 39 000 | **30%** |
| R2.4 Corruption Reporting Mechanisms | 408 230 | 238 200 | **-42%** |
| Reporting Mechanisms are operational | 245 030 | | **-100%** |
| Expertise, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building | 163 200 | 238 200 | **46%** |
| **(B) SO 2 total: Practices, evidence-based dialogue and advocacy within the public and private sector are improved to combat corruption** | **909 110** | **1 008 110** | **11%** |

*SG+ Financial Plan VQ4 2024*

This narrowed focus limited the project's ability to address the broader, more inclusive governance reforms that had initially been proposed.

- **EQ 7: To what extent was the implementation modality, including mitigation measures or preventive strategies proposed appropriate to the specific context of the intervention?**

The implementation modality of SG+ was generally well suited to the specific deployment context of the project: it consists in the partnership formed between Enabel and the PSFU with an indirect implementation of the Project by the PSFU. Indeed, PSFU being one of the main and most active private sector association at the time, it was identified as the most relevant partner. Partnering with a Ugandan Private Stakeholders is very relevant to ensure sustainability of the system put in place. It shall be noted that Enabel local team had to intervene at all stages of the implementation process, in support to the PSFU, which had to go through a learning curve and capacity building on the job.

The preparatory work carried out before the project launch helped engage relevant key stakeholders from the outset, including government institutions, professional associations, and training organizations. This approach made it possible to design a project that was largely aligned with the needs of both students and the private sector, particularly within the WRP component. The involvement of companies in defining needs, recruiting processes and revising curricula enhanced the program's relevance, ensuring better alignment with private sector expectations. This demand-driven dynamic allowed companies to select candidates that matched their needs without bearing the cost of the recruitment process, which is particularly challenging for SMEs.

PSFU also relied on a number of sub-contractors: technical assistants, consultants, developers, evaluators, trainings, hence used the best knowledge existing to shape and implement the Project.

Implementing the training activities of the WRP through recorded video capsules and GAC through a user guideline and TOT approach (40 trained trainers) is in principle very appropriate for sustainability purposes. Video capsule could be broadcast widely and even used in other settings. However, while most of the graduates were trained online, the face-to-face delivery of the training to graduates prior the placement at the workplace has been asked for by graduates, and trainers. On the governance component, ToT were envisaged as a resource that any company can refer to at a modest fee to be supported to understand the system as well as onboard them onto the EGP system.

Mitigation measures and preventive strategies were tailored to anticipated risks, such as potential resistance to certain program components, low level of ownership of the national stakeholders and lack of confidence of the beneficiaries in the mechanisms developed. These measures were grounded in local knowledge, drawing upon previous lessons learned from similar interventions. Ongoing dialogues, and the inclusion of key institutions and national plateform such as the NITA (National Information Technology Agency), the NCHE or the UGHub in the decision-making were key strategies implemented to ensure the community's buy-in. Additionally, checks systems were implemented at several layers to ensure transparency and effectiveness: external evaluation of companies, WRP decision committee on inclusion of companies in the system, PSFU checks at the workplace, feedback reports from the workplace.

### 3.2.2. Coherence:

**The SG+ Project demonstrated a good level of coherence with other Enabel and international development actors projects. However, its complementarity could have been strengthened with closer SB4U collaboration.**

- **EQ8: Are there any complementarities developed by the SG + with other interventions implemented in Uganda in the same sector by Enabel or by other international development actors that led to produce comparative advantages for the project' implementation and the outcome' achievement?**

Several sectoral programs supporting graduates integration were implemented prior to the SG+, such as the initiative led by the Ministry of Gender and the Uganda Manufacturers Association (Uganda / Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) Youth Employment Programs 2010-2019 financed by the GIZ). However, the SG+ WRP has a unique positioning, as it addresses a critical need for strengthening support in the transition from education to the labour market—both in terms of skills and practical experience. **It complements and aligns with the TVET national policy, particularly through its cost-sharing model and partnerships with private companies, strengthening graduate integration efforts.**

SG+ Project complemented other programs led by Enabel in Uganda, such as Support to Skilling Uganda and initiatives within the Social Protection Portfolio in terms of scope and target. According to stakeholder feedback and progress reports examined, this collaboration has been effective, with the SG+ project leveraging on the partnerships with private companies built under the SSU initiative to expand its reach to more employers.

The WRP component of the SG+ has now informed the design and implementation of the recent **Wework program**, part of the current Enabel portfolio, with recommendations to expand the number of institutions involved, particularly by including more vocational training organizations to broaden the program's reach and expanding the duration of the financial support to beneficiaries.

Additionally, as anticipated by the midterm review, the internal coherence of the initiative has been enhanced as Enabel's online learning platform for training sessions has been effectively used to deliver online training to graduates of WRP. As highlighted in the ROM report[15], there are synergies with EU-

[15] **Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM)** is an external support mechanism to the European Commission's monitoring system. This support led to an evaluation report, published in 2024, providing the implementation team with five key recommendations.

funded initiatives and other Enabel programs, such as the Switch Africa Green Initiative and the Justice and Accountability Reform Program which open regional expansion opportunities.

On the GAC component, **the Project aligned with existing governance initiatives, particularly in E-Government Procurement funded with the World Bank, by reinforcing private sector engagement.** The GAC's contribution in deploying E-Government Procurement has been seen as an asset by the Ministry of ICT and the PPDA. Synergies have been created through the engagement of multiple stakeholders - ie private companies, professional association, institutions, etc. - in both the governance of and implementation of project activities. The digitalization component of the GAC also allowed to provide feedback from the private sector on ongoing effort to the development of e-government services, whereas the CRF aligned with national effort to fight corruption.

Finally, the Mid-Term Review, the ROM report and the audit conducted during implementation enabled key adjustments to be made, particularly regarding alignment and complementarities with other ongoing interventions: notably, the participation in the SB4U technical working group, experience sharing opportunities, the contribution to the organization of the EU-Uganda Business Platform, etc.

### 3.2.3. Effectiveness:

**The project successfully facilitated the creation of dialogue spaces between the public and private sectors in Uganda, fostering discussions and cooperation through regular meetings, forums, and events. It contributed to strengthening young graduates' access to the job market. It contributed to the initiation of adoption of e-government services including digital procurement. However, operational adaptation, particularly under the GAC component, limited its ability to fully execute activities as initially planned.**

**EQ4: To what extent the SB4U approach has promoted dialogue spaces between private and public sectors and has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing barriers and improving private-public collaboration?**

The SB4U has played a key role in facilitating public-private dialogue by creating a privileged discussion platform in Uganda.

The SG+ Project Governance and Accountability Component (GAC) four pillars benefited from synergies in connection with the SB4U approach: evidence collected, and stakeholders feedback suggest that dialogue spaces were successfully created and enhanced with regular meetings, forums, and workshops that bring together representatives from both SG+ and SB4U. These events have provided a platform to government, the private sector, and development partners for discussing key issues, sharing perspectives, and aligning objectives on mutually relevant topics. This collaborative framework has facilitated the understanding and partial adoption by companies of the new electronic government procurement platform, and the implementation of a Corruption Reporting Facility by and for the private sector, ensuring that feedback comes directly from businesses' experiences with corruption.

This platform has also enabled the formulation of concrete recommendations on EG-P and the digitalization of public administration. Events such as the Private sector Anti-Corruption conference or The Governance and Anti-Corruption sector actors dialogue, exemplify the strengthened public-private collaboration fostered by SB4U. However, excerpt from the midterm review and project documentation highlighted some room for improvement in the coordination with the SB4U. Moreover, the number of targeted events and round table discussions between relevant MDA involved and the private sector were not reached, notably on digitalization and data integration pillar and the Corruption Reporting

Mechanism[16]. The M&E framework did not keep track nor capture indicators related to related outputs, such as partnerships formed, and policy dialogues held.

On the WRP side, public-private dialogue has been promoted through the taskforce and additional mechanism, such as the establishment of a mixed public-private M&E Committee (project steering committees) and: nine experience-sharing events for trainers and companies bringing together companies, supervisors, graduates, and other stakeholders ; twenty three events on lessons learned and best practices and twelve evaluation committee meetings.

Regarding barrier reduction, the SB4U approach has also aimed to reduce traditional barriers that hinder effective public-private collaboration. The creation of joint task forces under the SB4U was intended as a key strategy in addressing these barriers. While the taskforces for the WRP and GAC components were established as planned, their potential to facilitate experience-sharing and alignment—especially with complementary initiatives like the EU's GreenUp program—was not fully realized. As a result, opportunities for continuous learning, strategic coordination, and the anticipation of implementation challenges may have been missed. Nonetheless, the introduction of the platform for Corruption Reporting to facilitate has been instrumental in building and enhancing trust between private and public sector, further contributing to smoother cooperation.

There is another potential avenue for influence to consider, although it may be premature to draw any meaningful conclusions at this stage. Through the public-private policy dialogue platforms created and the connections established in the technical working groups under SB4U, there is an opportunity for future collaboration and the development of joint initiatives and policies aimed at improving the labour market and shaping the demand for skilled labour.

- **EQ10: To what extent has the coaching, the internships opportunities, the soft skills development proposed, contributed to equip adequately graduates to enhance their employability and to increase their access to the employment offer on the labour market in alignment with private sector' requirements (in the green economy or the private sector)?**

The SG+ project has contributed to addressing gaps between companies' expectations and young graduates' skills and provided graduates with a space to learn, gain experience, and enhance their employability.

One of the most appreciated components of the project was the soft skills training, a key element in improving employability. The university curriculum does not equip graduates with the behavioural skills suitable for the workplace: however, without the right attitude, access to employment and integration at the workplace remains difficult. WRP developed training modules were demand-driven, ensuring relevance to labour market expectations. A specific training module addressed participants' accountability and proactivity: interpersonal skills, time management skills, administration and management and critical thinking skills. Other essential modules, such as digital skills development, data management, and cybersecurity awareness, were also introduced to better meet labour market demands. Specifically, simulations and in-person learning have been identified by graduates during their feedback as essential tools for enhancing soft skills, enabling students to better apply their knowledge in practical settings.

As a result, 67% of the graduates were satisfied with the skills acquired thanks to the program and 89% of the employers are satisfied with the level of skills of the graduates they hosted, as indicated in the final

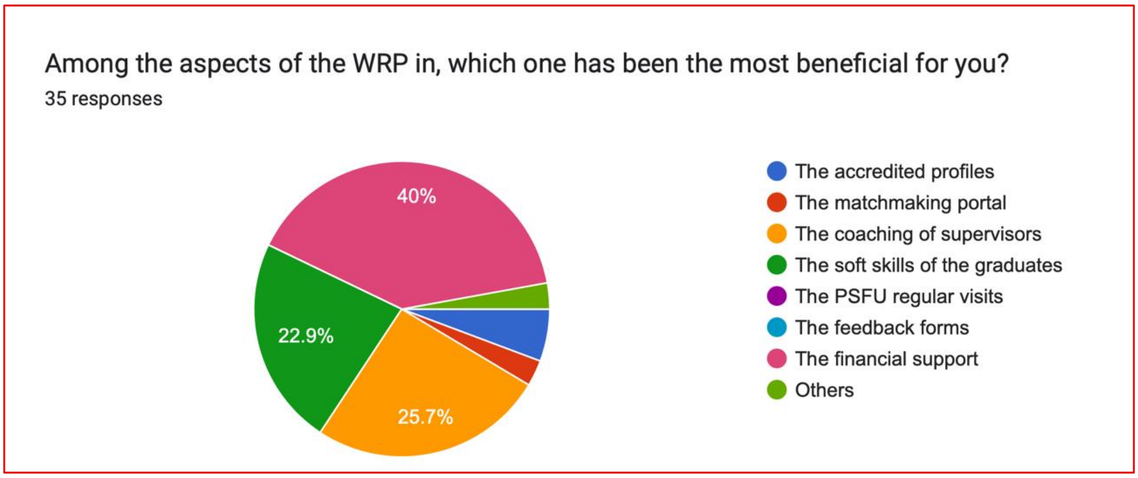
[16] The number of dedicated days for trainings did not reach the target both pour the R.21 and the 2.2.

tracer study conducted in 2024. In the feedback collected, graduates and companies consistently highlight the positive impact of soft skills training, with employers emphasizing the importance of these skills, noting that graduates who had undergone soft skills development were more likely to demonstrate effective communication, adaptability, and leadership potential. ETE interviews with employers indicate that skills gained during the training and the professional experience during the youth placement have facilitated their professional integration. Graduates themselves reported that soft skills training enhanced their ability to collaborate with diverse teams, manage conflicts, and be more professional, displaying the positive attitude appreciated by employers. And yet, there is room for improvement as 33% of graduates (33%) were dissatisfied with the level of soft skills they gained during the program.

Another key feature of the WRP is the financial support offered to companies to provide decent work conditions to young graduates. This feature helped overcome a key barrier and led to the participation of over 256 companies—surpassing the initial target of 200.

Another aspect is the experience gained during the job contract. Interviews with graduates who completed their placement highlight that they feel better prepared for the job market due to their experience. Many reported gaining industry-specific insights and professional networks that proved instrumental in securing subsequent employment. As a result of their participation in the Project, feedback of graduates indicates that they are all confident in their ability to successfully transform employment opportunities they will apply for.

*Figure 3 Graduates feedback on the WRP benefits*



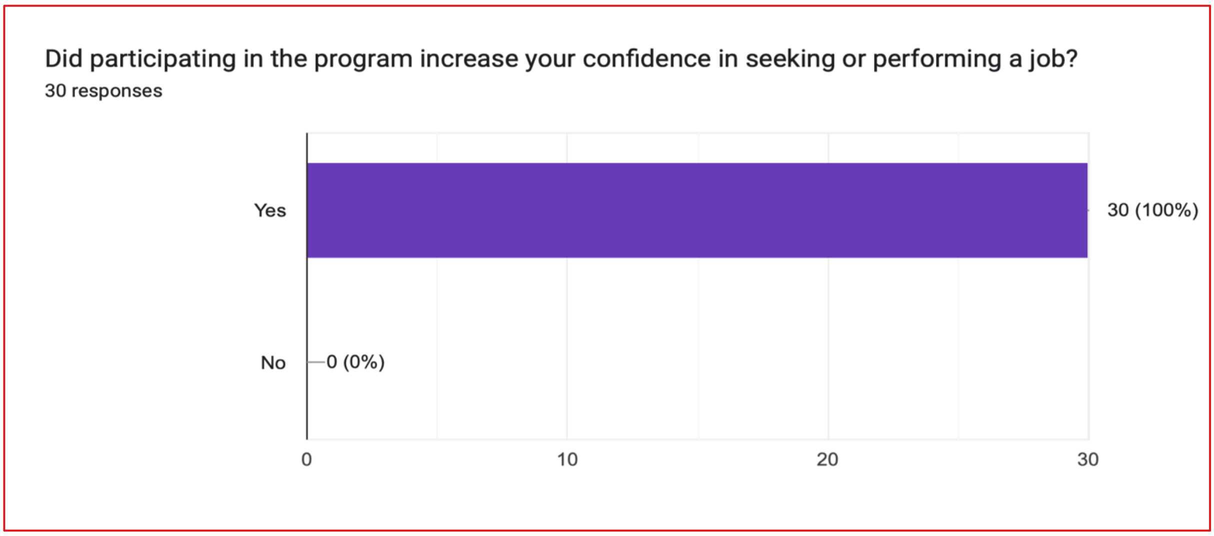

*WRP Graduates Survey – Technopolis*

Additional support to the youth were provided through the mentoring initiatives, including for example a WhatsApp groups led by the teaching team and coaching sessions. According to the graduates who benefited from the coaching and mentorship, these sessions provided significant guidance and increased their ability to navigate in a professional setting. Many graduates became project ambassadors by sharing their experiences. However, the level of support and guidance varied, and the coaching sessions were not consistent across the graduates' cohorts. Suggestions to improve this component by providing full mentorship and coaching support and individualised guidance were made by graduates.

Finally, the structure and duration of the Project, despite some adjustment needed during the project, were deemed appropriate, enabling participants to effectively prepare for permanent jobs; 77% of graduates were offered full-time positions or extended contracts after the placement period, mainly from the hosting organisation. Data collected during ETE interviews and workshops with graduates and hosting companies indicate that a high number of hosting companies had one or two WRP staff as permanent employee.

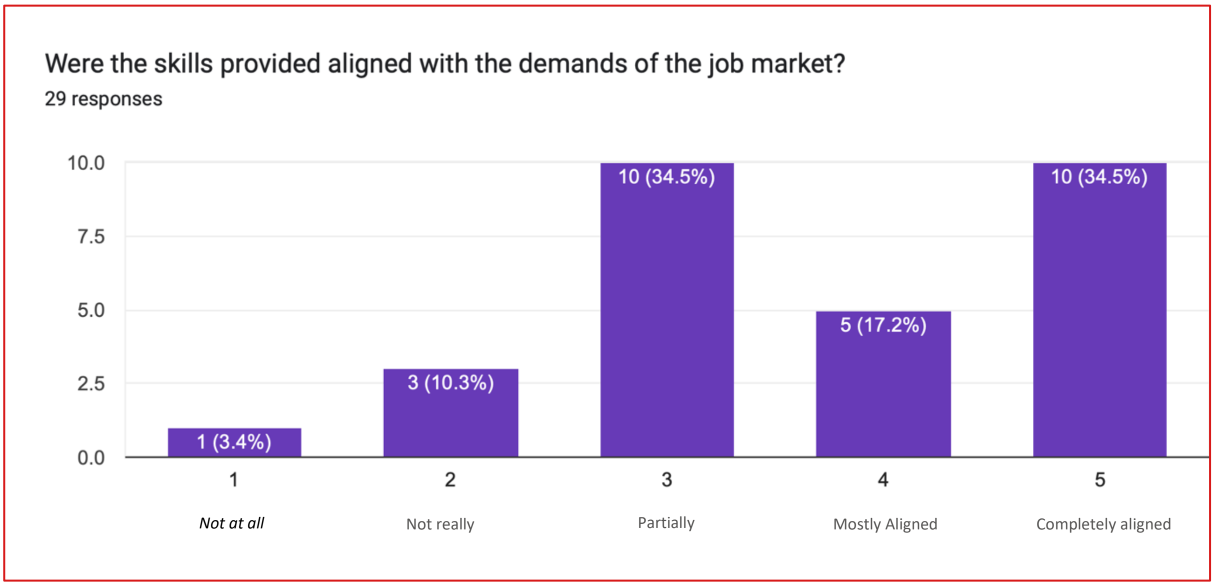
This conversion rate demonstrates the value of placement in providing both employers and graduates with a mutually beneficial opportunity to assess fit and readiness for permanent roles in the private sector.

*Figure 4 WRP impact on graduates' confidence*




*WRP Graduates Survey – Technopolis*

*Figure 5 WRP impact on the graduates' skills*




*WRP Graduates Survey – Technopolis*

However, some design features of the WRP also generate a windfall effect. It was reported that some large companies approached the WRP to benefit from the subsidies for youth recruitments while they already had identified profiles for recruitment. It was also reported that some companies did not apply the dignity at the workplace guidelines nor paid proper salaries to the youth; the companies had a way to bypass the reporting system as the employer is the one to send report to the PSFU and the young employee does not have possibility to inform about possible misbehaviours of the employer directly to the PSFU. While PSFU has organised control visits at the workplace, the visitor would not be allowed to meet alone with the employee. Employee would also be afraid of reporting problems and be harassed or even fired. Young employee level of precarity is such that they would accept anything to have a first experience at the workplace. And finally, some companies do keep the graduates for a limited period of time, just so as to replace them by other graduates under the WRP or now the new WeWork Project.

**EQ11: To what extent the tools and approaches, as the integration of digitalization and e-procurement tools, the communication strategies, curricula development, proposed by the SG+, have positively influenced the broader labour market and the private sector's demand for skilled labour?**

The SG+ Project has played a piloting role in shifting recruitment practices in the private sector. While it facilitated access to job opportunities for thousands of program participants and provided about 200 companies with job-ready profiles, it created interest for some companies to recruit out-of-the university graduates, while they use to hire much more experienced candidates. It also created incentives for companies to adapt their internal HR policies and introduce onboarding processes, training programs, coaching on the job, and decent work conditions.

The establishment of a matchmaking platform has proven to be an extremely valuable tool for connecting employers and students, offering a space where parties can interact and engage with one another directly. This platform serves as an intermediary, streamlining the hiring process and helping students find job time opportunities that align with their skills and career goals with employers' benefit from a direct connection to a pool of qualified candidates, while students gain access to job opportunities that they might not otherwise have found. However, issues such as the misalignment of graduates' expectations with those of companies and the need for continued incentives to encourage firms to hire graduates would need to be addressed for further roll out.

Hundreds of companies have registered to date on the platform. Several interviewed companies mentioned that they would not have found the right profiles if not through the platform as they face many challenges in identifying and attracting graduates: lack of visibility and knowledge of right job opening diffusion channels, lack of attractiveness of their sectors or their placement localisation. Even though some large companies already have recruitment teams and processes and use the WRP as 'only' another source of recruitment, it still allows the WRP youth to get a valuable experience with these large companies that they probably would not have had if not thanks to the project.

However, the requirements for companies participating in the project created barriers for some potentially valuable companies to join. The limited selection criteria in the Due Dilligence Process resulted in the manufacturing sector dominating the participation, this sector being the most structured and offering more job opportunities. As a result, other sectors did not benefit as much from the program. Feedback collected from beneficiaries also highlighted that systematic PSFU and PMU site visits to companies and graduates could have improved the project achievements. Also, progress reports and feedback from beneficiaries confirms that platform's success is directly proportional to the number of active participants, and consistent effort from universities, businesses, and other partners is needed to keep the platform thriving.

Finally, it is worth noting that, while there is limited logical connection between the WRP and GAC components and while different companies benefited from the two components, it is not possible to derive meaningful conclusion on the influence of the GAC component on the broader labour market.

**EQ 12: To what extent has the public-private dialogues and advocacy strategies, including corruption reporting facilities, improved governance practices and reduced corruption within the private sector?**

SG+ has contributed to raise awareness among some stakeholders about anti-corruption practices and are a first step in strengthening good governance principles. Stakeholders acknowledged that the dialogues fostered a more open environment for discussing regulatory bottlenecks, transparency, and compliance, especially among SMEs that had limited prior exposure to such frameworks.

Activities undertaken under the GAC component played a key role in promoting the electronic government procurement (e-GP) system. The partnership with the PPDA (Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority) enabled the constitution of Technical Execution Team (TET) with representatives from both PPDA and PSFU, to adapt the project implementation and to lead sensitization campaign, trainings and workshops to private companies. Even if the platform is not yet widely accepted by the private sector as it is not fully rolled out yet, it has helped generalize access to tenders, streamline application processes, and potentially reduce some corruption risks. Moreover, it helped minimize geographical barriers, allowing companies from remote areas to access bids without the logistical difficulties of physical submissions. Nearly 600 companies were sensitized on the e-GP system—far exceeding the initial target. Companies participating in the dialogue spaces have reported improved relationships, with many expressing a strong willingness and desire to collaborate more with public sector organizations. Yet, the broader adoption of e-procurement remains slow even though the government has committed to onboarding all departments and agencies onto the procurement portal. Technical challenges and inadequate ongoing support limited users' ability to fully utilize the system. The system is targeted to be fully rolled out by the end of 2025.

Thanks to the corporate governance trainings, several companies were able to improve their operational efficiency and overall compliance with national regulatory requirements: they have been trained and equipped with corporate governance tools such as documented internal processes for HR, procurement, internal audit. Some companies which were unfamiliar with taxation regulatory framework, reported that the knowledge gained through the trainings allowed them to adapt and increase their business opportunities and revenue. As a result, these companies are now able to better assess their HR needs and make provisions to offer decent work. However, systemic improvement in governance practices is difficult to assess.

Some originally planned interventions, such as data integration and broader corporate governance reforms, were scaled down or deprioritized in favour of more feasible actions like supporting the EG-P rollout and the Corruption Reporting Facility. The revised scope ended up focusing more narrowly on procurement-related issue and the establishment of robust private sector reporting channels. These adjustments allowed the project to maintain a degree of effectiveness despite initial design rigidity. However, the Project's pilot nature, combined with its limited scope and short time frame, significantly constrained its potential to deliver comprehensive and lasting governance outcomes.

Initiatives such as the sharing of best practices in corporate governance, the establishment of the Corruption Reporting Facility (CRF), or events aimed at raising awareness on corruption were implemented. Similarly, while the CRF provides a secure reporting mechanism, its actual use and effectiveness in fighting against corruption is not guaranteed as the tool was designed for whistleblowing, and no prosecution or action to assigning responsibility and dispensing justice. It lacks critical design features, including sufficient institutional anchoring to ensure follow-up on reports. Moreover, uptake of the CRF was modest, and there is little evidence that reports led to tangible action. There was no feedback loop to inform users of outcomes of the facility, undermining trust in the mechanism.

Beneficiaries of the GAC pillars have reported improved internal governance practices and improvement in transparency and accountability in their relationships with public sector organizations. Another key outcome reported in stakeholders feedback is an increased appetite of the private sector to engage in anticorruption initiative. An effective roll out of the e-GP to all MDAs at both the local districts and national levels and the limitation of the use of manual procurement system will improve the results of these anti-corruption initiatives.

### 3.2.4. Efficiency

**The program's efficiency was uneven between the Work Readiness Program (WRP) and Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) components. The WRP benefited from the financial incentives included in the program and well-suited trainings enabling a good engagement of graduates and companies. However, the GAC faced challenges due to a limited M&E framework with mostly output indicators, making it difficult to track progress.**

- **EQ3: Are there any specific approaches that have positively contributed or negatively affected the development of the initiatives in both components, WRP-Curricula development, policy dialogue and governance on corruption?**

Some approaches helped strengthen the efficiency in both components (WRP - Curricula development, policy dialogue, and governance on corruption). For the WRP, the financial support provided by the program had a particularly positive impact, offering companies a real "financial cushion" that allowed them to take part in the program. The support provided also contributed to operational efficiency by facilitating timely access to training and follow-up support for program graduates. The ongoing assistance and training helped companies enhance their internal processes and governance structures under result 2, Governance and Anti-Corruption. The project's flexibility — particularly in its ability to adapt and make adjustments during implementation — enabled more efficient coordination with key partners such as PSFU. Additionally, targeted approaches like the use of residential trainings and the partnership with Campus Bee to boost visibility improved the efficiency of outreach and engagement efforts. The Evaluation Committee played a critical role in the integration of companies into the Work Readiness Program and ensured the right and most suitable companies to host graduates were selected. The Steering Committee's role was to oversee project management at a more strategic level, validate key decisions, and provide recommendations to improve program implementation. Additionally, the diverse composition of this committee, including representatives from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, employer associations, and sectoral organizations, ensured inclusive and transparent governance. However, while oversight mechanisms were in place, more frequent follow-up visits by PSFU to the graduates could have further strengthened the monitoring process and enhanced graduate satisfaction with the program.

Regarding the Governance and Anti-Corruption component, the results under 2.1 "The capacities in e-procurement of private sector companies are enhanced" benefited from the close collaboration with national authorities, particularly the PPDA and NITA. This collaboration was particularly efficient and contributed to better involvement of private companies in the e-GP rollout. At the same time, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) provided high-level strategic oversight, offering guidance and ensuring the project's objectives were achieved. Its composition, including representatives from the EU and Enabel, strengthened technical and financial supervision while ensuring strong governance and transparency in decision-making.

**EQ9: to what extent the implementation mechanisms including the monitoring and evaluation system adopted have facilitated the outputs' delivery and the general achievement?**

The implementation mechanisms, including the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system largely supported the project's output delivery and general achievement. The Project flexibility in adapting to operational constraints helped maintain the program's effectiveness. However, a better design of the M&E system would have been beneficial.

The implementation mechanisms were key in ensuring the project's outputs were delivered effectively. Implementation modalities are based on a two-tier approach, with Enabel as the unique beneficiary and signatory of the Contribution Agreement with the EU Delegation, and PSFU as the main implementing partner through a grant agreement with Enabel. Therefore, a steering committee was established to oversee the overall SG+ implementation, while PSFU, the grant beneficiary and main implementing partner managed day-to-day operations.

The roles and responsibilities were clearly defined from the onset. On the aspect of governance of the project, the SG+ Steering Committee contributed to the project's efficiency by providing a structured forum for coordination among key stakeholders from government, implementing partners, and the private sector. Its composition facilitated information sharing and alignment across components, supporting smoother implementation and timely resolution of operational issues. The Committee's function helped ensure institutional coherence and supported efficient resource utilization across the project.

PSFU, being a major platform for the private sector in Uganda, facilitated advocacy and dialogue and played a central role in communicating the initiatives to both private sector members and external beneficiaries like the graduates. For example, companies were trained on how to integrate their data with the government, which was intended to improve the business environment and foster better public-private collaboration. This was particularly crucial in the context of governance and corporate accountability. The corporate governance component also included trainings provided to ensure companies could comply with decent work policies and improve their internal structures. The Work Readiness Portal, the platform where graduates and companies could connect, helped track project indicators and collect their feedback to improve implementation.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system was designed to meet project reporting requirements at both the grant level and donor level but revealed significant limitations in practice: the absence of a clear and logically articulated results framework, with relevant indicators, especially for the GAC component, limited the ability to assess whether improvements in governance practices and anti-corruption mechanisms were achieved and sustained. Additionally, on the skills and attitude component, the M&E system remained focused on placement numbers and lacked tools to assess qualitative outcomes such as long-term employability and the relevance of skill acquisition, especially for women and young girls, for whom disaggregated data were insufficient. Overall, this hindered the project's ability to generate learning and adapt its strategy, critical functions for a pilot intervention.

There were challenges encountered in monitoring and evaluating GAC component largely due to the Project's rigid design, which did not anticipate or allow for adjustments to the M&E framework based on evolving needs. While an M&E framework and data collection tools were in place, they were primarily output-focused and not well-suited to capture broader systemic or outcome-level changes. The Theory of Change (ToC) for the GAC component was also incomplete, limiting the ability to demonstrate impact. Furthermore, M&E officer staff had limited scope to revise the framework or introduce more relevant indicators during implementation, despite recognizing its shortcomings. As a result, feedback loops were inconsistently applied, and the M&E system was unable to fully support adaptive management or learning. These challenges underscore the need for greater flexibility and resources in the design phase, particularly when addressing complex governance reforms.

Reporting tools, including quarterly and annual reports, were instrumental in keeping the project on track. Enabel provided templates and specific M&E tools, like the indicator performance tracking tool IPTT, a beneficiary database for WRP graduates and a detailed M&E system which PSFU used to ensure consistent and accurate reporting. These tools helped track progress and adjust strategies as needed, making the project more adaptable to the needs on the ground. Additionally, regular visits from PMU to beneficiaries (graduates and companies) helped to monitor project implementation. However, much of the reporting remained activity-focused, particularly for the governance component. Progress reports documented events conducted and participants reached but included limited qualitative insights into results, challenges, or unintended effects, which did not encourage deeper analysis or reflective learning, and follow-up actions based on reporting were not systematically tracked. This reduced the utility of reports as management tools, especially in a complex and adaptive field like governance reform.

On resource planning and spending, the project was generally well-resourced in terms of financial allocations and personnel. The flexibility built into the budget structure at the grant level allowed for some degree of adaptive management, enabling project teams to respond to emerging needs and contextual shifts, especially in the GAC component. Some activities, specifically under the pillar of fostering corporate governance and advancing data integration, were deprioritized, due initial over-ambition in the component's scope and based on contextual implementation challenges. Moreover, the reallocation of general means funds toward direct implementation activities further illustrates the Project's flexible financial management. However, while this responsiveness enabled progress in delivery, it may also reflect planning imbalances, either an overestimation of support function needs or an underestimation of resource requirements for specific components. Overall, while financial planning supported adaptability, broader effectiveness in resource use was influenced by structural and design limitations.

### 3.2.5. Sustainability

**The sustainability of the SG+ Project faces several challenges. While the learning model was well-received by the private sector, its long-term viability depends on sustained efforts and additional resources.** Interviews with key stakeholders and the absence of follow-up actions in project documentation confirm that the sustainability measures foreseen in the TFF were not executed as intended. **The government's support for apprenticeship frameworks and integration into national plans is promising, but full roll-out will take time. In the Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) component, more funding and staff are required to ensure lasting governance improvements. While the project fostered trust and dialogue, continued engagement and resources are needed for long-term impact and scalability.**

- **EQ2: To what extent is the model adopted by the SG+ owned by the private sectors partners and integrated to improve the labour market?**

The sustainability strategy foreseen in the TFF was based on **strengthening strategic partners and beneficiaries such as the PSFU through targeted training to transfer new skills and key competencies.**

On the WRP component, both the private and public sector in Uganda appears eager to continue implementing a work-based learning model. The adoption of the SG+ model by Enabel WeWork, PSFU, and private companies is a major sustainability milestone. However, as highlighted in the 2023 annual report, the model would benefit from a clear sustainability strategy and enhanced ownership. Indeed, while there is an existing law supporting apprenticeship frameworks, the Ugandan government has prioritized expanding such initiatives as SG+ / WeWork in the National Development Plan IV (NDP IV), full roll-out will take time and will need additional resources.

Businesses are keen to welcome graduates and diplomas holders to provide their first job opportunities. However, this enthusiasm varies depending on the companies' size and sector: large enterprises typically have youth enrolment programs in place and tend to offer less favourable placement conditions compared to the WRP, particularly in terms of compensation; their interest in the WRP is to offer better placement conditions. Conversely, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which mainly have only recently gained access to graduate talent through the WRP, demonstrate a stronger interest in the model as the WRP introduces a structured pathway to host and possibly retain young talent, an approach they may be inclined to maintain if the initial experience proves beneficial and cost-effective. Their engagement signals potential for sustainability, while some of these businesses have reported even willing to contribute financially to the initiative to the extent of their capabilities. Supporting mechanisms and incentives could further enhance the likelihood that these businesses continue offering such opportunities beyond the program's duration.

Concerning the Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) component, more resources (human, skills and funding) are needed to implement strategic activities and capture significant changes in governance. While Project surveys showed improvements in terms of governance practices, but it is not possible to assess the sustainability of these changes and their impact on the broader labour market.

- **EQ 13: How sustainable are the partnerships between the private and public sectors fostered by the SG+ Project, and what is their potential for scaling up to other sectors or regions within Uganda?**

The main public -private partnerships fostered by the SG+ Project are the ones between the PSFU and government departments and agencies involved in the key governance bodies of the intervention, namely the NCHE, NITA, and PPDA. The project has therefore made measurable progress in fostering collaboration between private sectors actors and public institutions, with early indicators suggesting moderate sustainability of the partnerships. Some of these engagements have been formalised through Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), indicating a shift toward a more institutionalised collaboration framework, beyond project driven engagement, as evidenced by the PSFU Partnership with State House Investor Protection Unit, which has developed a reporting mechanism like CRF to capture reports of challenges faced by investors in Uganda.

On the skills and attitude component, the PSFU and the public institutions involved have already initiated steps to incorporate the project activities into national development strategies to ensure the continuation of these initiatives even after the project end. This alignment with national strategies increases the likelihood of continued support from relevant ministries and agencies. For instance, the National Council of Higher Education is working on including the WRP soft skills curriculum in the national curriculum for tertiary institutions. However, some stakeholders caution against delivering the Skills and Attitude Trainings through universities which are deemed too far from the workplace.

Continuous dialogue and backstopping measures will be essential to keep the momentum going. Companies also emphasized the need for collaboration with academic institutions to ensure graduates are better prepared for the workplace. Feedback from companies collected during interviews and workshops revealed strong support for the project continuation, with many expressing a desire for more engagement and information about the SG+ Project. They suggested that PSFU increase communication on the value of the program and its long-term benefits, particularly the role of companies in bridging skills gaps.

Additionally, the new bilateral partnership between Enabel and the Federation of Uganda Employers, to implement the WRP is an encouraging signal of emerging ownership and a willingness to operationalise similar initiatives at the local level. The initiative therefore acts as catalyst for building relationships with the private sector, creating an entry point for more sustainable public-private partnerships.

On the GAC component, the integration of the e-GP system is also a significant step undertaken by the government in reducing physical interactions and manual procurement processes, which is essential for long-term operational efficiency and reducing corruption opportunities. According to stakeholders' feedback, all departments and agencies will be on the procurement portal in a near future as deployment is ongoing. The sustainability of e-GP implementation depends heavily on institutionalizing mechanisms for continuous training, stakeholder engagement, and real-time feedback, which were underdeveloped during the project phase. The project also highlighted the potential for PSFU to play a long-term role in supporting governance practices within the private sector. During implementation, PSFU demonstrated capacity and reach through its training programs, suggesting that integrating governance-related services into its regular offerings could enhance sustainability. However, such integration was not systematically pursued under the current project scope.

The project helped fostering trust between companies and public bodies like the IGG (Inspector General of Government) to report corruption and promote good governance practices. The CRF, from the data collected, is a great starting point in restoring trust in government as businesses can safely report corruption cases. It is accessible to businesses across the country and already scaled up somehow. A further step will be to create and foster partnerships and collaboration between the government department who have the power to investigate and PSFU and similar organizations doing whistle blowing and to create mechanisms to maintain the platform. An important step towards implementing this recommendation has already been taken, as evidenced by the PSFU Partnership with State House Investor Protection Unit.

Despite those encouraging signs, there is some remaining challenge to be addressed, including the heavy dependence on SG+ facilitation, including logistical coordination, relationship-building, and financial support for joint activities for some partnerships to be sustained, notably the project driven partnerships.

- **EQ 14: To what extent are the improvements in graduate skills and attitudes sustainable in the long term, and how likely are these graduates to remain competitive in the labour market?**

Regarding the WRP component, the Project has shown positive early outcomes for participants who secured employment following completion.

While insights from the tracer study of graduates highlight the perceived value of soft skills in improving workplace readiness and facilitating smoother transitions into employment, the long-term impact on employability remains uncertain, and no data was collected to assess continued use of these skills or alignment with evolving labour market needs.

The availability of an online course provides a mechanism for ongoing learning, but evidence of sustained engagement is lacking. As such, while the program has laid a foundation for self-directed professional growth, its lasting effectiveness will depend on graduates' continued initiative and the relevance of the resources provided. While this aligns with adult learning principles, no evidence was collected during this evaluation to confirm whether or how participants engage with the resources provided post-program. Moreover, as indicated by the tracer study report, the issue of lack of job opportunities is still prevalent, implying that the competitiveness and employability prospects of the graduates are not solely dependent on their skills but also heavily influenced by the broader labour market conditions.

Rather than directly improving graduates' long-term competitiveness in the labour market, the program's sustainability will likely rely on its effect in highlighting gaps in market access support and pave the way for private sector-led initiatives aimed at improving student employability.

### 3.2.6. Impact

**The SG+ Project supported policy reform through digitalization and anti-corruption efforts enhancing transparency, as well as improved employability by integrating soft skills into education and influencing recruitment practices. However, the Project long-term impact is impossible to assess as it was a pilot project, challenges on its sustainability remain, continued awareness and collaboration are key for long-term impact.**

- **EQ5: To what extent the SG+ has stimulated the policy making environment? And to what extent the achievements produced have influenced public bodies/policies in adopting reforms or improving strategies on corruption prevention and job market' access?**

Although the Project activities were closed only shortly before the ETE - making it difficult to fully assess their impact on the policy-making environment-, there is compelling evidence that SG+ has acted as a key catalyst for dialogue and initiated meaningful shifts in policy development. One of the most notable ways the SG+ program has impacted the policy-making environment is through its advocacy for more robust frameworks aimed at improving access to the job market and reducing corruption. By showcasing successful results, engaging stakeholders, and presenting actionable data, the Project has contributed to keep the issue of graduate employment and corruption prevention and high on the national policy agendas. The mechanism introduced by the SG+ has enough potential to influence future interventions and policies aiming at shaping the broader labour market as the work-based learning model is being tested and implemented in various settings and modalities to improve employment prospects for youth and access to labour force for companies.

Regarding the WRP, the SG+ has stimulated the policy environment by bringing attention to the gap between education and the job market. Its focus on training graduates and facilitating their entry into the workforce has influenced public bodies to consider more inclusive policies that align educational outputs with job market demands. By doing so, it encouraged policy discussions on how universities and training institutions can better align their curricula with labour market demands and how they can integrate soft skills training in their programs. One example of policy shift observed is the development of apprenticeship frameworks, where public institutions have indicated willingness to align with SG+ practices. The government's inclusion of work-based learning models and soft skills training in the strategic and actions plan suggests that SG+ has played a role in shifting the policy discourse on graduate employability and skills development. And yet, while these shifts are promising, the full extent of the SG+ program's influence on policy change remains a work in progress. Many of the proposed reforms are still in early stages, and their success will depend on continued advocacy, resource allocation, and long-term political will.

Concerning the GAC, the program has contributed to the evolution of the policy-making environment by supporting the digitalization of processes and placing the transition from education to the job market at the core of its approach. In the area of anti-corruption efforts, the project has helped strengthen transparency by reducing opportunities for malpractice. The establishment of the Corruption Reporting Facility is also a significant step in shedding light on the poor practices encountered by the private sector and the current shortcomings in addressing corruption-related issues. The involvement of key stakeholders in the design and development of the Corruption Reporting Facility (CRF), notably the Ministry of Justice and the State House Anti-Corruption Unit, played a critical role in fostering institutional ownership and legitimacy. Their participation not only ensured that the CRF aligned with national anti-corruption frameworks but also contributed to shaping practices that promote transparency and reinforce accountability within public institutions. This collaborative approach helped to anchor the initiative within existing governance structures, increasing the likelihood of sustained use and long-term impact.

### 3.2.7. Cross Cutting Issues (Gender Equality and Environment)

- **EQ15: to what extent the WRP influenced the equal access to job market and promoted decent work and the creation of jobs in particular for women and young girls?**
- **EQ 16: to what extent the SG + model has facilitated the integration of gender issues within employability policies?**

Regarding promotion of decent work, the WRP made significant efforts to promote decent work by ensuring that all graduates were employed under conditions that upheld workers' rights and the principles of decent work. The Project provided protection against unforeseen workplace injuries and ensured a safe and supportive work environment: 349 graduate employees were provided with sector-specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure workplace safety. It promoted social responsibility by ensuring that workers benefited from health insurance: 1056 graduate employees were given a Group Personal Accident Insurance.

SG+ also supported companies in developing salary scales to enhance job attractiveness and improve working conditions: to promote fair compensation and enhance decent work, the project established a minimum salary threshold based on a survey conducted to determine the average entry-level salary for graduates in Uganda. As a result, any salary below 400,000 UGX was not accepted, ensuring that graduates received a salary that allowed them to meet basic needs while gaining valuable work experience. The Project's due diligence process helped ensure that host companies adhered to these standards.

The WRP program incorporated some measures to promote gender equality in access to the job market. The program also ensured a relatively balanced participation rate, with 46% of graduates benefiting from the WRP being women, however there is limited or no direct evidence on which measures specifically influenced the participation of women and young girls.

The Project yet encouraged awareness among employers through targeted training on inclusion policies. It also promoted gender-sensitive training, and efforts were made to ensure gender representation among trainers. The Project engaged into the systematic tracking of gender-employment indicators.

Beyond these gender sensitive elements, the WRP more systemic and long-term effect on employability policies and improving access to employment for women remains uncertain, even though SG+ engaged dialogue with a key stakeholder such as the Ministry in charge of Gender. However, these efforts were not supported by a structural mechanism that could remain beyond the Project duration.

- **EQ17: to what extent the SG + has contributed to the Green Up policy agreement and to spread out the importance of creation of green jobs within the private sector?**

The SG+ Project had a limited contribution to the Green Up policy agreement. Environmental sustainability is not a central focus of the Project intervention logic, from activities to expected outputs, outcomes or impacts.

While "Green jobs are decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency[17]", the SG+ Project had a limited contribution to the promotion of green jobs within the private sector in Uganda. Evidence collected from Project participants highlighted the limited understanding and inclusion of this aspect in Project activities.

However, the Project focused on sectors somehow related to the green economy (manufacturing/agro-processing, infrastructure, tourism and hospitality, and ICT-digitalisation) and the companies benefiting from the WR were prioritized based on these criteria.

Additionally, the Project encouraged greener procurement practices and incorporated environmental criteria into its due diligence processes. Additionally, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles were introduced in some training sessions, though their place remained relatively limited.

[17] Green jobs help: a) Improve energy and raw materials efficiency; b) Limit greenhouse gas emissions; c) Minimize waste and pollution; d) Protect and restore ecosystems; e) Support adaptation to the effects of climate change. UNESCO - UNEV

# 4 Conclusions

1. A robust theory of change and intervention logic are needed from the design phase, to ensure relevance and coherence in implementation, and facilitate stakeholders understanding of their roles and expected contributions. In depth needs assessment and background analysis, together with a baseline study, are key to building such a ToC. **In the case of the SG+, weaknesses in the GAC component of the ToC led to decreased relevance thus impact of the component.**
2. **The positive outcomes and prospects for impacts of the SG+ WRP on the youth integration to the workforce and governance of companies are worth being reproduced and scaled up in Uganda.** Building on the lessons learned or ensuring scaling up/reproduction yet needs a structured approach to sustainability which addresses the risk of losing project gains.
3. **SG+ Public Private dialogue and partnership platform well addressed the need for coordination between stakeholders**, ensuring that policy or Project efforts were embedded within broader governance reforms, and maximised effectiveness of Project activities.
4. The WRP component addressed private sector needs with non-sector specific activities. **Relevance and effectiveness could be enhanced with sector-specific activities then rolled out more broadly.**
5. **MSMES and large companies displayed very different needs and respond to different incentives to accept and retain staff**. While the WRP did not tailor its approach to the size and specific interests of participating companies, addressing these differences could enhance activities relevance and efficiency.
6. The WRP gained important traction with companies and graduates with little publicity. **Graduates were informed of the job opportunities through some confidential and closed What'sApp groups. Hence there are still many graduates to be reached out.**
7. **The matchmaking platform built by SG+ has been very instrumental to both companies and youth to allow youth to land on jobs and companies to identify needed expertise**. However, the platform is accessible only by companies. Graduates cannot select themselves job opportunities. At times, offers made to them often do not match their expectations. **Graduates are thus not yet active in the job search, limiting their ability to comprehend the job market itself.**
8. **While the SG+ Project M&E system included varied indicators, quite many of them were not SMART**. Ensuring that progress is systematically measured and adjusted thanks to SMART indicators would have allowed the Project to adjust more swiftly and built on learning opportunities.
9. Some youth placement Projects such as the ones organised by the African Leadership Academy, or the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences **have developed interesting tracing systems through Alumni group surveys** which prove useful in the long run to assess the sustained impact of the Support provided to youth. **Such a system does not exist for the WRP.**
10. There are still important needs in terms of supporting the governance and anticorruption agenda in Uganda. **More funding and resources are required to ensure lasting governance improvements**. Early results show the relevance of training companies in governance as well as ensuring continuity in the functioning of the CRF.

# 5 Recommendations

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R1. Develop a sustainability plan at the design stage if possible and at the most at early stage of implementation:** a clear plan that includes post-project sustainability strategies, focusing on integration into national policies and long-term operational continuity. | C2. | Enabel / EU ; PSFU | Level 2 - Representation/Country. | Short term | Strategic |

This recommendation aims to anticipate the sustainability challenges of the implemented program right from the start of the mission. For future similar missions, a sustainability plan could be drafted and then adjusted during the mission based on key lessons learned to ensure that the national stakeholder takes ownership of the program's activities and objectives once it is completed.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R2. Strengthen the intervention logic:** Develop a well-articulated theory of change with clear objectives, activities and expected outcomes. | C1. | Enabel / EU ; PSFU | Level 1 – Project/program.<br><br>Level 2 - Representation/Country. | Medium/long term. | Operational |

This recommendation highlights the importance of designing a clear and structured continuity plan to maximize the long-term impact of pilot programs such as SG+. When a project involves components as distinct as Skills & Attitudes and Governance & Anti-Corruption, it is essential to invest in early, in-depth preparatory work—particularly the development of a comprehensive and context-specific Theory of Change. A well-articulated ToC should clearly map out the intended outcomes, the causal pathways linking activities to these outcomes, and the underlying assumptions.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R3. Leverage existing platforms for public-private dialogue and partnerships:** Utilize and reinforce existing multi-stakeholder platforms to enhance dialogue and collaboration between public institutions, the private sector, and civil society on governance and anti-corruption initiatives. | C3. | Enabel / EU ; PSFU | Level 2 - Representation/Country. | Medium/long term | Strategic |

This recommendation aims to address the challenges of ownership and coordination among diverse stakeholders in the fight against corruption and the implementation of reforms. The efforts made during the project should lead to concrete impacts, particularly through the proposal and implementation of reforms. Capitalizing on public-private dialogue platforms is intended to anchor similar projects within existing frameworks to strengthen their impact.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R4. Align program design with sector-specific needs:** Development of tailored program guidelines that address sector-specific challenges, ensuring the curriculum is relevant for each industry. | C2. C4. | Trainings partners; companies; graduates. | Level 1 – Project/Program | Medium term. | Operational. |

The implementation of the project has revealed significant differences in structuring, HR policy maturity, and needs depending on the sector. Promoting a sectoral approach would enhance the program by adapting it to the specific requirements of each sector, thereby offering tailored programs for students as well.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R5. Structure a two-level program for large companies and the less structured job market and synergise with existing approaches in large companies:** Develop a differentiated approach that tailors support mechanisms to the specific needs of (1) large, structured companies and (2) the MSMEs. | C2.<br>C4.<br>C5. | PSFU ;<br>Enabel ;<br>Local Authorities ;<br>Companies ;<br>Graduates | Level 1 - Project/Program;<br>Level 2 - Representation/Country | Medium term. | Strategic |

The definition of a two-level implementation framework for the WRP aims to address two key challenges faced by the project: the difficulty of integrating less structured businesses into the program due to high due diligence requirements, and, on the other hand, the high expectations of more mature companies. Establishing a two-tier program would help tailor support to businesses while expanding the project's scope and impact.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R6. Disseminate more widely WRP opportunities:** through all campuses and different channels (recruitment campaigns, radio campaigns) | C1.<br>C2.<br>C6. | Graduates | Level 1 – Project/Program | Medium term | Operational |

Despite achieving the target number of graduates enrolled in the program, the project could have gained greater visibility by diversifying communication and awareness-raising channels. Implementing recruitment campaigns on campuses, leveraging strategic relays, and using tools such as radio would likely have helped reach a larger number of students.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R7. Provide graduates with direct access to job offers**: Granting graduates direct access to job offers on the platform to improve job matching and recruitment speed / ensure that the platform continues to develop and operate over the long term | C7. | Companies / Graduates | Level 1 – Project/Program | Medium term. | Operational. |

This recommendation addresses the challenge of the project's sustainability and viability. The various stakeholders consulted emphasized the value and importance of the matchmaking platform between graduates and businesses. Supporting the long-term sustainability of this platform should enable its gradual development into a key hub for job matching and access to the labor market.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R8. Integrate M&E from the beginning:** Ensure that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms are included at the program's inception, allowing for continuous assessment and adaptive management**.** | C1.<br>C2.<br>C6.<br>C8. | Enabel / EU ; PSFU | Level 1 - Project/Program | Medium/long term | Operational |

The integration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms from the outset of the program aims to address the identified weaknesses in tracking and assessing the GAC components. Establishing a well-structured M&E framework with clear processes will enable continuous assessment and adaptive management, ensuring that program activities remain aligned with their intended objectives. This approach aims to facilitate data-driven decision-making and allow for timely course corrections.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R9. Continue tracking graduates in the medium term:** Tracking graduates for several years after program completion to evaluate the long-term impact on employability and career growth. | C9. | Enabel / PSFU / Graduates | Level 1 – Project/Program | Long term. | Operational. |

This recommendation aims to ensure the impact tracking of the WRP. For projects seeking to drive structural change, long-term monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential to assess their effectiveness. Tracking graduates and their career trajectories after participating in the WRP will help determine both the sustainability of the jobs offered and the professional progression of the supported students.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R10. Institutionalize Governance Training within PSFU:** integrate governance training and advisory services into its core offerings. This would position PSFU as a continuing governance support hub for private sector actors, beyond the lifespan of the SG+ program | C10. | PSFU / Enabel/ Development partners | Level 1 – Project/Program | Short/ medium term. | Operational. |

This recommendation addresses the issue of emergence and sustainability of outcomes of intervention in the governance and anti-corruption areas. Systemic changes in governance require time, consistency, and sustained institutional support. Unlike technical interventions that may yield immediate outputs, governance reforms involve shifts in organizational culture, stakeholder relationships, and accountability mechanisms, processes that evolve gradually. In the context of SG+, while initial training and awareness-raising efforts created momentum, the short duration of implementation and the pilot nature of the program limited deeper behavioral and institutional transformation Embedding governance training within PSFU’s regular services ensures that businesses continue receiving guidance and reinforcement beyond the program cycle. This will also build PSFU’s institutional role as a governance resource hub.

| Recommendation | Related conclusion(s) | Targeted actor(s) | Level | Priority | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **R11. Enhance the effectiveness of the CRF:** to ensure that reporting of abuses is accessible across the business community, taking into account varying levels of digital infrastructure and literacy among enterprises | C10. | PSFU / Enabel/ Development partners | Level 1 – Project/Program | Short/ medium term. | Operational. |

This recommendation aims at improving the effectiveness of the project, in order to generate learning for subsequent implementation and scale up. Ensuring that reporting of abuses is accessible across the business community, taking into account varying levels of digital infrastructure and literacy among enterprises will be instrumental for a greater uptake of the CRF, ensuring broad accessibility and inclusivity. While digital tools provide greater visibility, allow for anonymous reporting, and enhance efficiency, manual reporting mechanisms remain vital, particularly for businesses operating in areas with limited digital access, as highlighted in the Midterm Review report.

# 6 Lessons learned

- **Grounding design to ascertain relevance.** As highlighted in the midterm review, the project's relevance is grounded in its design, which was informed by close consultations and co-construction with key stakeholders, ensuring that the activities were tailored to meet the specific needs of both the youth and the employers. The design phase used a participative approach with private sector organizations and representatives meeting with government and technical and financial partners to uncover and work towards addressing the most pressing needs to enhance business environment and foster economic development. Additionally, the content and delivery of training program were also informed by baseline studies and ex-ante needs assessment to ensuring that they aligned with the demand by employers and addressed barriers and challenges faced by young people in accessing employment. By incorporating the perspectives of those directly involved in youth employment, the project was able to design initiatives that were not only relevant but also practical and actionable within the local context, further solidifying the project's alignment with the local economic context.

- **A partnership approach to job market readiness.** This approach aims at preparing individuals, particularly young graduates, for successful entry into the workforce. This practice involves providing targeted support to key stakeholders such as universities, students, companies, and local authorities to bridge the gap between education and employment. The project focused on improving job market readiness for young graduates by addressing the gap between their technical skills and the soft skills expected by employers. The main goal is to ensure that graduates are not only proficient in their technical fields but are also equipped with essential interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are critical for success in the workplace. To achieve this, the project strengthens the connection between universities, students, companies, and local authorities. It involves the implementation of specific projects aimed at integrating soft skills development into training curricula, as well as advocating for improved pre-employment programs and better links between the labor market and students. This also includes creating opportunities for students to engage with potential employers and participate in training that addresses both their technical and soft skills needs. The key stakeholders in this effort are universities, businesses, students, and local authorities. Universities are responsible for revising and enhancing curricula, while companies contribute by identifying the specific soft skills they require in graduates. Local authorities play a supportive role in facilitating these collaborations and ensuring alignment with regional workforce development strategies. As a result of these collaborative efforts, students are better prepared for the job market, with a more balanced skill set that includes both technical expertise and essential soft skills. Employers benefit from a more competent and well-rounded workforce, and the educational system becomes more responsive to the needs of the labour market. **The lesson learned is that creating strong partnerships between universities, businesses, students, and local authorities is crucial for preparing graduates for employment. These collaborations, through targeted projects and advocacy, not only improve training programs but also enhance pre-employment links, ensuring that graduates are equipped with the skills and experience needed to succeed.** By addressing both technical and soft skills, this approach significantly improves the job market readiness of graduates and aligns education with employer expectations. These insights are drawn from the ongoing evaluation of the project, with feedback from stakeholders involved in curriculum development, workforce readiness, and pre-employment initiatives. Additional readings can be found in studies, articles, or reports pertaining to job readiness for young graduates.

- **A comprehensive approach to equitable conditions at the workplace.** In addressing the importance of workplace conditions, the practice focuses on creating an environment where employees feel safe, supported, and able to thrive. Workplace conditions include both physical factors like safety protocols, ergonomics, and cleanliness, as well as emotional and psychological factors, such as a supportive management style, work-life balance, and mental health support. These elements together create a work environment that can significantly impact employee productivity, satisfaction, and overall well-being. The main objective of focusing on workplace conditions is to improve employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity. However, there are several challenges that companies face in this area. Many businesses struggle to provide adequate working environments, particularly in industries with lower wages or limited job security like MSMEs. In these cases, employees may face unsafe working conditions which ultimately leads to dissatisfaction and poor retention rates. By addressing these challenges and improving workplace conditions, companies can create environments that not only meet employees' basic needs but also promote engagement, well-being, and a positive work culture. To implement this practice effectively, organizations typically go through several stages. The first step is to assess the current conditions within the workplace. Once this assessment is completed, businesses can introduce improvements such as ergonomic office furniture, flexible working hours, or initiatives to reduce stress and burnout. It's also crucial to engage employees continuously through feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, to understand their needs and adjust practices accordingly. Finally, training and awareness programs for both management and staff are essential to ensuring that the improvements are sustainable and effective. Key players in improving workplace conditions include employers and management, who are responsible for creating and maintaining a supportive environment, as well as HR professionals who ensure that policies promoting work-life balance and employee well-being are in place. Employees are the primary beneficiaries of these improvements, as they experience the direct benefits of a healthier, safer, and more supportive work environment. The results of improving workplace conditions are often significant. When employees feel safe and supported, they are more likely to stay with the company, leading to lower turnover rates. In addition, employees are more engaged and productive, which benefits the company. Over time, a focus on positive workplace conditions contributes to a more resilient and sustainable workforce, where employees feel connected to their work and motivated to perform at their best. The long-term impact is a stronger, more committed workforce that drives organizational success. **A key lesson learned from this practice is the importance of taking a holistic approach to workplace conditions. It's not enough to just address physical safety; mental health, work-life balance, and leadership style are just as crucial. Furthermore, ongoing engagement with employees through regular feedback is vital to adapting the workplace to changing needs and challenges. For workplace conditions to truly have a lasting impact, businesses must be committed to continuous improvement.** To document the impact of these efforts, organizations can refer to employee surveys, productivity reports, and case studies. Additionally, literature on workplace wellness programs and employee satisfaction provides valuable insights into how better conditions can lead to positive organizational outcomes and employee retention.

- **Self-assessment on corporate governance.** one of the key lessons learned from the project is the importance of implementing self-assessment mechanisms for companies before launching governance training programs. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the training content aligns with the actual needs of the companies and that they are more engaged throughout the project. By conducting self-assessments, companies can better identify their own strengths and weaknesses, which helps tailor the training to address the most relevant gaps and challenges. The self-assessment process allows businesses to evaluate their existing governance practices, which in turn ensures that the training program is customized to meet their specific needs. For example, in this project, a training session on corporate governance tools was found to be less useful because many of the companies already had these tools in place. What was truly needed, instead, was a focus on showcasing best practices in governance. This insight was gained through self-assessments, which indicated that companies required support in applying and refining their governance practices rather than learning about basic tools that were already established. The stakeholders involved in this process include the companies themselves, project coordinators, and governance experts. By encouraging companies to evaluate their governance structures, the project ensured that participants were actively involved in shaping their learning journey and that training was directly relevant to their needs. This active participation fostered stronger engagement throughout the program and made it more effective in addressing the real challenges faced by businesses. The results of this approach were significant. By tailoring the training to focus on best practices instead of corporate governance tools, companies gained more practical knowledge that they could apply immediately. This led to better engagement, higher satisfaction with the training, and more impactful improvements in governance practices. The lesson learned is that self-assessment mechanisms are crucial for aligning governance training with the actual needs of companies. By assessing their existing practices and identifying gaps before training begins, businesses can ensure that the content is relevant and applicable. This approach not only increases engagement but also improves the overall effectiveness of the training program. Tailoring the content based on these assessments enhances the chances for meaningful improvement in governance practices and ensures that the project's activities address the true needs of the companies involved. These insights were gathered through feedback from companies and project evaluations, which emphasized the importance of aligning training content with real-world needs to ensure that programs