Enabel

Executive summary

Mid-term review

"Programme to support the economic integration of young people in Kinshasa into decent jobs".

Democratic Republic of Congo

COD 20001

COTA asbl

Final report date: June 2024

Agence belge de développement

enabel.be

1 Presentation of the assessment

The mid-term review of the programme aims to assess the performance of the intervention based on the six DAC criteria, with particular emphasis on three: relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. Three specific questions have also been formulated to enrich the evaluation in relation to these criteria. In addition, the evaluation also includes three cross-cutting themes: gender, digitalisation and the environment. This review aims to provide an external assessment of the progress made and the results achieved. It contributes to learning by drawing useful lessons for other interventions and new programmes, and strengthens accountability to the donor, partners and internal stakeholders. The focus is on providing steering support to determine whether a reorientation of the intervention is necessary, with recommendations accordingly. The review covers the period from January 2021 to March 2024.

Several data collection tools were used to achieve these objectives:

- Document review - some thirty documents were consulted;
- 55 individual semi-directve in-depth interviews were conducted;
- 4 focus groups bringing together young people benefiting from training and support towards wage employment and self-employment, programme partners, companies and training operators, provided a better understanding of the successes and challenges encountered throughout their support under the programme.
- A hybrid feedback session was held on 13 March 2024, during which participants had the opportunity to share their comments on the initial findings and provide additional insights.
- A final feedback session was held on 3 June 2024 to put the findings into perspective and discuss the recommendations.

2 Findings and conclusions

Coherence	B	The coherence of the intervention is judged to be good and is a priority for the KinEmploi teams. Synergies have been established with projects such as Decent Work and Social Protection, Training, Entrepreneurship, Employment (TEE) and Youth and Culture. However, although coordination mechanisms with other Belgian players are in place, they need to be made more effective. In addition, coordination with the interventions of other international donors remains inadequate, often being limited to information sharing.
Relevance	A	The intervention is highly relevant. The various implementing partners and beneficiaries are convinced of the programme's relevance in improving the match between skills supply and demand in a context marked by high youth unemployment, inadequate vocational training provision and strong gender inequalities.
Efficiency	B	The effectiveness of the intervention is good. The approach adopted by KinEmploi and its achievements are widely recognised by the players involved. The programme has already surpassed or is on the point of achieving its quantitative objectives in terms of the integration of young people and women, as well as job creation by MSMEs.
Efficiency	C	Efficiency problems have been identified. The MVTT[1] made land available to KinEmploi for the construction of the Resource Centre (RC), but there were

[1] Ministry of Vocational Training and Trades.

		significant delays. This has resulted in a low implementation rate for operational activities, since the construction of the RC represents 78% of the budget allocated to result 2.
Sustainability	C	The programme faces a number of challenges which, if left unresolved, could compromise the sustainability of the intervention. It suffers from weak support from its anchor ministry and the province of Kinshasa. There is insufficient inter-institutional collaboration to align training, employment and entrepreneurship policies. The quality of jobs created through incubation and acceleration activities is a problem.
Impact	C	KinEmploi has initiated positive changes by repositioning vocational training as a means of integrating beneficiaries into the labour market, rather than an objective in itself. The intervention has encouraged the emergence of a dynamic entrepreneurial community and has generated strong participation by women. However, the lack of sustainability is a major risk to its long-term impact.

Relevance

Implementing partners find the programme relevant, and beneficiaries are satisfied overall. The programme helps to bridge the gap between the skills of young job seekers and the needs of the Kinshasa labour market, which is characterised by high youth unemployment, inadequate vocational training and gender inequalities. It offers training that provides real access to paid employment and self-employment, in line with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). The key sectors targeted are HORECA[2], photovoltaics and agri-food. After a hesitant start, KinEmploi has been able to adapt and establish effective partnerships, creating job placement opportunities and public-private partnerships. However, difficulties persist with entities such as the Office National de l'Emploi[3] (ONEM) and the lack of an inter-ministerial dimension to the RC.

Efficiency

The effectiveness of the intervention is judged to be good. KinEmploi has structured the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kinshasa, providing much-appreciated non-financial services such as the Lean Startup toolkit and the training of qualified coaches. Access to finance remains a major challenge. To address this, KinEmploi has entered into a partnership with COPEMECO to facilitate equipment leasing, and partnership agreements with banks are being considered to adapt their financial offerings. KinEmploi has exceeded its targets for integrating young people (70.5%), 89% of whom will be women by 2023. The objective of creating 250 jobs through MSMEs has almost been achieved, with 229 young people integrated. However, the rapprochement between the private and public sectors in Kinshasa is lagging behind other regions, and the delay in building the RC remains a major challenge.

Durability

KinEmploi faces a number of challenges which, if not resolved, could compromise the sustainability of the intervention. It is imperative to strengthen the endorsement of the programme by the Ministry of Vocational Training and Trades (MVTT) and the commitment of the province of Kinshasa to ensure greater ownership. Although efforts have been made to ensure the RC's sustainability, it is still essential to develop a viable economic model to guarantee its financial autonomy.

[2] HORECA is an acronym that stands for "Hotels, Restaurants, and Cafés" in English. It refers to the sector of the economy that encompasses hospitality establishments such as hotels, restaurants, cafés, and similar businesses.
[3] National Employment Office.

There is an urgent need to speed up the construction of the RC, while improving public-private partnerships and stepping up communication and advocacy efforts. KinEmploi has established several partnerships to achieve its objectives, but coordination between partners needs to be strengthened. The quality of the jobs created through incubation and acceleration activities is a major concern, as most entrepreneurs generate no more than $100 a month, whereas a decent job in Kinshasa should earn at least US$345. Finally, KinEmploi is finding it difficult to disseminate its capitalisation documents, mainly because of the lack of formal documentation on good practice and lessons learned.

Specific questions

Specific Question 1: In this complex context in Kinshasa, is the KinEmploi programme putting in place the necessary framework, activities and actions within the training/employment/ entrepreneurship landscape in the targeted geographical area?

Kinshasa is characterised by a largely informal economy, high youth unemployment and underemployment, and low female participation. KinEmploi targets young people aged 18 to 35, particularly women, by offering short, alternating vocational training courses to bridge the gap between training provision and market needs. The programme encourages self-employment and entrepreneurship, while facilitating access to salaried jobs through better intermediation. The programme has put in place a tripartite strategy involving the public and private sectors and civil society, with institutional and operational partnerships. Key activities include the construction of a Resource Centre (RC), scheduled for June 2024, despite delays due to land disputes. KinEmploi is also helping players in the ecosystem to adopt innovative working methods. Despite initial challenges related to complex procedures and the specificities of the Kinshasa context, progress has been made in partnership dynamics. Despite this, public-private partnerships are still less developed in Kinshasa than in other regions. The deployment of acceleration programmes is proving more difficult than that of incubation programmes in Kinshasa. Finally, the quality of the jobs created through entrepreneurship remains a major challenge, with incomes often below $100 per month.

Specific Question 2: To what extent is this "Resource Centre" mechanism - particularly in its partnership and multi-actor dimension - supported by the project's institutional stakeholders? What expectations do the institutional stakeholders have of the innovative approach to ecosystems that the project is trying to develop in Kinshasa? The viability of this tool in the current context?

The KinEmploi Resource Centre (RC) aims to promote a partnership approach to improve the relevance of vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship policies in Kinshasa. However, the commitment of institutional players is insufficient, partly because of a founding decree that does not reflect the interministerial dimension of the scheme. Cooperation with bodies such as ONEM has not yet lived up to expectations, despite recent progress. The development of a partnership dynamic is also hampered by the delay in the construction of the RC building. In addition, the construction of the RC, with a budget of €2.6 million, is facing major operational challenges, suggesting that five years will probably not be enough to overcome them. The long-term viability of the RC will depend on the creation of a sustainable economic model and the resolution of administrative and governance complexities.

Specific Question 3: What are the achievements of the KinEmploi project that need to be consolidated or extended? What could be the options and scenarios (synergies with other players or other) to guarantee this continuity?

The KinEmploi project has made a number of significant advances in the field of training, employment and entrepreneurship in Kinshasa. It has integrated key components such as the Lean Startup toolkit, encouraged the involvement of women in entrepreneurship and developed initiatives such as the creation of innovative businesses by COPEMECO. Efforts to prospect for jobs and adapt incubation tools have also been notable successes.

To consolidate these achievements and consider extending the project, it is essential to ensure full ministerial support and obtain the backing of the Kinshasa authorities. Strengthening public-private partnerships, improving ONEM services and perfecting business acceleration are also priorities. Establishing a viable economic model for the Resource Centre (RC) is crucial, requiring the ongoing mobilisation of financial and institutional partners.

Synergies with other players such as the inter-donor group led by Enabel and financial institutions are promising. Cooperation with Congolese government programmes, such as FOGEC and INSER, to fund specific actions, as well as exploring crowdfunding opportunities, are potential strategies to ensure KinEmploi's financial and operational sustainability. In addition, optimising communication and advocacy is crucial to strengthening links with the Congolese government and mobilising donor support. These initiatives could guarantee a smooth transition to programmes such as Enabel's TEE[4] project and ensure the continuation of actions undertaken as part of a long-term vision for training, employment and entrepreneurship in Kinshasa.

3 Recommendations

#	Recommendations	Target players	Priority
1	Develop a clear communication and advocacy strategy, supported by a precise roadmap, to strengthen trust between stakeholders and promote harmonious and sustainable collaboration in the sector.	Intervention Unit, Communication Support Service, STRATEX, Portfolio Manager Kinshasa, Enabel Resident Representative, Enabel (Brussels)	Short- term
2	Organise a strategic workshop with the Belgian Embassy to involve the Ministries of Vocational Training, Employment and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. The aim is to promote an inter-ministerial approach in the TEE project, going beyond vocational training to include employment and entrepreneurship in an integrated continuum.	Belgian Embassy in the DRC, KinEmploi intervention unit, Kinshasa portfolio manager, STRATEX Enabel Resident Representative	Medium-term
3	Explore and establish beneficial partnerships between the RC and the ITA[5] to strengthen social cohesion around the future RC site.	KinEmploi intervention unit, RC Manager	Medium-term
4	Allocate the necessary resources to formalise and systematically disseminate KinEmploi's best practices.	KinEmploi intervention unit, support service, Enabel (Brussels)	Short- term

[4] Training, Entrepreneurship, Employment (TEE).
[5] Institut Technique Agricole.

5	Finalise the RC's multi-stakeholder and multi-partner strategy, aimed at optimising complementary services between partners, and form a dedicated team to implement it.	KinEmploi intervention unit, RC manager	Short- term
6	To optimise the RC 's adoption of the partnership approach by means of a specific change management programme during its implementation.	KinEmploi intervention unit, RC manager	Medium-term
7	To develop and implement, in synergy with the Decent Employment and Social Protection project, a capacity-building programme for the ONEM.	KinEmploi intervention unit, Decent Employment and Social Protection project intervention unit, RC manager, PM Kinshasa, STRATEX	Long- term
8	To deepen the operational partnership with the ONEM with a view to offering joint support to job seekers that maximises the complementarities between the RC and the ONEM.	KinEmploi intervention unit, Decent Employment and Social Protection project intervention unit, RC manager, PM Kinshasa, STRATEX	Long- term
9	Broaden the membership of the “Structure Mixte de Concertation (SMCL)” and the RC steering committee to include the MEPME.	Belgian Embassy, PM Kinshasa, STRATEX, Enabel resident representative	Short- term
10	To strengthen coordination with Belgian players and international donors in order to develop prospecting for job offers from Belgian companies in the DRC and to propose a programme of activities to the inter-donor group for education and vocational training.	Embassy of Belgium Portfolio manager Kinshasa STRATEX Enabel Resident Representative	Long- term