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Botswana

2nd Mid-Term Review for the Trade Related Facility

Draft Final Report

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2nd Mid-Term Review for the Trade Related Facility


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Acronyms

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
APEI	Accelerated Programme for Economic Integration
CA	Contribution Agreement
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CTFP	COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme
DAC	Development Assistance Community
DES-RI	Deputy-Executive Secretary for Regional Integration [within the SADC Secretariat]
EAC	East African Community
EC	European Commission
EDF	European Development Fund
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FSU	Facility Support Unit
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDT	Industrial Development and Trade
MS	Member States
MSBLI	Member State budget line item(s)
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPDF	Project Preparation Development Facility
REIS	Regional Economic Integration Support
ROM	Resulted-oriented Monitoring
SACU	Southern Africa Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
STP	SADC Protocol on Trade
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
TMEA	TradeMark East Africa
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRF	Trade-Related Facility
VfM	Value for Money

Executive Summary

- ES 1 The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Trade Related Facility (TRF) was established through a Contribution Agreement (CA) (value of €31.6m) between the European Union (EU) and the SADC Secretariat on 28 July 2014. The project implementation period commenced on 1 October 2014 for a period of 60 months to 30 September 2019. Given significant delays during the start-up phase of the programme, the EU has agreed to a two-year no-cost extension, taking the programme up to 30 September 2021.
- ES 2 The overall objective of the programme is to improve the participation of SADC Member States (MS) in regional and international trade in order to contribute to sustainable development in the SADC region. And the specific objective of the programme is to enhance the implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol (STP) and the SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to increase intra-regional and inter-regional trade flows of the participating SADC MS. As such that anticipated outcomes of the programme are that there is a higher level of compliance and implementation of the STP's commitments by the SADC MS and that the SADC EPA MS are better prepared to effectively implement and monitor the EPA and benefit from it, particularly in terms of improved market access.
- ES 3 The TRF programme is currently the largest programme that the SADC Secretariat is implementing and it is unique in its approach in that it is implementing in 12 of the 16 SADC MS. Its focus is on the implementation of regional programmes – predominantly the SADC STP and EPA related commitments at the national level. In order to achieve national implementation, the TRF aims at working closely with SADC National Committees and Focal Points. Hitherto these committees and focal points, as well as most national governments, have struggled with the nationalisation of regional commitments, and the TRF is therefore a highly relevant programme as well as innovative in its approach.
- ES 4 However, the TRF has struggled in its implementation. A first Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was conducted in 2016, but several of its recommendations were rejected. The objective of this second MTE was, therefore, to be more timely and systematic in evaluating the activities of the TRF in MS. The team was tasked to broadly evaluate the quality and the results of the TRF and specifically to evaluate intermediate results measured against its expected objectives; to identify gaps and unintended consequences arising from the delays and challenges encountered; and to identify outstanding or unfinished aspects that may need to be addressed under any future programme.

Key conclusions (KC) and key lessons of the TRF MTE

KC 1 The SADC TRF is an important project for SADC – both in scope and in relevance to regional integration. Domestication of the SADC Trade Protocol and the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement has long been a stumbling block throughout the region and the TRF is assisting SADC member states in this endeavour. Trade facilitation is an ongoing project for any country aiming at greater participation in regional and global trade. The TRF was a good starting point for many MS; but emphasis needs to be placed on the learning that trade facilitation requires national resources and commitment as part of national agendas; and that that a programme like the TRF at best can only kick-start certain efforts or stop gaps in others.

In many MS this key lesson or understanding does not yet exist, as is evidenced by the lack of ability or commitment to integrate the TRF Project Management Units (PMUs) fully into national ministries, the design of national workplans not sufficiently incorporating respective countries' trade facilitation needs which perpetuates the reliance on donors to push this agenda and on consultants to develop activities. Ideally, national governments should already be planning for next phases of a domestic trade facilitation agenda, but little evidence of this was found in most MS.

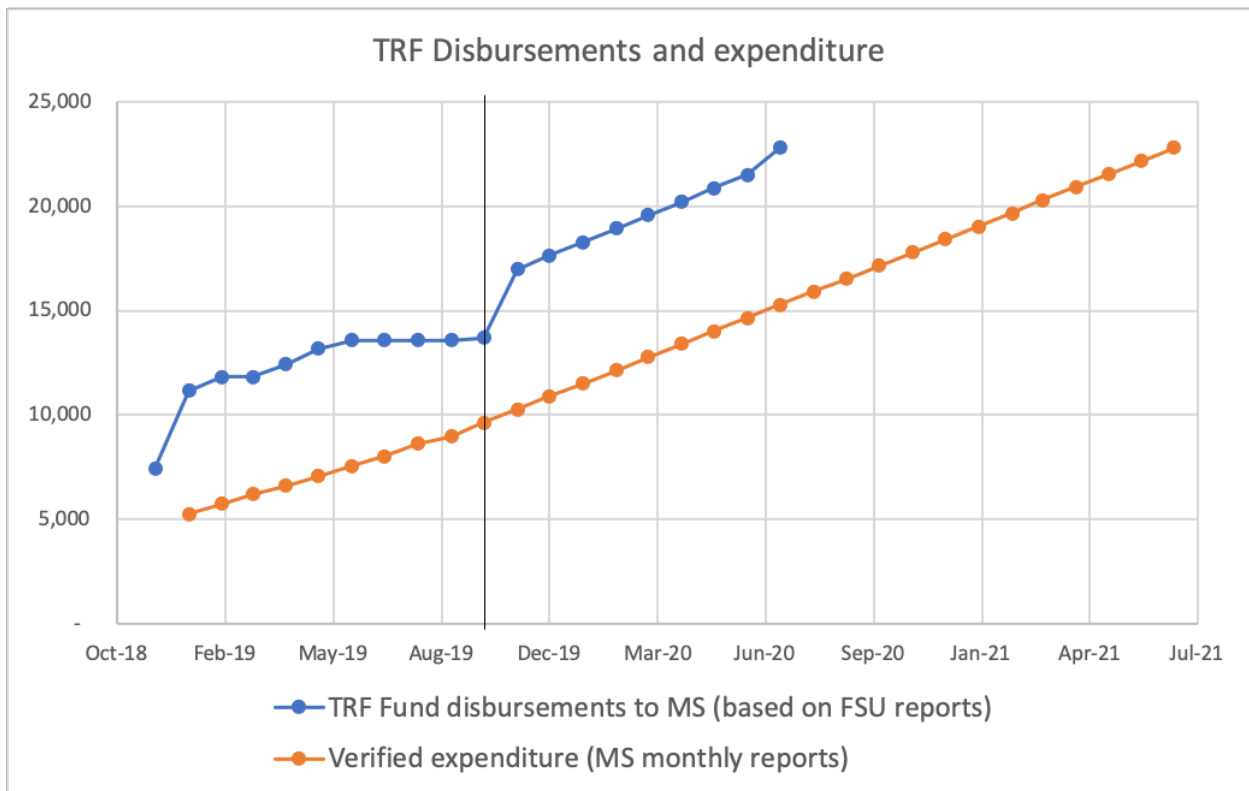
KC 2 As stated, the SADC TRF, as a donor programme, aims to plug holes where national government development workplans are stalling due to the lack of resources or expertise. As such it is critical that the member states take full ownership over the activities of the TRF and see them as part of their domestic workplan, and not as a stand-alone project with little relevance to national and regional objectives. But in the same vein, the SADC Secretariat should take full ownership over the overall TRF and provide the necessary eagle eye or insight as to how national progress on trade facilitation builds towards the regional objective of greater integration, an increase in trade amongst MS and with the rest of the world.

However, ownership and technical leadership have been weak from the SADC Secretariat. Most of the endless delays experienced with TRF activities were due to delays at the Secretariat; may that be due to restructuring, short staffing or no understanding of the critical importance of the TRF to the overall work of SADC and its member states. To date, the Human Resources and Financial Departments are not giving the TRF due recognition or priority, and the technical leads remain short-staffed with no permanent TRF Task Manager being yet appointed.

KC 3 Whereas many of the completed activities under the TRF have been of great benefit to MS, the TRF has only been able to leverage its regional nature to a limited degree. In other words, only a few of the projects (e.g. the e-commerce activities) are delivered in synchronicity across MS. While regional activities have been identified as useful, there is limited evidence of SADC Secretariat leading on best practice, managing the stumbling blocks encountered or leading on finding solutions. Only a few regional workshops have been arranged despite an overwhelming positive response to those held.

KC 4 Communication and visibility have been weak across MS and at the SADC Secretariat level, leading to low ownership at government level and weak participation by stakeholders. Ultimately, the region’s private sector will be the beneficiaries of the trade facilitation activities as they are better able to compete in the region and globally, but most MS are mostly implementing their activities without much input from their private sectors. In some countries the private sector sits on the Steering Committee, but it seems that their input is weak and these committees do not sit regularly.

KC 5 Most MS are far behind on their spending, considering that the MTE falls at the start of the last 18 months of implementation. All MS will have to ramp up spending significantly in order to achieve a high implementation percentage by March 2021. All countries have experienced delays with recruiting consultants for specific technical activities and have under-estimated the costs of such consultants. This means that ToR have had to be re-tendered and activities combined or abandoned in order to increase amounts available to attract the best consultants. However, there are MS that expect to ramp up spending within the immediate-term as consultants are paid for work completed and verification workshops are held early in 2020.



KC 6 As illustrated in the above diagram, in order for a successful completion of the TRF programme, spending will have to continue to speed up over the remaining 16 months of the no-cost extension period. Given the low spending levels up to September 2019, it is clear that the FSU, SADC Secretariat and MS will have to invest in having

dedicated staff that can comply with SADC rules and regulations in order to allow for disbursements and procurement as well as financial reporting.

Key Recommendations (KR)

In relation to the final phase of the ongoing TRF, the MTR recommends, that:

KR 1 Each MS should do a thorough self-assessment of its remaining activities under the TRF and articulate how best to utilise unspent funds to ensure that their PMUs are able to support the delivery of the remaining programme. In some cases, there will be a need to lift the 15% cap on administrative spend to allow the extension on PMU activities and staff. In most cases the PMUs should be allowed to extend contracts of key staff, even though this could also be a reduced size team in countries that are close to completion. Ideally, however, the relevant implementing ministries should take full ownership over the PMUs and second staff that can and will prioritise TRF activities in all areas, including financing, procurement and content expertise.

KR 2 Urgent attention needs to be paid by the SADC Secretariat and Member States to resolve the unverified spends in all countries in order to allow for next tranche of disbursements.

KR 3 The SADC Secretariat needs to show strong political leadership by mandating its Finance and Procurement departments to work closely with the content leads in Industrial Development and Trade, on all activities still remaining. Any further delays in financing and procurement will result in MS being unable to complete their activities, resulting in the need to return funds to the donor.

KR 4 Given the large volume of upcoming procurements in many MS, the FSU should be allowed to re-engage a procurement advisor to support the countries in managing these processes.

KR 5 Regional forums should continue to take place under the TRF in order to allow MS to start building critical mass for deeper regional integration. These workshops could be for TRF Coordinators and/or for specific technical officers in technical areas.

As consideration for any future TRF-style support, the MTR recommends, that:

KR 6 To maximise the utility of TRF-style limited regional special purpose funds, consider introducing tighter conditionality for Member States to access funds (e.g. related to cross-border activities and achievement of regional integration objectives such as the Protocol on Trade in Services and the Industrial Protocol).

KR 7 Alternative implementing arrangements for any similar future programmes should be explored as part of any future scoping and design exercise. An important consideration will be the performance of the SADC Secretariat in the revised pillar assessment exercise, and the EUD should ensure that the team undertaking the next

pillar assessment is aware of the challenges faced during the implementation of the TRF programme.

KR 8 The decentralised management approach has ended up developing time-limited capacity on issues such as the implementation of SADC rules, procurement and project management that is unlikely to be needed in many of the Ministries outside the implementation of the TRF. Unless a case for more systemic use beyond the delivery of a single programme can be made, centralising more of the core functions (e.g. procurement and finance) may provide a more efficient solution.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 2 The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Trade Related Facility (TRF) was established through a Contribution Agreement (CA) (value of €31.6m) between the European Union (EU) and the SADC Secretariat on 28 July 2014. The project implementation period commenced on 1 October 2014 for a period of 60 months to 30 September 2019. Given significant delays during the start-up phase of the programme, the EU has agreed to a two-year no-cost extension, taking the programme up to 30 September 2021.
- 3 The overall objective of the programme is to improve the participation of SADC Member States (MS) in regional and international trade in order to contribute to sustainable development in the SADC region. The specific objective of the Programme is to enhance the implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol (STP) and the SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to increase intra-regional and inter-regional trade flows of the participating SADC MS. As such, it is anticipated that the Programme is able to contribute to a higher level of compliance and implementation of the STP's commitments by the SADC MS and that the SADC EPA MS are better prepared to effectively implement and monitor the EPA and benefit from it, particularly in terms of any new opportunities related to improved market access.

1.2 Context

- 4 The TRF programme is currently being implemented across 12 SADC MS and is the largest technical assistance programme delivered by the SADC Secretariat. According to its design, the focus of the programme was supposed to be on the implementation of regional commitments – predominantly related to the SADC STP and EPA at the national level. In order to achieve national implementation, the Programme aims at working closely with SADC National Committees and Focal Points. These committees and focal points, as well as most national governments, have struggled with the nationalisation of regional commitments. The TRF's approach to address this gap is understood to be highly relevant as well as innovative in the SADC region.
- 5 The TRF programme is one of a complementary package of EU programmes supporting the regional economic integration agenda in the SADC region. Others include the Project Preparation Development Facility (PPDF) and the now completed Regional Economic Integration Support (REIS) programme. The PPDF aims to address the infrastructure aspects of the constraints to higher levels of economic growth and deeper regional integration. REIS focused regionally on enhancing institutional capacities in the SADC Secretariat in trade and investment related areas through addressing implementation and domestication of the STP and the SADC Finance and Investment Protocol. REIS also supported negotiations and implementation of the SADC-EU EPA. The EC is also launching several other support programmes, including:

- EU-SADC Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP);
- Support towards Industrialisation and the Productive Sectors (SIPS) in the SADC Region; and
- East and Southern African (EA-SA) Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme (TF2P).

Table 1: Focus areas of EU support in the SADC region

Topical marker	TFP	SIPS	TF2P
Participation development / Good governance	Significant objective	Significant objective	Main objective
Aid to environment	Not targeted	Significant objective	Significant objective
Gender equality (including women in development)	Significant objective	Significant objective	Significant objective
Trade development	Main objective	Significant objective	Not targeted

- 6 As illustrated by the table above, there are clear and relevant linkages between the various support packages offered by the EU to SADC. Whilst the now completed REIS, and the PPDF, aimed to create an enabling environment; the TRF drills down to national level constraints to implementing the STP and the EPA and to creating regional trade linkages. In addition, national EPA implementing projects are well underway in the SADC EPA countries, which will also focus on some of the stumbling blocks in trade facilitation.
- 7 There is also likely geographical synergy with the EU’s support to COMESA, which includes the upcoming COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme (CTFP), which aims at increasing intra-regional trade flows of goods, persons and services by reducing the costs/delays of imports/exports at specific border posts.
- 8 In addition to EU support, other donors are also active in the SADC region in this field. For example, GIZ is providing support under the Cooperation for the Enhancement of SADC Regional Economic Integration (CESARE) programme; the UK is planning to provide support to Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) countries and Mozambique related to post-Brexit negotiations; and the World Bank is planning regional support to five SADC Countries under the Accelerated Programme for Economic Integration (APEI).

1.3. 2nd Mid-term review of the SADC TRF programme / ‘the Action’

- 9 This is the second MTR of the programme, further to the agreed two-year no-cost extension of its duration up to 30 September 2021. The review covers the period following January 2017 and focuses on progress to date and explains why progress has – or has not – taken place as planned. This report provides recommendations on how to

successfully conclude the implementation of the TRF in the available extension period with a view of achieving most expected objectives as far as possible, taking into account the multiple challenges faced during the programme's implementation. While the programme approach may be sound in principle, substantive problems have been encountered during the implementation period at all levels, including the MS but also, crucially, the SADC Secretariat. The team also reviewed the logical framework for the programme and concluded that it was not pertinent to use time and resources to its updating or repurposing at this juncture.

- 10 The MTR provides recommendations on how best to design and deliver forthcoming 11th European Development Fund (EDF) supported programmes and provides lessons learnt regarding possible implementation modalities for the next programming period.

1.4. Evaluation scope and objectives

- 11 As per the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assignment, the review was conducted using four of the five DAC evaluation criteria, namely: effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. According to the ToR, the criteria on relevance has been sufficiently analysed in the previous MTR as well as in the Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reports. The ToR further requested the assessment of two EU specific evaluation criteria in addition to the DAC. Namely, to assess the EU added value (the extent to which the programme brings additional benefits to what would have resulted from the EU MS' interventions only); and to secondly, to assess the coherence of the programme itself, with the EU strategy in the SADC region and with other EU policies and EU MS actions or programmes.
- 12 The Terms of Reference (ToR) to this MTR specifically requested that the evaluators
- assess the materialisation of the expected results (or perhaps some of them) and their facilitating and contrasting factors.
 - assess the performance of the management at both regional (SADC Secretariat) and national levels (relevant Ministries and established Project Management Units (PMUs)) and their ability to adapt to changing conditions
 - assess the governing mechanisms of the programme, which would include the Steering Committee and the Facility Support Unit (FSU).
- 13 Where appropriate, the review team also considered aspects of gender, the environment and climate change and how they were incorporated into the TRF; as well as the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the principle of Leave No-One behind.
- 14 The objective of the MTR, therefore, was to assess the achievements, the quality and the results of the programme given the context of an evolving cooperation policy with an increasing emphasis on result-oriented approaches and the contribution towards the implementation of the SDGs.

1.5. Methodological instruments

15 The Evaluation Matrix (Annex 1) cross-referenced how the following evaluation methods were deployed to answer the evaluation questions. The following instruments were used to analyse evidence at two levels: at the management level and grant level. These tools included:

- An **organisational assessment**, covering the SADC Secretariat and the Facility Support Unit (FSU). This uses the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) organisational assessment methodology that Saana has successfully used on several previous evaluations of a similar nature. The IDRC methodology covers three topics: Enabling environment, Organisational capacity, and Organisational motivation. Each of these aspects were rated using established criteria. In addition, the MTR team refers to the EC's pillar assessments to cross-refer how the capacity to manage issues related to internal control, accounting, external audits, grants and procurement may have evolved over the implementing period.
- A systematic **document review**, including key management information and reports. This was used to establish process mapping of key processes to identify possible bottlenecks in the management processes.
- A rapid **Value for Money (VfM) assessment** to review the spending of the programme across the programme and grant facilities.
- A **contextual analysis** of the SADC regional trade policy context. This looks at the progress and potential opportunities and risks in the landscape concerning both the regional integration agenda as well as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA). This includes looking at other similar programmes, such as the European Commission (EC) funded regional trade programme supporting Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) in the East African Community (EAC).

16 At the Members State level, the team utilised the following evaluation tools:

- A **portfolio analysis** involving high-level assessments of output areas, outputs, Member State budget-line items (MSBLI) and activities to review trends and the state of programme delivery both at portfolio level and MS programme level; based primarily on Dashboard data and Detailed Work Plan information.
- A **process review**, that assesses the end-to-end process of how the grants have been designed, approved, commissioned, implemented and managed. The MTR aims to understand how the Member States, the SADC Secretariat and the FSU have interacted in the setting up and delivery of the grants. This allowed the team to assess how specific issues, such as the gender and climate, have been incorporated into the grant-level management processes. The team have used a stratified sampling methodology to select 36 out of the 135 Member State level activities using the criteria of results windows and technical focus areas. The review is based on document analysis and interviews with representatives of Member State PMUs. For the six case study countries, the interviews were conducted in person; whereas in the other six countries, the team relied on telephone interviews.

- The findings from the other methods were validated through the **country case studies**. The country selection for the case studies was made on the basis of the ToR and interviews during the inception stage (also explained in the Inception Report); the countries selected being Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. The case studies were used to achieve a deep learning experience across 3 projects per country. While the exact approach and methodology for each case study was developed uniquely for the country in question, emphasis was on reaching further along the results chain and engage with a broader set of stakeholders, including the private sector. In addition, the team undertook rapid organisational assessments of the Member State PMUs using a similar methodology as for the SADC Secretariat and FSU.

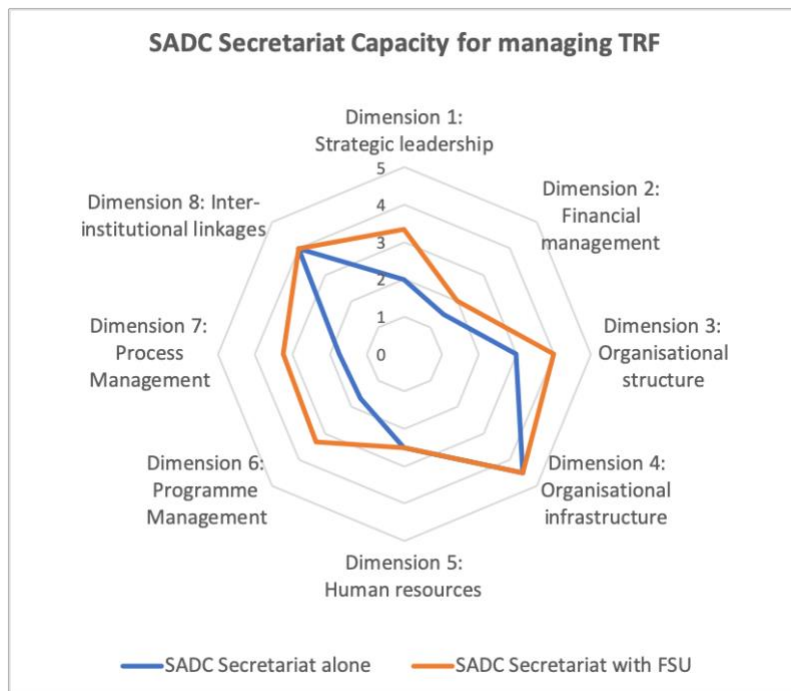
2. Answered questions / Findings

2.1 Assessing Efficiency (sound management and Value for Money)

Q1.1 How far can the quality of the day-to-day management be deemed efficient?

- 17 The management of the TRF essentially sits with the FSU, who have been central to supporting the SADC MS in their preparation of projects for submission to the TRF; both with personal support by the staff of the FSU and in supporting MS to contract consultants to design projects for submission. Furthermore, the FSU keeps a very close eye on the progress made in each MS with each approved activity by making use of a dashboard monitoring system that is updated on a monthly basis. The updates flow from the monthly reports received from the MS focal points or PMU. Where projects are running into difficulty, the FSU and the technical experts at the SADC Secretariat provide telephonic and email advice on how to proceed or step in with country visits to support the PMUs.
- 18 A rapid organisational review of the management of the TRF conducted by the review team does, however, raise significant concerns about the efficacy of how the programme has been managed; and especially, how it will be managed if the planned handover from the FSU to the SADC Secretariat takes place. As illustrated in the figure below, the analysis, which was based on the IDRC methodology, covered eight strategic dimensions of organisational performance and was based on interviews with the SADC Secretariat, the FSU and other key stakeholders in Gaborone and the MS. The analysis compared two scenarios for implementing the programme following the MTR: firstly, by SADC Secretariat alone and, secondly, by the SADC Secretariat supplemented by the FSU.
- 19 The review is based on the impressions of the evaluators from findings through interviews with FSU and SADC Secretariat staff, as well as other stakeholders both regionally and in the Member States. A documentation review has been used to support and deepen the analysis. Still, while the review process is intended as a systematic exercise to identify and better understand where the organisation(s) are working well and what are some of the most important constraints; the evaluators

recognise that it is a rapid, ad hoc exercise and the findings are inherently subjective and prone to interpretation.



20 Comparing the two lines (blue for SADC Secretariat alone and orange for SADC Secretariat supplemented with the FSU), it is clear from the analysis that in several of the dimensions that the FSU played a significant role in strengthening the capacity to manage the TRF programme. In five of the eight dimensions, the joint approach was rated higher than the SADC Secretariat alone, with the remaining three being rated at level capacity. Crucially, the SADC Secretariat alone was rated as 'weak' or 'very weak' in four of the eight dimensions,

with two as 'moderate' and two as 'strong' or 'very strong'. The combined rating with the FSU improved the scores so that only one dimension was rated 'weak' (financial management), with three as 'moderate' and four as 'strong' or 'very strong'. Notably, given that the SADC Secretariat has the fiduciary responsibility of managing the programme, the FSU has given less of a role in financial management and, thus, could not be expected to support this dimension to the same extent as some of the others.

21 Indeed, the financial management dimension was awarded the lowest score of all dimensions in both scenarios. The dimension consisted of two sub-criteria: *'financial planning capacity as illustrated by an accurate budgeting of operating expenses and forecasting of future monetary needs and requirement'* and *'illustrating robust financial accountability by being able to manage SADC financial rules required and can be transparent in its use of resources'*. These were rated as 'very weak' and 'weak' for SADC Secretariat alone and both as 'weak' when allowing for the FSU. The financial management appears to have been a constant struggle both centrally as well as when managing the projects in the Member States. From agreeing the rules, to training the Member State officials to implement the set procedures and controlling the actual expenditure, there have been near regular delays. Some countries have registered significant levels of ineligible expenditure compounded with doubts about their ability to access the final tranche of funding, undermining the viability and justification of the programme.

22 The dimensions where the TRF programme has most benefitted from the FSU's role are the ones that have the largest difference in ratings (1 = very weak, 5 = very strong)

for SADC Secretariat alone compared to the SADC Secretariat with FSU. The four dimensions were:

- Dimension 1: Strategic leadership (2.0 vs 3.3)
- Dimension 3: Organisational structure (3.0 vs 4.0)
- Dimension 6: Programme management (1.7 vs 3.3)
- Dimension 7: Process management (1.8 vs 3.3)

23 The gap in the strategic leadership dimension was driven by a two-point difference in the sub-category of 'strategic planning, as illustrated by examples of scanning environment for changes, developing tactics to obtain objectives, goals and missions'. The evaluators acknowledge that the SADC Secretariat has faced staffing challenges over the review period, likely contributing to it being unduly reliant on the FSU for the strategic planning of the TRF. However, the fact that these staffing issues have persisted at the Secretariat, and there appears to have been only a limited push to address or even mitigate these in the short-term, suggests a much deeper concern regarding the management culture and strategic capability of the organisation to deliver high-level results going forward into the last few months of delivering on the TRF programme.

24 The difference in the score for the organisational structure dimension was due to the SADC Secretariat's 'operational capacity as illustrated by clear roles and responsibilities as well as coordination of tasks and systems across the team' being rated 'weak'. The TRF programme was intended to benefit from the technical inputs by the substance experts of the SADC Secretariat. However, the evaluators have several reports that suggest this has only taken place to a limited extent (for example in the domain of SPS). This has been compounded by delays in finance and procurement, which mean that the most egregious delays have been measured in months. While the constraints in the staffing of the programme management within the Secretariat are evident and well documented, they aren't sufficient to justify the lack of performance. Indeed, the dimension for programme management was one of the lowest scored for the SADC Secretariat alone. The FSU was deemed to have been able to support the Secretariat in its capacities for 'planning (identifying needs, setting objectives, costing alternatives and developing evaluation systems)' and 'monitoring projects as illustrated by systems for evaluating progress and communicating feedback', with both criteria rated initially 'weak' and 'strong' once the FSU was taken into account. For its capacity for 'implementing projects as illustrated by adherence to schedules and coordination of activities' the SADC Secretariat was rated as 'very weak' due to regular delays in all phases of the programme cycle emphasised by the Member States. With FSU support the score marginally improved, but only to 'weak', highlighting the limited advisory role of the FSU. The decision-making and convening power, rightly, continues to rest with the SADC Secretariat as the implementing partner.

25 The narrative for the rating for the process management dimensions was similar. The two sub-criteria where the FSU was able to significantly increase the 'weak' rating

were capacity for *'problem-solving (defining problems, gathering data)'* and *'capacity for M&E (generating data, utilising information and changing and improving organisations)'*. The Secretariat was rated as *'very weak'* for *'decision-making (creating alternatives, deciding on solutions monitoring decisions)'*, improved to *'weak'* with the FSU taken into account for many of the same reasons as highlighted in the other dimensions above.

- 26 One of the secondary objectives of the TRF was to increase the programme management capacity of the SADC Secretariat. On the basis of the organisational review, the intended skills transfer has not been achieved and the SADC Secretariat would not be ready to successfully manage the TRF without the support of the FSU. While the reasons for this are undoubtedly many and complex, a major contributing factor is the lack of strategic leadership and commitment within the Secretariat.
- 27 In summary, the FSU appears to have provided the TRF's management with a significant performance uplift across several core dimensions. This highlights the importance of the FSU and a significant risk to the efficacy of the programme at this key juncture where the pace of the programme implementation will need to be increased while, potentially, scaling down the FSU.

Evidence: organisational review of SADC Secretariat managing the TRF programme. Presentation made to the MTR team in Botswana and the sharing of the dashboard as well as the monthly reports from MS.

- 28 SADC MS are responsible for managing the budgets of their financial contributions and should all have appointed a Financial Officer or Accounting Officer to the PMU. Difficulties did creep in with the planning of the budget as PMU costs outstripped project implementation during the first tranche phase; as most PMUs were established and running long before project implementation started. This resulted in MS needing to adjust work plans and budgets and request addenda to their financial contribution agreements. There was a significant delay in getting sign-off on these addenda due to staff constraints at the SADC Secretariat. To overcome this problem the EU helped release resources in July 2017, some of which helped PMUs to commence approved projects, and fund implementation including certain staffing costs.
- 29 Some countries, such as Lesotho, have found themselves in the position that by 30 September 2019 the funding for their PMU had run out and the PMU was subsequently dissolved. The only staff member retained to manage the programme is a civil servant in the Ministry of Trade. Without a PMU and without the expertise built with the finance, procurement and technical officials it seems highly unlikely that Lesotho will be able to complete implementation of the programme. However, in other countries – like Tanzania, the Seychelles and Namibia – more staff were seconded from the government than were recruited from outside; meaning they will be able to keep their PMUs in place until the new closing date. Yet in others, like Mozambique and Malawi, there is sufficient funding to see the PMUs through to March 2021; but there is a risk that expertise will be lost during the final reporting months of the TRF, which will

provide a massive challenge for the SADC Secretariat in terms of closing the programme down according to its rules and procedures.

Evidence: interviews with European Union Delegation (EUD) Botswana, FSU and SADC Secretariat. Field visits and telephonic interviews.

- 30 Risk management and the management of personnel has been weak given constraints at the SADC Secretariat. The Secretariat went through a period of restructuring since mid-2017, persisting into November of 2018, and this resulted in many staff that had been with the Secretariat for many years being replaced with newcomers. In addition, critical roles in TRF's management and leadership, as well as the Human Resources and financial departments, took a long time to fill, which had an immediate adverse impact on the delivery of the TRF. For instance, the Task Manager of the TRF at the Secretariat fell ill in October 2018, but the Secretariat has not been able to fill the post by end of December 2019.
- 31 In addition, the FSU currently only has three staff: the Team Leader, the Trade Expert and the Project Administrator. Some MS have a significant volume of procurements to conclude in the upcoming 6-12-month period and – given the limited capacity of the SADC Secretariat – could benefit from further input from a Procurement Expert within the FSU.
- 32 The PMU staff in the MS all seemed to have worked well as teams and had a good working relationship with their principals in the Ministry of Trade and Industry as well as with the FSU and the SADC Secretariat. (Please see the organisational assessments in the Annex under the country visit summaries.)

Evidence: interviews with EUD Botswana, FSU and SADC Secretariat as well as the field visits that showed most PMUs to be well staffed and managed and all had high praise for the FSU in the way it assists the MS towards achieving implementation. Whilst the relationship with the SADC Secretariat was seen as weaker, they also felt that there was a good relationship, but the sense was that they would see the FSU as an extension of the SADC Secretariat. From the country missions, it was clear that the PMUs had not necessarily fully understood the respective roles and responsibilities between the FSU and SADC Secretariat for managing the TRF programme.

- 33 There seems to be a good reporting system in place now following the first MTR (however, the quality of country reports vary). This reporting allows the FSU to update its dashboard and keeps the Steering Committee informed of progress and delays. There remains a challenge of sticking to deadlines and to clear channels of communication between the MS, the SADC Secretariat and the FSU. There is an opportunity to address this challenge contingent on the FSU successfully integrating with the core team at the SADC Secretariat, although this may have now been made more difficult as the FSU experts will not be able to co-locate with the SADC Secretariat staff during the extension period.

Evidence: monthly reports submitted by MS. Interviews at MS PMU level showed that the simplified reporting system adopted after a few months of operation allowed the Project Coordinator to spend more time with stakeholders and implementing agencies and not be bogged down with numerous reports. This shows that self-learning and flexibility in project management is key when a new approach to donor programmes is implemented. This is a good lesson for future programmes on how best to report from MS level up to the intermediary FSU and further on to the SADC Secretariat and the donor, the European Union.

Q1.2 To what extent have the intended beneficiaries participated in the intervention?

- 34 The SADC Secretariat and the MS are the main beneficiaries of the TRF. The SADC Secretariat's active participation and deep involvement with the programme is necessary for its success, however its involvement has varied across the time period under evaluation. This can partly be explained by the staff turn-overs and unfilled posts, but there also appears to be a sentiment in SADC Secretariat that the ultimate responsibility or ownership of the project lies with the FSU and the European Union Delegation (EUD) and not with the SADC Secretariat. This is, however, incorrect, as the SADC Secretariat is the main implementing body and is supported by the FSU and the EUD.
- 35 During the field visits it emerged that not all MS portrayed the necessary ownership over the TRF and its activities; as evidenced by weak support given by some ministries to implementing activities, or to collaborate with other ministries to ensure the success of the TRF. During the feedback session to the Reference Group of the TRF Evaluation in Gaborone on 15 November, the Deputy Executive Secretary concluded that this was one of the key stumbling blocks and that he would like to emphasise to each MS that the TRF is an auxiliary instrument to what governments have committed to doing in terms of the STP and the signatories to the SADC EPA should be doing in order to reap the benefits of the agreement. Each government should take strong ownership over the TRF.
- 36 And yet, in most SADC MS most ministries have been active participants in the TRF and have been the main implementers of the activity. They have faced challenges in terms of capacity to adopt SADC rules and regulations, in designing projects for TRF consideration and in implementing some of the activities. There has also been a challenge in the auditing of expenditures at MS level that is in line with SADC rules and procedures. Again, it is hoped that in the remaining less than two years of implementation the MS will be able to overcome these challenges.

Evidence: Interviews with EUD Botswana, FSU and SADC Secretariat. The field phase showed that ownership over the TRF by high ranking government officials could be weak, but that at the technical level most ministries and departments were progressing with implementing their activities. (Please see the country reports in the Annex for more granular analysis.)

Q1.3 Regarding technical assistance: how well did it help to provide appropriate solutions and develop local capacities and produce results?

37 Technical assistance was critically necessary in order for MS to design projects for approval by the TRF Steering Committee. Following significant delays in the commencement of the TRF's MS-level projects, all countries were requested to fill their full quota of projects. Technical support from the FSU and consultants enabled the design, development and approval of a large number of projects across the twelve MS in a short space of time. However, during the field phase and during the presentation to the MTR Reference Group, a number of stakeholders interviewed expressed the concern that one contributing reason for the low levels of ownership of the TRF at government and SADC level has to do with the fact that it was consultant-driven from the outset. There would have been deeper and more urgent concern to see a timely and correct implementation had governments designed their programmes in-house, although countries that chose to out-source programme design to consultants did so by their own volition. Equally, due to the delays during the early phases of TRF, the full allocation of the MS portfolio was approved in one sitting of the Steering Committee. This removed the pressure for countries to produce high quality projects as it effectively removed a competitive element from the programme and the possibility for active portfolio management by the SADC Secretariat and rewarding high performing MS with additional funds.

38 The FSU has now proposed the introduction of a limited contingency fund to which MS could apply for funding under thematic windows. This may produce interesting new applications to address some key regional constraints.

Evidence: interviews with EUD Botswana and FSU as well as field phase interviews and feedback at the MTR Reference Group meeting.

Q1.4 How the TRF has influenced the quality of monitoring, its existence, accuracy and flexibility and the use made of it; adequacy of baseline information?

39 At the central level, the FSU has been able to facilitate a culture of regular qualitative and quantitative reporting by the MS, allowing it to update the dashboards, which it in turn has used to track progress across the portfolio and prompt interventions where necessary. The fact that the reporting requirements were changed to better suit the Project Coordinators also shows that the FSU has been adept at self-learning and has demonstrated the ability to change.

40 However, at MS-level, the quality of monitoring is much more varied. While central tools, such as the Project Assessment Framework, were developed and exist in various iterations for the MS; there is very limited indication that these would be actively used for the management of projects or updated integrally as part of the

reporting cycle. In addition, very few activities had baselines from which impact could be measured.

Activity status across portfolio (as of August 2019)		
Phase	Number	% of total
On time / Complete	38	20%
Delays	76	40%
Critical Delays	74	39%
Not commenced	3	2%

- 41 According to the team’s analysis of the dashboards, out of the 191 activities (or sub-projects) identified across the 12 MS, only 20% were “on time” or “complete” by August 2019 – one month before the programme was originally supposed to close. Almost 80% of projects were facing delays, with half of these severe enough to classify as critical.
- 42 Given the nascent stage of maturity across the project portfolio, it remained a challenge for the MTR team to systematically quantify the impact of TRF funded activities. The field missions were crucial to supplement insights gained at the portfolio level, as the review team has had to rely on impressions from technical officers to verify the quality of the activities and the adjoining monitoring. Given that most of the activities planned under the programme remain to be completed, this MTR was too early to measure the achieved higher-level results (outcomes or impacts) of the TRF programme. The design of any final evaluation should pay close attention to how to measure impact-level results; especially in an environment where very few baselines exist and high-level data, like trade statistics, are a poor measure of interventions at the micro level.

Evidence: monthly reports, dashboard and interviews with FSU. Country missions and telephone interviews with MS.

Q1.5 Did any unplanned outputs arise so far?

- 43 The evaluators have been able to identify a few unintended consequences of the programme. For example, the responsible ministries in Seychelles and Madagascar reported to have aimed for the ratification process for the SADC Trade Protocol to have been concluded in time for them to be eligible for the funds available under the TRF. In addition, a few MS proposed working on e-certification for e-commerce as projects under the TRF. However, it soon became clear that this needed to be done at the regional level and this area has made good progress towards the region having a uniform e-certification system.
- 44 At the same time, there is a sense that the programme could have fostered more unplanned consequences across countries. For example, the experience from Zambia suggested that if the TRF had focused on projects that had a more narrowly defined cross-border mandate, there could have been deeper systematic changes resulting

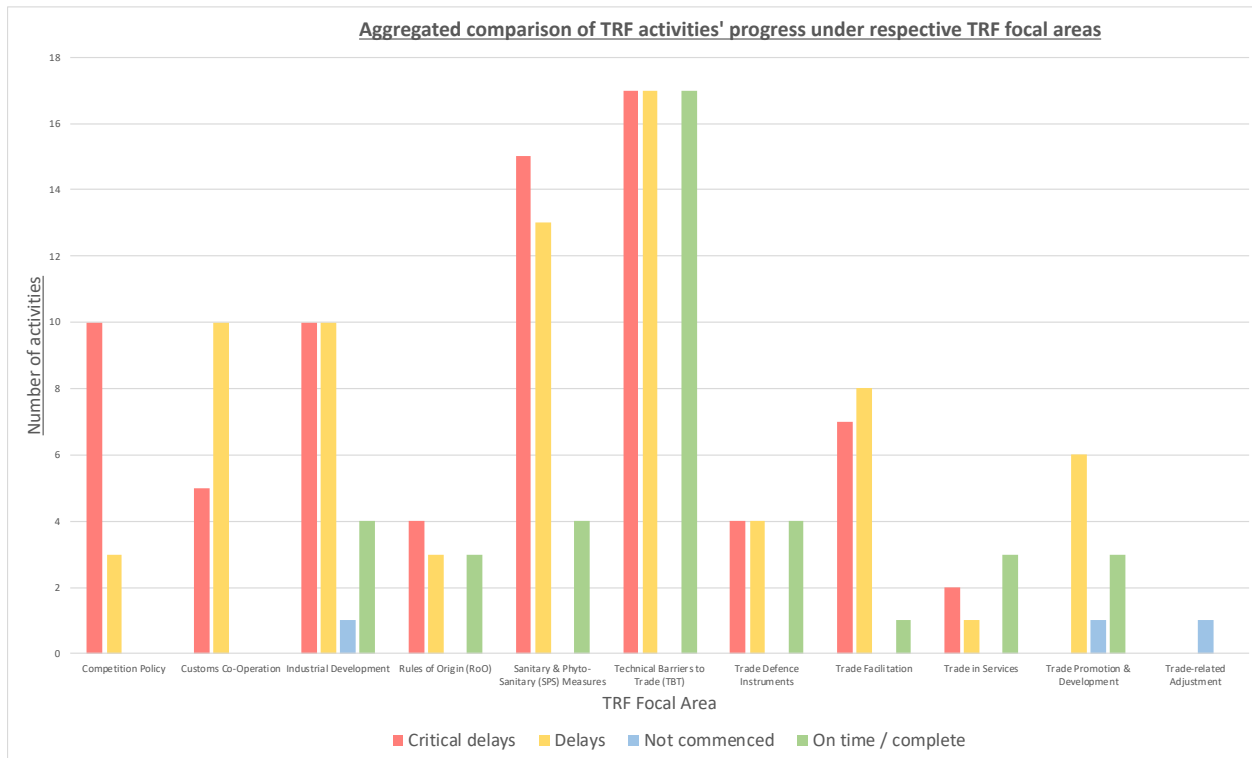
from the programme. One potential missed opportunity for the programme relates to Zambia’s work in the area of customs and trade facilitation aiming at improving processes at a One Stop Border Post into Zimbabwe. If the TRF programme in Zimbabwe would have also been involved in supporting the activity from the Zimbabwean side, outcomes are likely to have been faster and deeper (as also the Zimbabwean side could have benefitted from external support and resources).

45 To encourage cross-border cooperation and commonality across the implementation of the projects, the FSU has identified thematic areas (e.g. SPS) in which the Members States could apply for additional support using a Contingency Fund. This would be funded via unspent balances from Member States that were not able to spend all available funds. The TRF management has also made a commitment to hold more regional workshops to facilitate coordination between Member States and the staff of TRF PMUs. These were seen as hugely beneficial opportunities for cross-learning and sharing experience and best practise of how to implement TRF projects.

Evidence: interviews with FSU and SADC Secretariat. Country missions and telephone interviews.

2.2 Assessing Effectiveness (achievement of purpose)

Q2.1 To what extent have the planned benefits been delivered and received, as perceived by all key stakeholders?

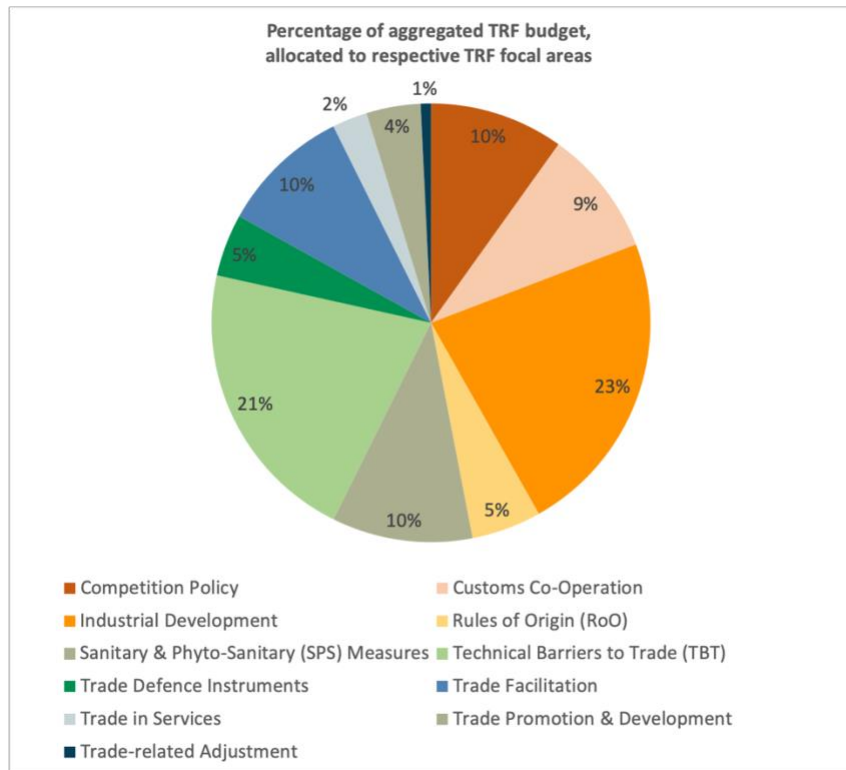


46 The team has undertaken an extensive systematic review of all the activities funded under the TRF. This is based on an analysis of a total of 715 sub-activities set out in the that we have labelled Member States Budget Line Items (MSBLI), covering 193 activities across 82 projects identified as part of the MS documentation. The review also looked at the sub-components of MSBLIs, of which there were almost 3,000.

47 The figure overleaf breaks down the TRF-funded activities into technical areas based on the reported phase in August 2019. There were most activities in the areas of TBT and SPS, while no discernible trend that projects in one technical area had progressed further than others beyond the fact that all projects labelled ‘competition policy’ or ‘customs cooperation’ were ‘delayed’ or ‘critically delayed’. In addition, the only project in the area of ‘trade related adjustment’ (in Mozambique) had yet to commence.

48 Looking at a more detailed breakdown of the planned budgets of the portfolio, the largest allocations are given to ‘Industrial Development’ (23%) and ‘TBT’ (21%) projects, suggesting that ‘Industrial Development’ projects were much larger in their median size.

49 A more detailed analysis of the progress of project implementation by the 12 Member States as part of the Country Missions and telephone interviews suggest that at current pace, without significant improvements to implementation, only 8 countries are likely to conclude all activities. Moreover, according to the evaluators’ assessment 5 countries will not be in a position to access the third tranches of payment without significant increase in efficiency at implementing partner, PMU and SADC Secretariat levels.



50 An analysis of the entire portfolio suggests that in August 2019 over 50% of the activities were delayed or suspended, with a further 13% facing escalations in the number and severity of delays of sub-activities. The anticipation from this initial finding was that many stakeholders would likely to perceive shortcomings in the delivery of the TRF, which was certainly confirmed as part of the country case studies. On a more

positive note, partners at all levels appear to accept that there is a need for an increase in the pace of implementation, suggesting the possibility of orderly completion of programme outputs by the end of the two-year extension. To succeed, this will require a considerable, and sustained, increase in the pace of delivery of the projects at all levels – and the securing of PMUs in those member states where that is likely to be wound-down due to financial considerations.

- 51 At the same time, interviews with stakeholders showed that there is considerable concern towards the ability of SADC Secretariat to provide adequate support during the final two years of the programme through financial, procurement and programmatic management. Some concerns were around funds reaching the MS on time, and also the timeliness of expenses being clearing. Other concerns related to the adequacy of support to MS through any procurement related issues and technical project implementation issues. Given the persistent challenges in the culture and capacity of the SADC Secretariat identified through the organisational review, the evaluators remain sceptical that the Secretariat is able to give the appropriate support unless significant political pressure is placed on all internal departments – technical, procurement and financial – to prioritise the TRF in the remaining 21 months of implementation.
- 52 It is useful to note that most countries have, in effect, only started implementation in early 2018, and the extension allows for an extension to carry on activities until March 2021. This means that member states will have another 15 months from 1 January 2020 to conclude their activities, nearly doubling their time for implementation. Against this context, and allowing for the view of the FSU, there is an impression that subject to the provision of sufficient support and appropriate leadership on all levels, many countries should be able to deliver all or nearly all of their planned outputs. Given the time available, even the Member States that are furthest behind in the implementation of national projects (e.g. Botswana and Madagascar) can still be redeemed. However, this will only be possible if the necessary support from the SADC Secretariat is provided consistently.
- 53 As an example, Namibia has shown that it did most of the slower-paced activities during a first phase; i.e. the design of ToR, the publishing and awarding of tenders and working with consultants to produce reports and training manuals. Going into a second phase of delivery will ensure an uptick of expenditure as consultants are paid and training events are hosted. In addition, the procurement of expensive equipment will also only take place upon the recommendations made by the consultants, which means that a large portion of Namibia's budget will be spent as soon as the first phase consultants close their reports.(A summary analysis of the project implementation status and likelihood to complete all activities for each of the Member States is available in the annexes.)

Evidence: interviews with FSU, EUD Botswana and SADC Secretariat. Organisational review. Portfolio review. Country mission and telephone interviews.

Q2.2 To what extent can the costs of the project be justified by the benefits; whether or not expressed in monetary terms in comparison with similar projects or known alternative approaches, taking account of contextual differences and eliminating market distortions?

- 54 Given its nascent phase of implementation, the MTE is very limited in being able to present verifiable results 'on the ground'. As such, it is difficult to quantify the benefits beyond noting where outputs have been delivered. During the country missions, the evaluators were able to identify isolated examples where the TRF support had contributed to higher level results, but these are not sufficient to allow for a systemic analysis of costs and benefits of the programme.
- 55 The actual potential for benefits to be derived from the pipeline projects individually were assessed at the country level. The testimonial from PMUs and almost all implementing partner technical officers highlighted the importance of the TRF projects. Often the funds were allocated as crucial building blocks in the strategic development plans of the organisations, stressing the importance of completing these in a timely manner so that funds would not have to be recalled.
- 56 The no-cost extension will reduce the potential cost-effectiveness of the programme, as the fixed management/administration costs of the programme will increase as a proportion of the overall costs of the programme. This is likely to happen centrally as well as in several of the countries to ensure that the PMUs have sufficient resources available to continue the management of the country projects.
- 57 Given the volume and breadth of activities during the programme, the review team has not requested detailed breakdowns of up to date expenditure across the programme including all 12 Member States; meaning it has not been possible to undertake a systematic and detailed value-for-money (VfM) assessment of all expenditure at MS level.
- 58 However, a VfM review at programme level has been possible. By October 2019 – or a month after the point when TRF was originally supposed to have been closed as a programme – less than €10 million of the expenses used by Member States had been verified as eligible. This enabled the comparison of fixed (administrative/management) versus variable (MS project) costs in three distinct scenarios:
- i) Situation as of 31 September 2019, assuming that TRF was closed at that juncture, based on the performance of the TRF and the expenditure across the various budget lines
 - ii) Anticipated situation as of 31 September 2021, assuming that all TRF country projects are completed and the central budget lines are exhausted as currently outlined
 - iii) The counterfactual where the programme succeeded in delivery as planned, being able to exhaust the TRF fund by 31 September 2019 with all central budget lines exhausted

Scenario	Fixed expenditure	Variable expenditure	Total expenditure	Ratio Fixed / Total
No extension	€ 9,428,989	€ 8,847,519	€ 17,916,508	53%
Extension	€ 12,375,600	€ 18,696,000	€ 31,071,600	40%
Counterfactual	€ 11,691,600	€ 19,380,000	€ 31,071,600	38%

Note: The fixed and variable expenditure calculations have been made on the basis of available expense information and supplementary assumptions by the evaluators. The fixed expenditure includes all anticipated central costs plus the estimated administrative costs at MS level.

59 From the analysis, it is clear that the project expenditure (notated in the table above as variable expenditure) is a key driver in the cost-efficiency calculation. While the programme's no-cost extension is likely to increase some administrative costs, it does provide the programme with an opportunity to fully disburse all funds, which would allow the programme to improve its performance from a 53% ratio of fixed / total costs as of 30 September 2019, to a result much closer to what would have been achievable under the budget allocation following the fourth addendum to the Contribution Agreement.

60 Beyond the individual benefit of these projects, the team also assessed the joint, or strategic, benefit of the portfolio altogether. Given the process for project selection at country level, there is limited evidence of synergy benefits across the projects in various countries. While this is potentially an opportunity missed, these linkages may yet be explored in the final two years of the programme's implementation. The regional workshops that have been held have been hailed as break-through events in which technical officers from MS made crucial contacts with other technical officers from other MS. They have been able to share successes and recommend consultants to one another or highlight concerns regarding others. Importantly, there is a growing recognition of the ultimate aim of the TRF, namely better intra-regional trade.

Evidence: portfolio review. Interview with FSU. Country case studies, process review, VfM analysis, contextual analysis.

Q2.3 How flexibly has management adapted to ensure that the results would still achieve the purpose; and how well has it been supported in this by key stakeholders including the SADC Secretariat, the EU Delegation and the Steering Committee?

61 Assessments of the ROM reports from 2017 and 2018 show several recurring themes in the management of the TRF over the last two years, albeit the specific issues in each year differ. Interestingly, both ROM reports encourage the transfer of implementation support responsibility from the FSU to the SADC Secretariat. This has, regrettably, failed to materialise, jeopardising the success of the overall programme, despite the FSU's consistent efforts to capacitate the Secretariat / IDT. As illustrated in the organisational review section above, the reasons for this are multiple and

complex, but notably have to do with the lack of capacity and motivation within the SADC Secretariat to absorb the support.

62 The table below summarises the key conclusions from the ROM reports.

Summary conclusions from ROM reports 2017 and 2018	
2017	2018
No-cost extension of the TRF – assess MS progress after 6-8 months to decide if 1.5 year no-cost time extension suitable to complete activities.	No-cost extension of the TRF – updating MS plans with new timeframes for implementation with EUD no-cost approval.
Implementation support – arrangements to divest management responsibility from FSU to SADC (TRF Unit, SADC Senior Programme Officer and technical staff relevant to TRF thematic areas) and MS.	Implementation support – facilitating stronger management of TRF by SADC and MS rather than by FSU.
More efficient support to MS – on contracting queries, to reduce over-reliance on FSU and reduce preventable rejections based on ToR misunderstandings.	Utilisation of technical expertise – use technical assistance available under the FSU contract to build in-house capacity within SADC.
Exit strategies – future funding sources included in ToR and procurement plans, accounted in ToR assessments.	Exit strategies – incorporating aspects of financial and operational sustainability into activities.
Reporting contract closures – improving incorporation of contract closure complexities in work plans.	Monitoring system and reporting – improving progress reporting consistency, accuracy and reliability.
-	Role of private sector – increasing their involvement in activities.
Communication and visibility – maximising regional visibilities of programme and regional media at MS level.	Communication and visibility – improve scheduling and implementation of activities and exposure at regional level.
-	Continued support – to MS via a re-established SADC taking onus of TRF management from FSU.
-	Quality of outputs – plan systematic reviews of outputs to gather lessons learned.

63 Based on the review team’s interviews both with the PMUs and other stakeholders, the FSU has been very proactive in trying to support the MS to reach their deliverables. From the outset, technical support was offered to prepare the project documentation

and several country visits and trainings took place to ensure that problems were resolved and that all stakeholders were on board.

- 64 The FSU received strong support from the EUD Botswana to the extent that it went beyond normal practice in order to ensure financial top-up for MS, despite their reworked work plans not being signed-off by the SADC Secretariat. This was in part due to the SADC Secretariat having experienced a period of volatility and change with large number of new personnel taking over and several key posts remaining unfilled for long periods, given the large restructuring that took place.
- 65 The Steering Committee has had a passive oversight rather than an active leadership role as the FSU reports to the Steering Committee. While the meetings have been regular, they have mainly served the purpose of highlighting where potential problems are arising and helped inform the FSU on potential best ways forward.
- 66 The most recent Steering Committee meeting took place after the evaluators reported back to the MTR Reference Group in November 2019. It was evident that the urgency of ensuring the two-year extension is used in the best possible way to ensure completion has been noted, to the extent that there was a commitment to communicate with the relevant Ministers overseeing the TRF to underscore its urgency and importance.
- 67 The experience of working with the local EUDs in the MS varied across the countries visited. Although all Delegations have a role within the national TRF steering committees in principle, there are mixed levels of engagement in Tanzania and Mozambique; whilst there seem to be stronger relationships in Eswatini and Malawi. In Tanzania, for example, the new trade officer was scarcely aware of the existence of TRF and had not engaged with the Ministry. It is clear that a strong relationship is beneficial, as the local EUD can give support, put political pressure where necessary and ensure that local programmes complement the regional TRF support programme. Without this relationship, the various parties are operating in a vacuum, which can result in the duplication of efforts or in working towards contradicting goals.

Evidence: interviews with FSU, EUD Botswana and SADC Secretariat. Records of Steering Committee meetings. Email exchanges with FSU. Field phase probed MS on how they have perceived support from the FSU and SADC Secretariat as well as from the EUDs in the respective countries.

Q2.4 How far can the balance of responsibilities between the various stakeholders be deemed appropriate?

- 68 As a regional trade programme, the TRF does have a considerably large constituency of stakeholders at both national and regional levels. The portfolio analysis suggests that there are more than 50 implementing partners alone across the 12 MS. The functions of each of the partners at regional level have been clearly articulated. However, it would appear that the SADC Secretariat has been overly reliant on the

FSU to drive the programme. This is supported by the demand to extend the FSU support into the programme extension period rather than for the SADC Secretariat to take over management as originally planned. The FSU has devised a hand-over plan in this regard, based on the appointment and operationalisation of the Task Manager along with a functioning 'Core Team' to actively engage the Secretariat with the TRF.

69 At national level, the picture is more mixed. The analysis suggests that some countries have engaged with stakeholders successfully, delivering well performing projects; whilst others are progressing at a slower pace. It is, however, clear that there is also a mixed outcome in terms of the training received on using SADC rules and regulations. For many MS these rules seemed more onerous and very different to their national rules, whereas others commented on the fact that they found the SADC rules easier to follow than normal national rules. This also means that in the countries where SADC rules seemed onerous and foreign, the training received was critical but could be lost if those individuals are not kept within the PMU over the remaining two years of implementation and or are not (re)integrated into local ministries.

Evidence: interviews with FSU, EUD Botswana and SADC Secretariat. Field phase probed MS on how they have perceived support from the FSU and SADC Secretariat as well as from the EUDs in the respective countries. Organisational assessment of the FSU and SADC Secretariat.

2.3 Assessing Impact

Q3.1 Impact of policy at national level

70 The portfolio analysis shows that there has been significant uptake of support for national level policy support from the TRF. A review of the portfolio at project level, 54 activities (out of 191) contained elements of national policy creation or bolstering, across ten countries (with only Malawi and Mauritius not apparently containing National Policy support projects). These 31 activities totalled a valued at EUR 5,149,881 or 27% of the allocated project portfolio.

71 Out of the above, only 15 were marked as "On time / complete" in the internal management dashboards as of August 2019. These outputs totalled a value of EUR 694,040 and as such were significantly smaller than average activities. Out of the six country missions, four had completed policy projects: Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique and Tanzania.

Evidence: portfolio review. Interviews with FSU and SADC Secretariat. Field phase missions.

Q3.2 Impact of interventions on regional policy instruments

72 Interviews with the SADC Secretariat has shown that they find the project to be innovative in its implementation approach and that they would like to continue

supporting national implementation of regional commitments, which has always been the greatest stumbling block towards regional integration in the SADC region. However, the SADC Trade Protocol is but one key pillar of the integration agenda; and the SADC Secretariat would like to see the integration of the SADC Industry Protocol, as well as the SADC Trade in Service Protocol, be implemented as a cluster in future programmes. In this way they would be able to show MS convincingly that all three areas are necessary not only for SADC integration but more broadly for the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) as well as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). During the field phase most stakeholders interviewed applauded the approach of the TRF and once they participated in regional workshops started to see the bigger picture of how the intervention should be seen as a building block towards greater intra-regional trade. While there may be merits in combining the two other protocols under a TRF-like programme, given the lack of enduring commitment to the programme by MS and the SADC Secretariat, the EUD are unlikely to replicate a similar initiative.

Evidence: interviews with SADC Secretariat and FSU. Field Phase probed national governments on how they would perceive such a cluster approach.

Q3.3 Extent of collaboration of MS in areas of common interest

73 At the outset of the project, promotion of cross-border collaboration – including the pursuit of a coherent strategy for addressing bottlenecks for regional economic integration and the creation of regional centres of excellence – was weak. Due to time delays in concluding the initial phase of the programme, each MS was encouraged to pursue their own interest with little regard of how their approach fitted in with their neighbours, or how interventions could be scaled. However, more recently, through the regional consultative forum, the FSU have facilitated attempts to link the efforts of MS to one another and or to learn from how one country went about implementation to another. Learning exchanges have taken place.

74 In addition, some countries had proposed to work on e-certification for e-commerce; but it was soon decided that this should be uniform across the region, and work is progressing at the regional level in this regard.

Evidence: interviews with FSU, Reports from Regional Consultative Forum meetings and interviews during the field phase.

Q3.4 Extent of collaboration of member states towards enhancing the SADC EPA

75 One incidence where the TRF has been identified to have increased collaboration of SADC-EU EPA implementation, was a US\$79,000 grant made available within the TRF to fund an additional event at the EPA Joint Council Meeting in Cape Town, South Africa on 19 February 2019. This facilitated wider strategic discussions around EPAs and implementation. Attendees included representatives from Eswatini, Namibia,

Mozambique, South Africa and Lesotho. As a result of the session, the Joint Council adopted the institutional framework of the EPA containing:

1. The rules of procedure for the Joint Council
2. The rules of procedure for the Trade and Development Committee
3. The rules of procedure for the Dispute Settlement and Dispute Avoidance and the Code of Conduct of Arbitrators and Mediators.

Evidence: FSU interviews, document review.

2.4 Assessing Sustainability (the likely continuation of achieved results)

Q4.1 Evaluating the ownership of objectives and achievements

76 The issue of ownership should be addressed at two levels: regionally by the SADC Secretariat as the implementing partner, and nationally by the PMUs and their host ministries. As evidenced above, including in the organisational review, the ownership of the SADC Secretariat for the TRF has been weak. It has let the FSU take the role for driving and defining the programme. While issues with implementation have been acknowledged widely within the Secretariat, very limited remedial actions appear to have taken place. This is not likely to be due to the lack of consultation, as the FSU and EUD have had sustained and near daily contact both formally and informally with the Secretariat through the lifecycle of the programme.

77 At the Member State-level, due to the delays in launching the grant programme, the design and approval process for grants was rushed. This led there to being limited time for consultations with MS stakeholders during the design phase of the national TRF projects. In populating the PMUs, Member States had the option of using in-house officers or recruiting external advisors. Based on in-person and remote interviews of all the 12 PMUs during the field phase, it was clear that the choice between the two options represented a series of trade-offs in terms of implementation efficiency and sustainability. While dedicated, external staff recruited to singularly deliver the PMU were able to advance the activities quickly as they did not have to manage a multitude of other activities that seconded officials would often be forced to accommodate. At the same time, where the experts were entirely external, once their contract was finished and they were disbanded, the management capacity of the PMU plummeted.

78 For example, in one country the PMU has had to effectively close down at the end of September 2019 for budgetary purposes. Once the external advisors have left, the ministry considers the implementation support for TRF to have been exhausted and is indicating no sign to facilitate the implementation of TRF activities. Little to nothing has been achieved since the PMU was closed down. No additional effort is forthcoming from the ministerial finance and procurement officers to enhance TRF implementation. Whereas a key conclusion from this review is that the PMUs should be revived in order to ensure that all activities stand a chance of being completed, more should also be done to ensure that the MS recognise that the TRF is only there

to assist governments with the work plan they should already be implementing towards nationalising the STP and implementing the SADC EPA.

- 79 In other countries, like Namibia, the PMU formed an integral part of the Trade Ministry and there seems to be far greater ownership over the TRF activities and its successes. Inter-ministerial collaboration has been a challenge in a number of countries where an activity needs the participation of several ministries, like the promotion of food safety, or agriculture and health activities. Such activities are currently seen as additional work for non-trade ministry officials, when in reality ministries of trade must address these collaboratively with the other relevant ministries as partners.
- 80 In some cases it was impossible for the evaluators to ascertain whether equipment bought – especially under SPS activities for local laboratories – would be used in a sustainable manner for years to come. In Tanzania, the Bureau of Standards has a separate team that is able to maintain, and service procured equipment; whereas the equipment for the Ministry of Agriculture was sitting in cardboard boxes as the laboratory was yet to be connected to electricity or water. In other countries, no evidence was presented that maintenance and the procurement of consumables for this equipment formed part of the planning process, and it was highly unclear whether all MS had the necessary trained staff to operate and make proper use of the equipment. In Lesotho, the PMU employed two technicians to make use of equipment procured, but with the closure of the PMU they were not absorbed into the Ministry, meaning that their expertise will be lost in the short-term if the PMU's role is not extended and in the long-term unless ownership and skills transfer can be ensured by designing it into the final phase of the extended project. The final TRF evaluation will have to make an assessment on how this risk has been mitigated during the ultimate two years of the programme.

Evidence: Interviews with FSU, Annual reports, programme documentation, country missions.

Q4.2 policy support and the responsibility of the beneficiary institutions

- 81 The SADC MS that are implementing the TRF have all signed and ratified the SADC Trade Protocol and some are signatories to the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement. These agreements and protocols form part of their national trade policy objectives. However, the countries have struggled with nationalising the Protocol and the EPA. This is the key reason why TRF is deemed so relevant.
- 82 As already reported there seems to be low ownership over the TRF across many MS and even at the SADC Secretariat level. The Deputy-Executive Secretary for Regional Integration (DES-RI) has emphasised that this is a key starting point to ensure success of the TRF and that following the closing of the TRF that MS continue to implement projects that build on TRF activities and ultimately aim for greater intra- and inter-regional trade. He stressed that the TRF should be seen to complement national work plans and not be seen as a stand-alone external project with no relevant linkages

to government activities. It is important that this message is communicated to Ministers and Permanent Secretaries as clearly and as often as possible, which will boost the sustainability of TRF outcomes.

- 83 Crucially, this same message of urgency will need to be communicated and well understood by those responsible for the implementation of the TRF within the SADC Secretariat. Ultimately, DES-RI and other representatives of the Secretariat's senior management will be the ones held accountable if the programme fails to accelerate progress in the extension period.

Evidence: Interviews with DES-RI, FSU and EUD, programme documentation, country missions.

Q4.3 Evaluating institutional capacity

- 84 Plans to embed the TRF activities and continuation of those in the SADC Secretariat's Industrial Development and Trade (IDT) unit have been set. At least a six-month transition period is foreseen during which the FSU Director will hand over to the yet-to-be appointed TRF Task Manager. In addition, the FSU Trade Specialist will work closely with the IDT Directorate until the closure of the implementation phase of the facility in order to give technical assistance and to ensure that ownership will continue to reside with the SADC Secretariat.

- 85 The senior management of the Secretariat has expressed its desire to continue the way in which the TRF was implemented in future programmes. However, the experiences under the TRF programme to-date do not build confidence about the joint ability of the SADC Secretariat and MS together to manage a complex technical assistance programme.

- 86 Ownership over the TRF and its activities vary broadly across and within the MS. Some PMUs have been able to integrate at least some of the TRF activities as core parts of their respective counterpart ministries, departments and agencies; whereas others are not giving the TRF much attention. Even in countries where the TRF seems embedded in the Ministry of Trade the PMUs are struggling to get all the implementing partners on board. It is difficult to diagnose a singular reason for this, although it would appear this has often to do with either diverging organisational imperatives, access to external resources and competencies in implementing technical assistance projects.

Evidence: Interviews with FSU, SADC Secretariat, FSU hand-over plan, programme documentation, organisational review.

Q4.4 How adequate was the project budget for its purpose particularly phasing out prospects

- 87 The overall programme budget is EUR 32 million, making TRF the largest programme managed directly by the SADC Secretariat. Based on a SADC expenditure verification

report from October 2019, the actual expenditure of the EUR 22.8 million allocation was just over EUR 6.2 million up to 31 March 2019 with verified eligible expenditure at EUR 4.8 million. While we appreciate that the pace of disbursements has increased and is expected to increase further, this highlights a key concern for the delivery of the programme. Given the achieved disbursement rates to-date, it is notable that the SADC Secretariat has only been able to facilitate and manage the delivery of a fraction of the available funds. Accordingly, it would seem that the amount of funds was sufficient at the programmatic level.

- 88 At MS-level, the situation is more varied. The block allocations of up to EUR 1.4 million per country per window have been utilised at a differing level, with some countries having barely spent 20% of the available funding envelope by September 2019, whereas others had spent over 70%, although questions about the level of ineligible expenses especially for the faster spending countries persist. Five out of the 12 MS benefitted from support under two windows and had a budget of EUR 2.6m or above and a comparison of the average expenditure of these five MS to the other seven countries that were given only EUR 1.4m to manage does not suggest that there is a significant difference in level of disbursement (38% vs 40% of available funds). Accordingly, one may conclude that MS have been able to spend a certain proportion of funds, on average, that was made available for them.
- 89 The low level of average expenditure across the 12 MS does, however, raise a question of how *well* the money has been spent. The block grants committed the funds for each MS at an early stage and to date there is very limited evidence of PMUs reallocating funds within their budgets from non-successful activities to more successful ones. This will become a key issue in the final phase of the programme, especially in countries such as Botswana where some activities require the passing of legislation before they can commence and are unlikely to take place within the timeframes available for the extension. At the same time, there have been constraints for individual budget lines, for example related to the funding of the PMUs, which were limited within the 15% of overall country budget maximum for administrative expenses.
- 90 At programme level, given the level of existing funds unutilised, it is unlikely that additional funds beyond the EUR 32m would have produced significant additional results. More flexible management across and within MS budgets would have, however, added considerable value to the use of the existing budget, although this would require a notable performance uplift from the SADC Secretariat, who were reported to take several months to approve a simple budget modification. One commendable initiative suggested by the FSU to expend some of the unutilised balances is a Contingency Fund that would allow the MS to apply for thematic projects to be implemented during the extension period.

Evidence: TRF financial and administrative documents, organisational review, VFM analysis, Country case studies, additional FSU and SADC Secretariat interviews.

2.5 Value of EC contribution

Q5.1 Extent to which the project/programme is complementary to the intervention of EU MS in the region

- 91 The European Union Delegation in Botswana has traditionally taken the lead within the EU system on supporting SADC's regional integration agenda. The EUDs in the SADC MS were mandated to advance the socio-economic development of the countries based on individual national programmes. Seeing as trade and exports are empirically linked to economic development there is a strong link between the mandates of the EUDs, although it should be noted that trade is not a defined priority for all EUDs in the region. As pointed out above, there are vast differences between how the TRF PMUs engaged with the local EUDs. Where the relationship is strong, like in Eswatini, there is a definite benefit in terms of easing out stumbling blocks and encouraging engagement across sectors. Where the relationship is weak, as in Mozambique, the local EUD staff expressed their concern at the real risk that a local EUD EPA support programme could duplicate or work at cross-purposes to what the TRF is doing.
- 92 As regular soft encouragement to PMUs by the FSU and the regional EUD in Botswana to keep their national EUD updated on the implementation of the TRF has not been sufficient in achieving this coordination, more stringent measures should be considered for future programmes. This may include noting a formal (observation) role for the national EUD within the financing agreement between the SADC Secretariat and the MS.

Evidence: interviews with EUD Botswana and country mission interviews with EUDs.

Q5.2 Extent to which the project/programme (its objectives, targeted beneficiaries, timing, etc.) is complementary to the SADC regional economic integration agenda

- 93 As has been pointed out several times, the TRF is highly relevant and complementary to the SADC regional economic integration agenda. For years the integration agenda has been stalled by the lack of nationalisation of regional decisions, protocols and agreements. Targeting the SADC MS for support gives them the potential capacity to specifically target the implementation of the STP and the EPA. The TRF highlights the possibility of making regional integration a reality on the ground. However, if the programme allows for such broad selection criteria for project definition, it is inevitable that some countries will take the approach that, for example, Malawi decided upon. Their choice of implementing the industrialisation pillar is perfectly valid but may not fully capture the unique value that TRF could bring in the facilitation of cross-border interactions. Accordingly, any project selection criteria applied in a similar regional project may want to encourage more explicitly the application for projects that can benefit from simultaneous operations on both sides of the border.

94 At the same time, the field phase has shown that whereas the TRF activities were designed with advancing national interests in mind, some activities – such as the trade facilitation projects in Zambia – actually contribute to easing intra-regional trade. However, there was no evidence that these activities were starting to create the necessary linkages between the EPA countries to take advantage of the agreement.

Evidence: SADC Secretariat and FSU interviews, country case studies, additional FSU and SADC Secretariat interviews.

Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

95 The SADC TRF is an important project for SADC – both in scope and in relevance to regional integration. Domestication of the SADC Trade Protocol and the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement has long been a stumbling block throughout the region and the TRF is assisting SADC member states in this endeavour. Trade facilitation is an ongoing project for any country aiming at greater participation in regional and global trade. The TRF was a good starting point for many MS, but emphasis needs to be placed on the learning that trade facilitation requires national resources and commitment as part of national agendas; and that a programme like the TRF at best can only kick-start certain efforts or stop gaps in others.

96 In many MS this key lesson or understanding does not as yet exist, as is evidenced by the lack of ability or commitment to integrate the TRF Project Management Units (PMUs) fully into national ministries, the design of national workplans not sufficiently incorporating respective countries' trade facilitation needs which perpetuates the reliance on donors to push this agenda and on consultants to develop activities. Ideally, national governments should already planning for next phases of a domestic trade facilitation agenda, but little evidence of this was found in most MS.

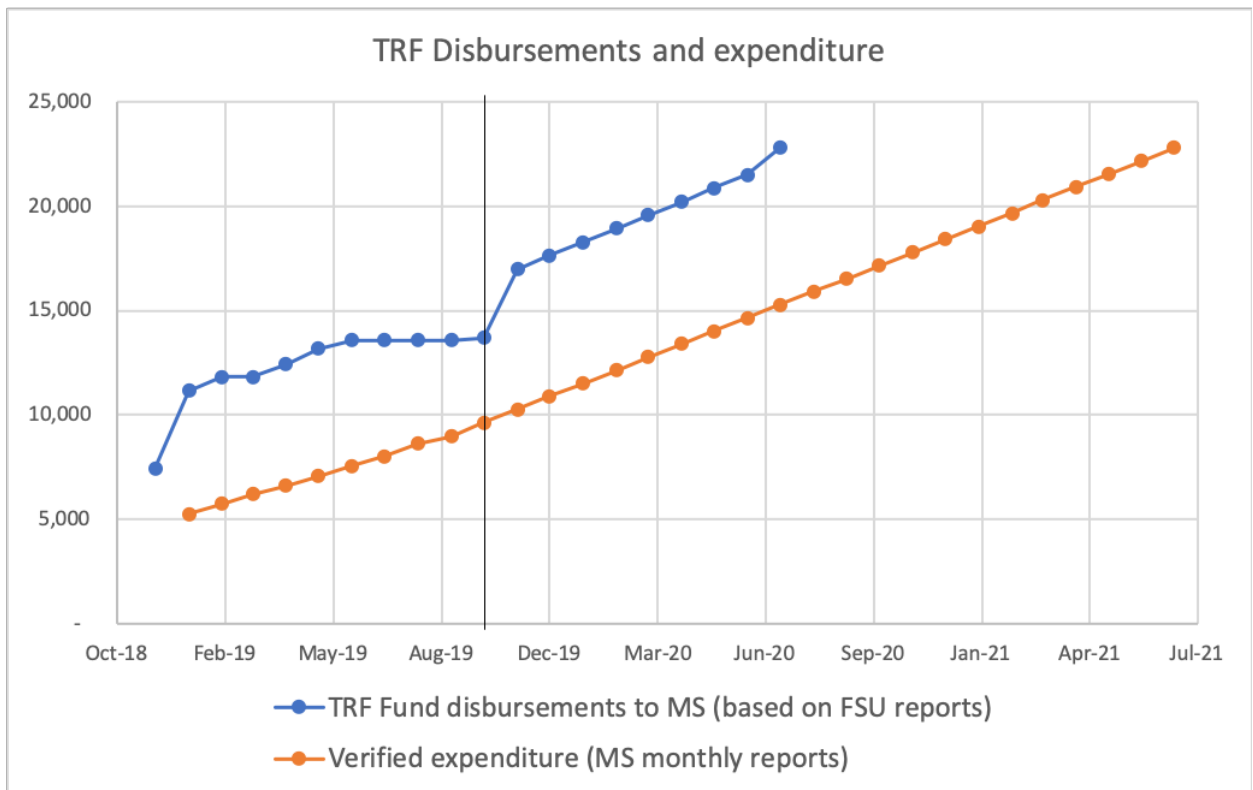
97 The SADC TRF, as a donor programme, aims to plug holes where national government development workplans are stalling due to the lack of resources or expertise. As such it is critical that the member states take full ownership over the activities of the TRF and see them as part of their domestic workplan and not as a stand-alone project with little relevance to national and regional objectives. But in the same vein, the SADC Secretariat should take full ownership over the overall TRF and provide the necessary eagle eye or insight as to how national progress on trade facilitation builds towards the regional objective of greater integration and an increase in trade amongst MS and with the rest of the world.

98 However, ownership and technical leadership have been weak from the SADC Secretariat. Most of the endless delays experienced with TRF activities were due to delays at the Secretariat; may that be due to restructuring, short staffing or no

understanding of the critical importance of the TRF to the overall work of SADC and its member states. To date the Human Resources and Financial Departments are not giving the TRF due recognition and priority and the technical leads remain short-staffed with no permanent TRF Task Manager being yet appointed.

99 Whereas many of the completed activities under the TRF have been of great benefit to MS, the TRF has only been able to leverage its regional nature to a limited degree. In other words, only a few of the projects (e.g. the e-commerce activities) are delivered in synchronicity across MS. While regional activities have been identified as useful, there is limited evidence of SADC Secretariat leading on best practice, managing the stumbling blocks encountered or leading on finding solutions. Only a few regional workshops have been arranged despite an overwhelming positive response to those held.

100 Communication and visibility have been weak across MS and at the SADC Secretariat level leading to low ownership at government level and weak participation by stakeholders. Ultimately, the region’s private sector will be the beneficiaries of the trade facilitation activities as they are better able to compete in the regional and globally, but most MS are mostly implementing their activities without much input from their private sectors. In some countries the private sector sits on the Steering Committee, but it seems that their input is weak and these committees do not sit regularly.



101 Most MS are far behind on their spending, considering that the MTE falls at the start of the last 18 months of implementation. All MS will have to ramp up spending significantly in order to achieve a high implementation percentage by March 2021. All countries have experienced delays with recruiting consultants for specific technical activities and have under-estimated the costs of such consultants. This means that ToR have had to be re-tendered and activities combined or abandoned in order to increase amounts available to attract the best consultants. However, there are MS that expect to ramp up spending within the immediate-term as consultants are paid for work completed and verification workshops are held early in 2020.

102 As illustrated in the diagram overleaf, in order for a successful completion of the TRF programme, spending will have to continue to speed up over the remaining 16 months of the no-cost extension period. Given the low spending levels up to September 2019, it is clear that the FSU, SADC Secretariat and MS will have to invest in having dedicated staff that can comply with SADC rules and regulations in order to allow for disbursements and procurement as well as financial reporting.

3.1.1 Efficiency

103 As one would reasonably expect from a decentralised regional programme spanning 12 countries, the experience of the efficiency of the implementation of the TRF programme is extremely varied. At the central level, the FSU has played a crucial role in ensuring the day-to-day management of the programme. The intention was to gradually hand over the management of the programme from the FSU to the SADC Secretariat, which hasn't taken place as the Secretariat has struggled to secure the capacity to manage the key functions of the programme, including core management, procurement and finance. A prerequisite for the programme to be able to achieve its intended objectives in the course of the no-cost extension period, is for the central management of the TRF to be considerably improved.

104 In the Member States, the PMUs have played a crucial role in the design and procurement of projects and monitoring of implementation. Member States have opted for different constellations of PMUs, some being formed exclusively of Ministry staff assigned to the PMU, while others were primarily filled with external consultants. While there is some evidence to suggest that in the countries where the PMUs have been external, the projects have been more efficiently managed. This has come with a trade-off in sustainability in circumstances where the PMU has been disbanded due to the lack of funds.

105 A comparison of the ratio of the programme's fixed expenditure (i.e. central management and administrative costs) as a ratio of the total expenditure by October 2019 suggests that the programme was significantly underperforming compared to the original plan. The no-cost extension does, however, provide the SADC Secretariat the opportunity to improve the cost-efficiency of the programme to almost the originally planned levels.

3.1.2 Effectiveness and impact

106 The TRF has struggled to produce output level results to date, with less than 50% of the funds expended and even less fully accounted for by the original end date of the programme. Given that context, very limited systemic attainment of outcome-level results further along the results chain could be identified by the review team. The country missions captured anecdotal evidence of individual projects having achieved beneficial outcomes, which supports the hypothesis that the way the programme has been managed can work. However, there were also instances to show the contrary, for example where testing equipment that was procured under the project had not been put into use because the furnishing of the laboratory had not been completed. This highlights that while in certain circumstances projects can succeed, it is by no means certain and careful management will be needed all the way from the SADC Secretariat, the FSU, to national PMUs and the implementing partners.

107 This is made all-the-more challenging by the fact that the programme was delayed from very early on, which forces the parties implementing the projects focus on the delivery of activities and outputs; whereas the real focus for this type of programme delivery should always be on the outcomes and impacts. A good illustration is provided by a review of the monthly MS reporting – this is primarily focused on the completion of activities and outputs. This is understandable given the context and experience of the programme, but this highlights the challenge that the programme is facing in the extra time provided by the no-cost extension: in order to ensure that the money is not just being used, but that it is being used well, the programme management (at all levels) will have to simultaneously manage the delivery of a high volume of outputs, but also keep a focus on delivering (and being able to capture the attainment of) higher level results. In very practical terms, this is likely to require the addition of results trackers managed centrally by the FSU/SADC Secretariat and populated by the PMUs, again highlighting the importance of ensuring that these stay in place.

3.1.3 Sustainability

108 Based on the review team's experience during the country missions, the sustainability of the project's activities is extremely varied across, and even within, countries. In some cases, the activities were fully embedded into the strategic plans of partner organisations and it was clear that the project had been identified as a mechanism to address specific issues that were of concern to the stakeholders. A positive example was from Malawi, where TRF support had helped set up a new private sector organisation for the producers and processors of oil seeds, which has now started to advocate for relevant policy changes on behalf of its membership. In other instances, planning beyond the programme period has been insufficient and has led, for example, to a situation in one of the MS where a laboratory that had been equipped by the TRF programme, was not in use at all due to the lab technicians' salaries being contingent on ringfenced project-funding. Once their TRF-funded contracts finished, their formal mandate finished with it. Planning how programme

results can be better embedded into organisations for lasting benefits is an area that can be assessed at length in future support programmes with the SADC Secretariat and other partners.

109 In addition to the allocation of budget for the technical assistance and capacity building activities of the MS, a lot of resources have been used to develop and capacitate the PMUs within the Ministries of Trade. While the PMUs have played an important role in the implementation of the programme and it would be extremely unlikely that the programme was even able to deliver the remaining outputs if the PMUs are disbanded, there is scant evidence that the effort has increased the capacity of the ministries to manage projects. In many countries TRF was the first technical assistance programme of this type that respective Ministries of Trade had managed, and it is unlikely that they will be required to do this again any time soon. As a result of this, it would appear that many MS have had to go through quite a hard learning curve to be able to manage these projects (including using SADC rules, procurement in niche areas, etc) only to have to disband these capacities as the programme comes to a close. Thus, in hindsight, the decision to base the implementing model of the programme on national PMUs should be reconsidered.

3.2 Recommendations

110 Based on the analysis conducted above, the review team has presented a number of recommendations to improve the implementation of the TRF programme during the no-cost extension period until September 2021:

111 **Recommendation 1:** Given the persistent challenges in the culture and capacity of IDT to drive the programme, the TRF Steering Committee should ensure that i) the SADC Secretariat senior leadership makes available sufficient resources to all internal departments – technical, procurement and financial – to prioritise the delivery of TRF in the remaining months of implementation and that ii) the senior leadership of the Secretariat is held accountable for the results.

112 **Recommendation 2:** Each MS should do a thorough self-assessment of its remaining activities under the TRF and articulate how best to utilise unspent funds to ensure that their PMUs are able to support the delivery of the remaining programme. In some cases, there will be a need for the Steering Committee to lift the 15% cap on administrative spend to allow the extension on PMU activities and staff. In most cases the PMUs should be allowed to extend contracts of key staff, even though this could also be a reduced size team in countries that are close to completion. Ideally, however, the relevant implementing ministries should take full ownership over the PMU's and second staff that can and will prioritise TRF activities in all areas, including financing, procurement and content expertise.

113 **Recommendation 3:** Urgent attention needs to be paid by the SADC Secretariat and Member States to resolve the unverified spends in all countries in order to allow

for the next tranche of disbursements in early 2020. Some MS are still facing significant amounts of ineligible expenses and, unless remedied, these will stop the payment of the final tranche payment and significantly jeopardise the ability to deliver all planned activities.

- 114 **Recommendation 4:** The SADC Secretariat needs to show strong political leadership by mandating its finance and procurement departments to work closely with the content leads in IDT on all activities still remaining. Any further delays in financing and procurement is likely to result in MS being unable to complete their activities, resulting in the need to return funds to the donor. Similarly, at MS level, the senior management at the host ministries needs to show leadership and hold the PMUs and delivery teams to account. The programme has faced unnecessary delays at various levels, and this cannot continue if the targeted results are to be achieved. The timelines for obtaining approvals, additional information, etc must stop being measured in weeks and months, and start to be counted in hours and days.
- 115 **Recommendation 5:** Given that many MS still have a large volume of procurements in the pipeline, and this is one of the key areas that has been a bottleneck in the management of the programme, the FSU should be allowed to re-engage a procurement advisor to advice countries in managing the procurement processes.
- 116 *Beyond the extension of the current phase of the TRF programme, the MTR can make the following recommendations as part of future considerations for trade-related technical assistance in the SADC region:*
- 117 **Recommendation 6:** Regional technical assistance supporting regional economic integration can add considerable value beyond the EU's existing national support programmes. However, to maximise the utility of these limited special purpose funds, introducing tighter conditionality for MS to access funds (e.g. related to cross-border activities and achievement of regional integration objectives such as the Protocol on Trade in Services and the Industrial Protocol) should be explored.
- 118 **Recommendation 7:** The MTR validates the general approach of the TRF programme for delivering technical assistance to support the national implementation of regional commitments. The capacity of the SADC Secretariat to act as an effective implementing agent for the programme has been questionable, even with the support of the FSU, and alternative implementing arrangements for any similar future programmes should be explored as part of any scoping and design exercise. An important consideration will be the performance of the SADC Secretariat in the revised pillar assessment exercise, and the EUD should ensure that the team undertaking the next pillar assessment is aware of the challenges faced during the implementation of the TRF.
- 119 **Recommendation 8:** The national PMUs have played an important role in the implementation of TRF and acted as important focal points in the Member States. The

decentralised management approach has, however, ended up developing time-limited capacity on issues such as the implementation of SADC rules, procurement and project management that is unlikely to be needed in many of these organisations outside the implementation of the TRF. Unless a case for more systemic use beyond the delivery of a single programme can be made, centralising more of the core functions (e.g. procurement and finance) may provide a more efficient solution.

Annex I – Terms of Reference

SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

Second Mid-Term Review for the Trade Related Facility

FWC SIEA 2018 - LOT 2 – Infrastructure, sustainable growth and jobs
EuropeAid/138778/DH/SER/multi

FED/2019/407563

Contracting Authority: EU Delegation to Botswana and SADC

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Relevant country / region / sector background

These Terms of Reference concern a Mid Term Evaluation of the SADC Trade Related Facility (TRF) programme – to be contracted through EU Framework contract.

Within the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) of the 10th EDF, 2 focal areas were identified for cooperation within the SADC region: (1) Regional Economic Integration and (2) Regional Political Cooperation. The general objective of the 1st focal area is to provide broad-based support to deepen SADC economic integration and trade policies, including investment promotion, regional infrastructure and food security.

The TRF Contribution Agreement (value of €31.6m) was signed on 28th July 2014 and formal implementation started on 01st October 2014; however, actual implementation of activities under the Contribution Agreement began with the arrival of the technical assistance team on 05th January 2015 and will continue until 30th September 2019. While Financing Agreements were signed by 27 July 2017, project implementation in most beneficiary countries only commenced after receipt of the 30% advance payment, which in some cases was used to mobilise implementation arrangements such as recruitment of Project Management Units (PMUs) staff. Indicative nominal allocations (INA) were outlined in the Contribution Agreement, with scope for reallocation based on Member State performance and the recommendations of the two mid-term reviews planned under the TRF, while there was also the possibility of reallocation between the STP and EPA windows, if required.

The TRF Programme intends to focus on the implementation of regional programmes and EPA related commitments at the national level. As such, TRF is a Member States driven and focused programme, where a critical role is foreseen for the SADC structures at the national level, such as the SADC National Committees and Focal Points. TRF aims to boost intra-regional and inter-regional trade through stronger implementation and domestication of the SADC Trade Protocol (STP). Simultaneously, the TRF wants to provide opportunities to the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) countries to take full advantage of this trade agreement and will thus provide support to address EPA related challenges and support its implementation. As such, the main beneficiaries of TRF are the Directorate for Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (TIFI) and the SADC Member States.

The TRF programme is one of a complementary package of programmes supporting the regional economic integration agenda. The other programmes in the package are the Project Preparation Development Facility (PPDF) and the Regional Economic Integration Support (REIS) programme. The PPDF is funding the preparation of financing proposals for sizeable economic infrastructure investment projects within the SADC region. Thus, the PPDF aims to address the infrastructure aspect of the constraints to higher levels of economic growth and deeper regional integration. The REIS has a regional focus and looks to enhance institutional capacities in the SADC Secretariat in trade and investment related areas through addressing implementation and domestication of the SADC Trade Protocol and the SADC Finance and Investment Protocol; REIS is also providing support to the negotiations and implementation of the SADC-EU EPA.

Under the 11th EDF this programme will be complementary to the programme in support of the Investment and Business Environment (SIBE) and the EU-SADC Trade Facilitation Programme as well as the Support to the Industrialisation and the Productive sectors (SIPS). The ongoing Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme addresses transport related Non-Tariff Barriers that hamper intra-regional trade across the Tripartite region.

1.2 The Action to be evaluated

Title of the Action to be evaluated	Support to the SADC Trade Related Facility
Budget of the Action to be evaluated	EUR 31,600,000
CRIS number of the Action to be evaluated	FED/2014/346-288
Dates of the Action to be evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start: 28/07/2014• End: 30/09/2021

The TRF programme has the following objectives, results and key activities:

The **Overall Objective of the Programme** is to improve the participation of SADC Member States in regional and international trade in order to contribute to sustainable development in the SADC region.

The **Specific Objective of the Programme** is to enhance the implementation of the STP and the SADC EPA to increase intra-regional and inter-regional trade flows of the concerned SADC Member States.

The Contribution Agreement introduces **2 Key Result Areas** (KRAs) for the TRF programme:

- **Key Result Area 1:** STP window – higher level of compliance and implementation of the STP's commitments by the SADC Member States is achieved;
- **Key Result Area 2:** EPA window – SADC EPA Member States are better prepared to effectively implement and monitor the EPA and benefit from it, particularly in terms of improved market access.

The **activities** (in brief) under each KRA as envisaged in the Contribution Agreement are described as follows:

KRA 1: STP window – higher level of compliance and implementation of the STP's commitments by the SADC Member States is achieved.

This window will focus on removal of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) for all goods (including agricultural) and services, including: (1) enhanced customs cooperation; (2) TBT/SPS; (3) Rules of Origin; (4) Trade Facilitation; (5) Industrial Development; (6) Trade Promotion and Development; and (7) Trade in Services.

KRA 2: EPA window – SADC EPA Member States are better prepared to effectively implement and monitor the EPA and benefit from it, particularly in terms of improved market access.

This window may support activities similar to those carried out under the STP window, such as NTBs, Rules of Origin, Trade Facilitation, SPS/TBT and Trade in Services. But it will also support additional (and exclusive) activities, including: (1) Trade Defence Instruments; (2) Tariffs; (3) Trade Related Adjustment; and (4) Competition Policy.

TRF has two main components of support: financial support to SADC Member States and technical assistance. The financial support (EUR 20 million) intends to fund directly programmes and projects at the national level in the eligible Member States with the objective to strengthen implementation of regional trade commitments by those countries.

A Call of Applications was issued and countries submitted project proposals. This resulted in 12 contracts with 12 SADC member states being signed, most of them in July 2017. All Member States opted to adopt a project-based approach for implementation (though 6 could qualify for Budget Support), which has resulted in all Member States implementing projects in accordance with relevant SADC financial and procurement rules and procedures. This development contributed to unforeseen delays in project roll-

out and implementation arising from many Member States not having the capacity to implement projects using SADC financial/procurement rules and procedures. However, with targeted capacity-development and training provided under TRF, this aspect was rectified.

The technical assistance (TA) part of TRF has been providing a team of three long-term Key Experts (KEs) – a dedicated Team Leader, as well as a key expert on the SADC Trade Protocol and a key expert on the Economic Partnership Agreement – supporting the IDT Department within the SADC Secretariat as well as the SADC Member States to implement fully and benefit from the TRF. After a restructuring of the FSU to better focus on project management, the FSU TA team has been reduced to two Experts i.e. one team leader and one technical expert, with support from a project administrator. The experts are housed within the Facility Support Unit (FSU), an external PMU contracted through the SADC Secretariat on the basis of a service contract, implemented by GFA Consulting.

1.3 Stakeholders of the Action

The SADC Secretariat and MS as implementing bodies will be the main stakeholders and the direct beneficiaries of the TRF. Several national institutions and organisations, notably the ministries in charge of trade, industry, agriculture, the SADC national contact points, relevant inter-ministerial committees on TBT, SPS, etc. have an important role in the implementation of activities which they are expected to benefit from in terms of capacity strengthening.

1.4 Other available information

- Contribution Agreement FED/2014/346/288 “support the SADC TRF” and Annexes;
- Interim reports;
- First MTR done in 2016: Annex VII contains a summary of the conclusions of the first MTR and follow-up action;
- ROM December 2017;
- ROM December 2018.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT

Type of evaluation	Mid-term
Coverage	The Action in its entirety
Geographic scope	SADC and its member states
Period to be evaluated	from 01/January/2017 to date

This will be a second MTR of the programme, further to the agreed 2 year no cost extension of its operational duration up to 30 September 2021.

The second MTR will therefore evaluate the period not evaluated by the first MTR (roughly since January 2017). The second MTR will therefore *focus* on progress to date and, by explaining **why** progress is happening or is not happening as planned, provide recommendations on how to improve the Action during its residual duration in order to achieve the expected objectives, taking into account problems and opportunities. The evaluation should also review the Logframe and update and re-purpose it, if necessary, to ensure it is fit-for-purpose in the no-cost extension period.

The MTR will also provide recommendations on how to best link and synergise with forthcoming 11th EDF funded programmes and on lessons learnt regarding the implementation modality and conclusions for the next programming period.

2.1 Objectives of the evaluation

Systematic and timely evaluation of its programmes and activities is an established priority¹ of the European Commission². The focus of evaluations is on the assessment of achievements, the **quality** and the **results**³ of Actions in the context of an evolving cooperation policy with an increasing emphasis on **result-oriented approaches and the contribution towards the implementation of the SDGs**.⁴

From this perspective, evaluations should **look for evidence of why, whether or how these results are linked to the EU intervention** and seek to **identify the factors driving or hindering progress**.

Evaluations should provide an understanding of the **cause and effect links** between: inputs and activities, and outputs, outcomes and impacts. Evaluations should serve accountability, decision making, learning and management purposes.

The main objectives of this evaluation are to provide the relevant services of the European Union, the interested stakeholders and the SADC Secretariat and SADC Member States with:

- an overall independent assessment of the past performance of the Trade Related Facility, paying particular attention to its intermediate results measured against its expected objectives; and the reasons underpinning such results;
- identification of any likely gaps or unintended consequences arising from the delays and challenges encountered and/or the key issues to be addressed under the no-cost extension period;
- key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve current and future Actions;
- identification of any outstanding or unfinished aspects that may need to be addressed under any future programme and/or by other programmes/projects underway or planned.

In particular, this evaluation will serve to understand the performance of the Action, its enabling factors and those hampering a proper delivery of results as to inform the planning of the future EU interventions and Actions in the same sector.

The main users of this evaluation will be the Delegation of the European Union to Botswana and SADC, the SADC Secretariat and SADC Member States.

¹ COM(2013) 686 final "Strengthening the foundations of Smart Regulation – improving evaluation" - http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/docs/com_2013_686_en.pdf; EU Financial regulation (art 27); Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006; Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006; Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006; Regulation (EC) No 1717/2006; Council Regulation (EC) No 215/2008

² SEC (2007)213 "Responding to Strategic Needs: Reinforcing the use of evaluation", http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/docs/eval_comm_sec_2007_213_en.pdf; SWD (2015)111 "Better Regulation Guidelines", http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/swd_br_guidelines_en.pdf; COM(2017) 651 final 'Completing the Better Regulation Agenda: Better solutions for better results', https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/completing-the-better-regulation-agenda-better-solutions-for-better-results_en.pdf

³ Reference is made to the entire results chain, covering outputs, outcomes and impacts. Cfr. Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 "Laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action" - https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/ipa/2014/236-2014_cir.pdf.

⁴ The New European Consensus on Development 'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future', Official Journal 30th of June 2017. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2017:210:TOC>

2.2 Requested services

2.2.1 Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will assess the Action using four of the five standard DAC evaluation criteria, namely: effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and perspectives of impact. The criteria on relevance has been sufficiently analysed in the previous MTR as well as in ROM reports and does not require an update.

In particular this evaluation will assess the following:

- The materialisation of the expected results (or perhaps only some of them) and their facilitating and contrasting factors;
- The performance of the management at both regional (SADC Secretariat) and national levels (relevant Ministry and PMUs) and its capacity to adapt to changing conditions;
- The governing mechanisms of the Action.

In addition, the evaluation will assess two EU specific evaluation criteria:

- the EU added value (the extent to which the Action brings additional benefits to what would have resulted from Member States' interventions only);
- the coherence of the Action itself, with the EU strategy in in the SADC region and with other EU policies and Member State Actions.

The evaluation team shall furthermore consider whether gender, environment and climate change were mainstreamed; the relevant SDGs and their interlinkages were identified; the principle of Leave No-One Behind and the rights-based approach methodology was followed in the identification/formulation documents and the extent to which they have been reflected in the implementation of the Action, its governance and monitoring.

2.2.2 Indicative Evaluation Questions

The specific Evaluation Questions as formulated below are indicative. Based on the latter and following initial consultations and document analysis, the evaluation team will discuss them with the Evaluation Manager⁵ and propose in their Inception Report a complete and finalised set of Evaluation Questions with indication of specific Judgement Criteria and Indicators, as well as the relevant data collection sources and tools.

Once agreed through the approval of the Inception Report, the Evaluation Questions will become contractually binding.

2.2.2.1 Achievement of purpose (Effectiveness)

The effectiveness criterion, concerns how far the project's results were attained, and the project's specific objective(s) achieved, or are expected to be achieved.

The analysis of Effectiveness will therefore focus on such issues as:

- whether the planned benefits have been delivered and received, as perceived by all key stakeholders;
- whether intended beneficiaries participated in the intervention;

⁵ The Evaluation Manager is the staff of the Contracting Authority managing the evaluation contract. In most cases this person will be the Operational manager of the Action(s) under evaluation.

- How flexibly management has adapted to ensure that the results would still achieve the purpose; and how well has it been supported in this by key stakeholders including the SADC Secretariat, the EU Delegation and the Steering Committee;
- Whether the balance of responsibilities between the various stakeholders was appropriate.

2.2.2.2 Sound management and value for money (Efficiency)

The efficiency criterion concerns how well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results (sometimes referred to as outputs), in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Comparison should be made against what was planned at both regional and national levels.

The assessment of Efficiency will therefore focus on such issues as:

- the quality of day-to-day management, for example in:
 - a. operational work planning and implementation (input delivery, activity management and delivery of outputs), and management of the budget (including cost control and whether an inadequate budget was a factor);
 - b. management of personnel;
 - c. whether management of risk has been adequate, i.e. whether flexibility has been demonstrated in response to changes in circumstances;
 - d. the quality of information management and reporting, and the extent to which key stakeholders have been kept adequately informed of project activities (including beneficiaries/target groups);
 - e. respect for deadlines.
- Extent to which the costs of the project have been justified by the benefits whether or not expressed in monetary terms in comparison with similar projects or known alternative approaches, taking account of contextual differences and eliminating market distortions;
- Technical assistance: how well did it help to provide appropriate solutions and develop local capacities and produce results;
- Quality of monitoring: its existence, accuracy and flexibility and the use made of it; adequacy of baseline information;
- Did any unplanned outputs arise so far?

2.2.2.3 Likely continuation of achieved results (Sustainability)

- the ownership of objectives and achievements, e.g. how far all stakeholders were consulted on the objectives from the outset, and whether they agreed with them and continue to remain in agreement;
- policy support and the responsibility of the beneficiary institutions, e.g. how far donor policy and national policy are corresponding, the potential effects of any policy changes; how far the relevant national, sectoral and budgetary policies and priorities are affecting the project positively or adversely; and the level of support from governmental, public, business and civil society organizations.
- institutional capacity, e.g. (i) of the Governments (e.g. through policy and budgetary support) and counterpart institutions; the extent to which the project is embedded in local institutional structures; whether the institution appears likely to be capable of continuing the flow of benefits

after the project ends (is it well-led, with adequate and trained staff, sufficient budget and equipment?); whether counterparts have been properly prepared for taking over, technically, financially and managerially; and (ii) of SADC Secretariat (through technical assistance and budgetary support) the extent to which it can mobilise expertise internally to manage similar programme and build synergies with other cooperating partner institutions; the extent to which other programmes have been supported in sustaining their results for the future.

- the adequacy of the project budget for its purpose particularly phasing out prospects;

2.2.2.4 Achievement of wider effect (Impact)

- of policy at national level;
- of interventions on regional policy instruments;
- collaboration of Member States in areas of common interest (that promote the regional economic integration agenda);
- collaboration of member states towards enhancing the SADC EPA;

2.2.2.5 EC value added

Connection to the interventions of Member States. Extent to which the project/programme (its objectives, targeted beneficiaries, timing, etc .)

- is complementary to the intervention of EU Member States in the region.
- Is complementary to the SADC regional economic integration agenda.

2.3 Phases of the evaluation and required outputs

The evaluation process will be carried out in three phases:

- Inception/desk
- Field
- Synthesis

The outputs of each phase are to be submitted at the end of the corresponding phases as specified in the synoptic table in section 2.3.1.

2.3.1 Synoptic table

The following table presents an overview of the key activities to be conducted within each phase and lists the outputs to be produced by the team as well as the key meetings with the Contracting Authority and the Reference Group. The main content of each output is described in Chapter 0.

Phases of the evaluation	Key activities	Outputs and <i>meetings</i>
<u>Inception/Desk Phase</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial document/data collection • Background analysis • Teleconference with EU Delegation, SADC Secretariat and FSU • Stakeholder analysis • Reconstruction (or as necessary, construction) of the Intervention Logic, and / or description of the Theory of Change (based upon available documentation and interviews) • Methodological design of the evaluation (Evaluation Questions with judgement criteria, indicators and methods of data collection and analysis) and evaluation matrix • In-depth document analysis (focused on the Evaluation Questions) • Identification of information gaps and of hypotheses to be tested in the field phase • Methodological design of the Field Phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with EU Delegation to Botswana and SADC, SADC Secretariat and Technical Assistance Team • Inception report • Slide presentation of key findings • <i>Meeting with Reference Group (which will initiate the field phase)</i>
<u>Field Phase (visit to some member states)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meetings with key informants • Gathering of primary evidence with the use of the interviews and other appropriate techniques • Data collection and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meetings at SADC Secretariat with key informants • Initial meetings at level of visited country level with key informants and stakeholders • Intermediary Note • Slide Presentation of key findings of the field • Face to face debriefing with the Reference Group in Gaborone
<u>Synthesis phase</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final analysis of findings (with focus on the Evaluation Questions) • Formulation of the overall assessment, conclusions and recommendations • Updating of the TRF Logframe, if required • Reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Final Report • Executive Summary according to the standard template published in the EVAL module • Reviewed/updated TRF Logframe • Final Report after comments

2.3.2 Inception Phase

This phase aims at structuring the evaluation and clarifying the key issues to be addressed.

The phase will start with initial background study, to be conducted by the evaluators from home. It will then continue with a kick-off session in Gaborone between the EU delegation to Botswana and SADC and the SADC Secretariat as well as the FSU Team and the evaluators. Half-day presence of the evaluators is required. The meeting aims at arriving at a clear and shared understanding of the scope of the evaluation, its limitations and feasibility. It also serves to clarify expectations regarding evaluation outputs, the methodology to be used and, where necessary, to pass on additional or latest relevant information.

In the Inception phase, the relevant documents will be reviewed (see annex II).

Further to a first desk review of the political, institutional and/or technical/cooperation framework of EU support to SADC in the field of Trade and Regional Economic Integration, the evaluation team, in consultation with the Evaluation Manager, will reconstruct or as necessary construct, the Intervention Logic of the Action to be evaluated.

Furthermore, based on the Intervention Logic, the evaluators will develop a narrative explanation of the logic of the Action that describes how change is expected to happen within the Action, all along its results chain, i.e. Theory of Change. This explanation includes an assessment of the evidence underpinning this logic (especially between outputs and outcomes, and between outcomes and impact), and articulates the assumptions that must hold for the Action to work, as well as identification of the factors most likely to inhibit the change from happening.

Based on the Intervention Logic and the Theory of Change the evaluators will finalise i) the Evaluation Questions with the definition of judgement criteria and indicators, the selection of data collection tools and sources, ii) the evaluation methodology, and iii) the planning of the following phases.

The methodological approach will be represented in an Evaluation Design Matrix⁶, which will be included in the Inception Report. The **methodology of the evaluation should be gender sensitive, contemplate the use of sex- and age-disaggregated data and demonstrate how actions have contributed to progress on gender equality.**

The limitations faced or to be faced during the evaluation exercise will be discussed and mitigation measures described in the Inception Report. Finally, the work plan for the overall evaluation process will be presented and agreed in this phase; this work plan shall be in line with that proposed in the present ToR. Any modifications shall be justified and agreed with the Evaluation Manager.

On the basis of the information collected, the evaluation team should prepare an **Inception Report**; its content is described in these TORs.

2.3.3 Desk Phase

This phase is when the document analysis takes place. The analysis should include a brief synthesis of the existing literature relevant to the Action.

The analysis of the relevant documents shall be systematic and reflect the methodology developed and approved during the Inception Phase.

Selected phone interviews with some focal points in selected SADC Member States as well as with other institutions may be conducted during this phase to support the analysis of secondary sources.

⁶ *The Evaluation Matrix is a tool to structure the evaluation analysis (by defining judgement criteria and indicators for each evaluation question). It helps also to consider the most appropriate and feasible data collection method for each of the questions,*

The activities to be conducted during this phase should allow for the provision of preliminary responses to each evaluation question, stating the information already gathered and its limitations. They will also identify the issues still to be covered and the preliminary hypotheses to be tested.

During this phase the evaluation team shall fine-tune the evaluation tools to be used during the Field Phase and describe the preparatory steps already taken and those to be taken for its organisation, including the list of people to be interviewed, dates and itinerary of visits, and attribution of tasks within the team.

At the end of the desk phase a **Slide Presentation** will be prepared; its content is described in Chapter 0.

A presentation by the evaluation team to the Reference Group, if needed, will take place in Gaborone. One day presence of the evaluators is required (excluding travel time).

2.3.4 Field Phase

The Field Phase starts after approval of the Slide Presentation and Inception Report by the Evaluation Manager.

The Field Phase aims at validating / changing the preliminary answers formulated during the Desk phase and further completing information through primary research.

If any significant deviation from the agreed work plan or schedule is perceived as creating a risk for the quality of the evaluation or not respecting the end of the validity of the specific contract, these elements are to be immediately discussed with the Evaluation Manager and, regarding the validity of the contract, corrective measures undertaken.

In the first days of the field phase, the evaluation team shall hold a briefing meeting with the programme management, the EU Delegation to Botswana and SADC and the SADC Secretariat.

During the field phase, the evaluation team shall ensure adequate contact and consultation with, and involvement of the different stakeholders; with the relevant government authorities and agencies in SADC Member States. Throughout the mission the evaluation team will use the most reliable and appropriate sources of information, respect the rights of individuals to provide information in confidence, and be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments.

At the end of the field phase, the evaluation team will summarise its work, analyse the reliability and coverage of data collection, and present preliminary findings in a meeting with the programme management (including TA Team and SADC Secretariat) and the EU Delegation to Botswana and SADC.

At the end of the Field Phase an **Intermediary Note** will be prepared; its content is described in Chapter 0.

2.3.5 Synthesis Phase

This phase is devoted to the preparation by the contractor of **two distinct documents**: the **Executive Summary** and the **Final Report**, whose structures are described in the Annex III; it entails the analysis of the data collected during the desk and field phases to answer the Evaluation Questions and preparation of the overall assessment, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

The evaluation team will present, in a single Report with Annexes, their findings, conclusions and recommendations in accordance with the structure in Annex III; a separate Executive Summary will be produced as well, following the compulsory format given in the EVAL module (see Annex III).

The evaluation team will make sure that:

- Their assessments are objective and balanced, statements are accurate and evidence-based, and recommendations realistic and clearly targeted.

- When drafting the report, they will acknowledge clearly where changes in the desired direction are known to be already taking place.
- The wording, inclusive of the abbreviations used, takes into account the audience as identified in art. 2.1 above.

The evaluation team will deliver and then present in Gaborone the **Draft Final Report** to the Reference Group to discuss the draft findings, conclusions and recommendations. One day of presence of the evaluation team is required.

The Evaluation Manager consolidates the comments expressed by the Reference Group members and sends them to the evaluation team for the report revision, together with a first version of the Quality Assessment Grid (QAG) assessing the quality of the Draft Final Report. The content of the QAG will be discussed with the evaluation team to verify if further improvements are required, and the evaluation team will be invited to comment on the conclusions formulated in the QAG (through the EVAL Module).

The evaluation team will then finalise the **Final Report** and the **Executive Summary** by addressing the relevant comments. While potential quality issues, factual errors or methodological problems should be corrected, comments linked to diverging judgements may be either accepted or rejected. In the latter instance, the evaluation team must explain the reasons in writing. After approval of the final report, the QAG will be updated and sent to the evaluators via EVAL Module.

2.4 Specific Contract Organisation and Methodology (Technical offer)

The invited Framework Contractors will submit their specific Contract Organisation and Methodology by using the standard SIEA template B-VII-d-i and its annexes 1 and 2 (B-VII-d-ii). A short 5-page Methodology should be prepared by the proposed Evaluation Team and, based on their expertise and experience, outline how the evaluation mission will be conducted to ensure a quality outcome.

The evaluation methodology proposed to undertake the assignment will be described in the Chapter 3 (Strategy and timetable of work) of the template B-VII-d-i. Contractors will describe how their proposed methodology will address the cross-cutting issues mentioned in these Terms of Reference and notably gender equality and the empowerment of women. This will include (if applicable) the communication action messages, materials and management structures.

By derogation of what is specified in the standard SIEA template B-VII-d-i, the maximum length of the specific Contract Organisation and Methodology is 7 pages, written in Times New Roman 12 or Arial size 11, single interline, excluding the framework contractor's own annexes (maximum length of such annexes: 3 pages), additional to the Annexes foreseen as part of the present Specific ToRs. The timetable is not accounted and may be presented on an A3 page.

2.5 Management and Steering of the evaluation

2.5.1 At the EU level

The evaluation is managed by the Evaluation Manager of the EUD; the progress of the evaluation will be followed closely with the assistance of a Reference Group consisting of the EUD to Botswana and SADC the SADC Secretariat and the FSU Team and one representative from the Steering Committee.

The main functions of the Reference Group are:

- To define and validate the Evaluation Questions.
- To facilitate contacts between the evaluation team and the EU services and external stakeholders.

- To ensure that the evaluation team has access to and has consulted all relevant information sources and documents related to the Action.
- To discuss and comment on notes and reports delivered by the evaluation team. Comments by individual group members are compiled into a single document by the Evaluation Manager and subsequently transmitted to the evaluation team.
- To assist in feedback on the findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations from the evaluation.
- To support the development of a proper follow-up action plan after completion of the evaluation.

2.5.2 At the Contractor level

Further to the Requirements set in the art. 6 of the Global Terms of Reference and in the Global Organisation and Methodology, respectively annexes II and III of the Framework contract SIEA 2018, the contractor is responsible for the quality of: the process; the evaluation design; the inputs and the outputs of the evaluation. In particular, it will:

- Support the Team Leader in its role, mainly from a team management perspective. In this regard, the contractor should make sure that, for each evaluation phase, specific tasks and outputs for each team member are clearly defined and understood.
- Provide backstopping and quality control of the evaluation team’s work throughout the assignment.
- Ensure that the evaluators are adequately resourced to perform all required tasks within the time framework of the contract.

2.6 Language of the Specific contract

The language of the specific contract is to be English.

3 EXPERTISE REQUIRED

3.1 Number of experts and of working days per category

The table below indicates the minimum number of evaluators and the minimum number of working days (overall and in the field), per category of experts to be foreseen by the Contractor.

Category of experts	Minimum number of evaluators	Total minimum number of working days (cumulative)	(Out of which) minimum number of working days on mission (cumulative)
Cat I	2	90	50

Both Experts are expected to be Cat I expert. The team Leader in particular (to be identified in the Organisation and Methodology and in the Financial Offer) should possess a demonstrable senior evaluation expertise coherent with the requirements of this assignment and not provide less than 45 working days, out of which 25 in the field (see section on “location of the assignment” for further details).

3.2 Expertise required

Requirements of each Expert

- Have a Master's Degree in the field of economics, trade, development studies, finance and investment, trade law or business management OR relevant work experience of at least 10 years which must be above the professional experience duration fixed in points b), d) and e) below;

- For the Team Leader (KE1), experience in leading multi-disciplinary teams and must have conducted at least three (3) high-level evaluations, including at least one (1) relating to trade and regional integration;
- For KE2, experience in the sector of Trade and/or Regional Economic Integration and/or any other relevant field and must have undertaken at least three (3) high-level evaluations, , including at least one (1) relating to trade and regional integration;
- demonstrable experience in programme/project management of developmental programmes;
- demonstrable experience in monitoring and evaluation of developmental programmes;
- specific work experience of at least 5 years, in relevant technical areas, in regional contexts (preferably in the SADC region);
- be competent in the use of word processing, spread-sheet and presentation software; and
- be fluent in written and spoken English (competence in French and/or Portuguese would be an advantage).

Requirements of the team

- demonstrable knowledge of the SADC RISDP II, Industrialisation Policy, SADC Trade Protocol and SADC-EU EPA;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience of issues related to customs cooperation;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in working on trade in services issues;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in working on issues related to Rules of Origin;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience of work in the area of Trade Facilitation;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in the fields of standardisation, quality assurance, accreditation, metrology and conformity assessment and/or addressing SPS/TBT issues;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in industrial development;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in issues related to trade promotion and trade development;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in work related to trade defence instruments (institutional and legal frameworks);
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in work related to tariffs;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in issues around trade related adjustment;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience in working with competition policy;
- demonstrable knowledge or experience of working with Non-State Actors as well as government structures; and
- demonstrable affinity in promoting gender equality and inclusive development.

Languages levels are defined for understanding, speaking and writing skills by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages available at <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr> and shall be demonstrated by certificates or by past relevant experience.

The European Union pursues an equal opportunities policy. Gender balance in the proposed team, at all levels, is highly recommended.

3.3 Presence of management team for briefing and/or debriefing

The presence of member(s) of the management team is not required for briefing or debriefing purposes.

4 LOCATION AND DURATION

4.1 Starting period

Provisional start of the assignment is beginning of September 2019.

4.2 Foreseen duration of the assignment in calendar days

Maximum duration of the assignment: 180 calendar days.

This overall duration includes working days, week-ends, periods foreseen for comments, for review of draft versions, debriefing sessions, and distribution of outputs.

4.3 Planning, including the period for notification for placement of the staff⁷

As part of the technical offer, the framework contractor must fill in the timetable in the Annex IV (to be finalised in the Inception Report). The 'Indicative dates' are not to be formulated as fixed dates but rather as days (or weeks, or months) from the beginning of the assignment (to be referenced as '0').

Sufficient forward planning is to be taken into account in order to ensure the active participation and consultation with government representatives, national / local or other stakeholders.

4.4 Location(s) of assignment

The assignment will take place in Botswana for the purposes of face-to-face engagements with the EU Delegation, SADC Secretariat and the FSU. Engagements with all participating Member States (and key national stakeholder representatives⁸) will be expected to be undertaken by e-mail and by telephone to ensure a comprehensive feedback process is assured.

However, travel to selected Member States⁹ and face-to-face engagements with the key stakeholders will be required on a prioritised basis, under guidance from the Reference Group. Indicatively, prioritised Member States for which in-country travel and face-to-face engagements are anticipated are: Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi and Tanzania. The final selection of countries to be visited will be agreed with the evaluators at the Inception Phase and with guidance from the Reference Group.

5 REPORTING

5.1 Content, timing and submission

The outputs must match quality standards. The text of the reports should be illustrated, as appropriate, with maps, graphs and tables; a map of the area(s) of Action is required (to be attached as Annex).

List of outputs:

⁷ As per art 16.4 a) of the General Conditions of the Framework Contract SIEA

⁸ Stakeholders include: SADC TRF National Focal Point; TRF Project Coordinator; MS National Steering Committee representatives; TRF Project Beneficiaries; National Ministries of relevance;

⁹ 12 Member States (out of 16 SADC MS) are participating under TRF i.e. Botswana; Eswatini; Lesotho; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Seychelles; Tanzania; Zambia; Zimbabwe. 4 Member States are not participating i.e. Angola; Comoros; D.R. Congo; and South Africa. All 12 Member States participate under Window 1: STP and 5 Member States participate under Window 2: EPA (i.e. Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique and Namibia).

	Number of Pages (excluding annexes)	Main Content	Timing for submission
Inception Report	20 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention logic • Stakeholder map • Methodology for the evaluation, incl.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluation Matrix: Evaluation Questions, with judgement criteria and indicators, and data analysis and collection methods ○ Consultation strategy ○ Field visit approach • Analysis of risks related to the evaluation methodology and mitigation measures • Work plan 	End of Inception Phase
Desk Report	35 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary answers to each Evaluation Question, with indication of the limitations of the available information • Data gaps to be addressed, issues still to be covered and hypotheses to be tested during the field visit 	End of the Desk Phase
Intermediary Report	35 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities conducted during the field phase • Difficulties encountered during the field phase and mitigation measures adopted • Key preliminary findings (combining desk and field ones) 	End of the Field Phase
Draft Final Report	60 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cf. detailed structure in Annex III</u> 	End of Synthesis Phase
Draft Executive Summary – by using the EVAL online template	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cf. detailed structure in Annex III</u> 	End of Synthesis Phase
Final report	60 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same specifications as of the Draft Final Report, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report that have been accepted 	2 weeks after having received comments to the Draft Final Report.
Executive Summary – by using the EVAL online template	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same specifications as for the Draft Executive Summary, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report that have been accepted 	Together with the final version of the Final Report

5.2 Use of the EVAL module by the evaluators

It is strongly recommended that the **submission of deliverables** by the selected contractor **be performed through their uploading in the EVAL Module**, an evaluation process management tool and repository of the European Commission. The selected contractor will receive access to online and offline guidance in order to operate with the module during the related Specific contract validity.

5.3 Comments on the outputs

For each report, the Evaluation Manager will send to the Contractor consolidated comments received from the Reference Group or the approval of the report within 21 calendar days. The revised reports addressing the comments shall be submitted within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the comments. The evaluation team should provide a separate document explaining how and where comments have been integrated or the reason for not integrating certain comments, if this is the case.

5.4 Assessment of the quality of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary

The quality of the draft versions of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary will be assessed by the Evaluation Manager using the online Quality Assessment Grid (QAG) in the EVAL Module (text provided in Annex V). The Contractor is given – through the EVAL module - the possibility to comment on the assessments formulated by the Evaluation Manager. The QAG will then be reviewed following the submission of the final version of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary.

The compilation of the QAG will support/inform the compilation by the Evaluation Manager of the FWC SIEA's Specific Contract Performance Evaluation.

5.5 Language

All reports shall be submitted in English.

The Executive Summary of the final report shall be furthermore translated into:

- French and Portuguese

5.6 Number of report copies

Apart from their submission -preferably via the EVAL Module-, the approved version of the Final Report will be also provided in 5 paper copies and in electronic version at no extra cost.

5.7 Formatting of reports

All reports will be produced using Font Arial or Times New Roman minimum letter size 11 and 12 respectively, single spacing, double sided. They will be sent in Word and PDF formats.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: SPECIFIC TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

SPECIFIC TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

FED/2019/407563

FWC SIEA 2018 - LOT 2

EuropeAid/138778/DH/SER/multi

1. TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Contracting Authority selects the offer with the best value for money using an 80/20 weighting between technical quality and price¹⁰.

Technical quality is evaluated on the basis of the following grid:

Criteria	Maximum
<i>Total score for Organisation and Methodology</i>	40
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of ToR and the aim of the services to be provided	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall methodological approach, quality control approach, appropriate mix of tools and estimate of difficulties and challenges	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical added value, backstopping and role of the involved members of the consortium	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisation of tasks including timetable	4
<i>Score for the expertise of the proposed team</i>	60
OVERALL TOTAL SCORE	100

2. TECHNICAL THRESHOLD

Any offer falling short of the technical threshold of 75 out of 100 points, is automatically rejected.

3. INTERVIEWS DURING THE EVALUATION OF THE OFFERS

During the evaluation process of the offers received the Contracting Authority reserves the right to interview by phone one or several members of the proposed evaluation teams.

¹⁰ For more details about the 80/20 rule, please see the PRAG, chapter 3.3.10.5 - https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-funding-and-procedures/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag_en

ANNEX II: INFORMATION THAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE EVALUATION TEAM

- Legal texts and political commitments pertaining to the Action(s) to be evaluated
- SADC Regional Indicative Programmes (and equivalent) for the periods covered
- Relevant national / sector policies and plans from National and Local partners and other donors
- Action financing agreement and addenda
- Action's quarterly and annual progress reports, and technical reports
- European Commission's Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Reports, and other external and internal monitoring reports of the Action
- Action's mid-term evaluation report and other relevant evaluations, audit, reports
- Calendar and minutes of all the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Action(s)
- Any other relevant document

Note: The evaluation team has to identify and obtain any other document worth analysing, through independent research and during interviews with relevant informed parties and stakeholders of the Action.

ANNEX III: STRUCTURE OF THE FINAL REPORT AND OF THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The contractor will deliver – **preferably through their uploading in the EVAL Module - two distinct documents**: the **Final Report** and the **Executive Summary**. They must be consistent, concise and clear and free of linguistic errors both in the original version and in their translation – if foreseen.

The Final Report should not be longer than the number of pages indicated in Chapter 6. Additional information on the overall context of the Action, description of methodology and analysis of findings should be reported in an Annex to the main text.

The presentation must be properly spaced and the use of clear graphs, tables and short paragraphs is strongly recommended.

The cover page of the Final Report shall carry the following text:

"This evaluation is supported and guided by the European Commission and presented by [name of consulting firm]. The report does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the European Commission".

Executive Summary

A short, tightly-drafted, to-the-point and free-standing Executive Summary. It should focus on the key purpose or issues of the evaluation, outline the main analytical points, and clearly indicate the main conclusions, lessons to be learned and specific recommendations. It is to be prepared by using the specific format foreseen in the EVAL Module.

The main sections of the evaluation report shall be as follows:

1. Introduction

A description of the Action, of the relevant country/region/sector background and of the evaluation, providing the reader with sufficient methodological explanations to gauge the credibility of the conclusions and to acknowledge limitations or weaknesses, where relevant.

2. Answered questions / Findings

A chapter presenting the answers to the Evaluation Questions, supported by evidence and reasoning.

3. Overall assessment (optional)

A chapter synthesising all answers to Evaluation Questions into an overall assessment of the Action. The detailed structure of the overall assessment should be refined during the evaluation process. The relevant chapter has to articulate all the findings, conclusions and lessons in a way that reflects their importance and facilitates the reading. The structure should not follow the Evaluation Questions, the logical framework or the evaluation criteria.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.3 Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt generalise findings and translate past experience into relevant knowledge that should support decision making, improve performance and promote the achievement of better results. Ideally, they should support the work of both the relevant European and partner institutions.

4.1 Conclusions

This chapter contains the conclusions of the evaluation, organised per evaluation criterion.

In order to allow better communication of the evaluation messages that are addressed to the Commission, a table organising the conclusions by order of importance can be presented, or a paragraph or sub-chapter emphasizing the 3 or 4 major conclusions organised by order of importance, while avoiding being repetitive.

4.2 Recommendations

They are intended to improve or reform the Action in the framework of the cycle under way, or to prepare the design of a new Action for the next cycle.

Recommendations must be clustered and prioritised, and carefully targeted to the appropriate audiences at all levels, especially within the Commission structure.

5. Annexes to the report

The report should include the following annexes:

- The Terms of Reference of the evaluation
- The names of the evaluators (CVs can be shown, but summarised and limited to one page per person)
- Detailed evaluation methodology including: options taken, difficulties encountered and limitations; detail of tools and analyses.
- Evaluation Matrix
- Intervention logic / Logical Framework matrices (planned/real and improved/updated)
- Relevant geographic map(s) where the Action took place
- List of persons/organisations consulted
- Literature and documentation consulted
- Other technical annexes (e.g. statistical analyses, tables of contents and figures, matrix of evidence, databases) as relevant
- Detailed answer to the Evaluation Questions, judgement criteria and indicators

ANNEX IV: PLANNING SCHEDULE

This annex must be included by Framework Contractors in their Specific Contract Organisation and Methodology and forms an integral part of it. Framework Contractors can add as many rows and columns as needed.

The phases of the evaluation shall reflect those indicated in the present Terms of Reference.

		Indicative Duration in working days ¹¹		
Activity	Location	Team Leader	Evaluator ...	Indicative Dates
Inception phase: total days				
•				
•				
Desk phase: total days				
•				
•				
Field phase: total days				
•				
•				
Synthesis phase: total days				
•				
•				
Dissemination phase: total days				
•				
•				
TOTAL working days (maximum)				

¹¹ Add one column per each evaluator

ANNEX V: QUALITY ASSESSMENT GRID

The quality of the Final Report will be assessed by the Evaluation Manager (since the submission of the draft Report and Executive Summary) using the following quality assessment grid, which is included **in the EVAL Module**; the grid will be shared with the evaluation team, which will have the possibility to include their comments.

Action (Project/Programme) evaluation – Quality Assessment Grid Final Report

Evaluation data			
Evaluation title			
Evaluation managed by		Type of evaluation	
CRIS ref. of the evaluation contract		EVAL ref.	
Evaluation budget			
EUD/Unit in charge		Evaluation Manager	
Evaluation dates	Start:		End:
Date of draft final report		Date of Response of the Services	
Comments			
Project data			
Main project evaluated			
CRIS # of evaluated project(s)			
DAC Sector			
Contractor's details			
Evaluation Team Leader		Evaluation Contractor	
Evaluation expert(s)			

Legend: scores and their meaning

Very satisfactory: criterion entirely fulfilled in a clear and appropriate way

Satisfactory: criterion fulfilled

Unsatisfactory: criterion partly fulfilled

Very unsatisfactory: criterion mostly not fulfilled or absent

The evaluation report is assessed as follows

1. Clarity of the report

This criterion analyses the extent to which both the Executive Summary and the Final Report:

- Are easily readable, understandable and accessible to the relevant target readers
- Highlight the key messages
- The length of the various chapters and annexes of the Report are well balanced
- Contain relevant graphs, tables and charts facilitating understanding
- Contain a list of acronyms (only the Report)
- Avoid unnecessary duplications
- Have been language checked for unclear formulations, misspelling and grammar errors
- The Executive Summary is an appropriate summary of the full report and is a free-standing document



Strengths	Weaknesses	Score
Contractor's comments	Contractor's comments	

2. Reliability of data and robustness of evidence

This criterion analyses the extent to which:

- Data/evidence was gathered as defined in the methodology
- The report considers, when relevant, evidence from EU and/or other partners' relevant studies, monitoring reports and/or evaluations
- The report contains a clear description of the limitations of the evidence, the risks of bias and the mitigating measures





Strengths	Weaknesses	Score
Contractor's comments	Contractor's comments	

3. Validity of Findings

This criterion analyses the extent to which:

- Findings derive from the evidence gathered
- Findings address all selected evaluation criteria
- Findings result from an appropriate triangulation of different, clearly identified sources
- When assessing the effect of the EU intervention, the findings describe and explain the most relevant cause/effect links between outputs, outcomes and impacts
- The analysis of evidence is comprehensive and takes into consideration contextual and external factors



Strengths	Weaknesses	Score
Contractor's comments	Contractor's comments	
4. Validity of conclusions		
<p>This criterion analyses the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions are logically linked to the findings, and go beyond them to provide a comprehensive analysis • Conclusions appropriately address the selected evaluation criteria and all the evaluation questions, including the relevant cross-cutting dimensions • Conclusions take into consideration the various stakeholder groups of the evaluation • Conclusions are coherent and balanced (i.e. they present a credible picture of both strengths and weaknesses), and are free of personal or partisan considerations • (If relevant) whether the report indicates when there are not sufficient findings to conclude on specific issues 		
		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Score
Contractor's comments	Contractor's comments	
5. Usefulness of recommendations		
<p>This criterion analyses the extent to which the recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are clearly linked to and derive from the conclusions • Are concrete, achievable and realistic • Are targeted to specific addressees • Are clustered (if relevant), prioritised, and possibly time-bound • (If relevant) provide advice for the Action's exit strategy, post-Action sustainability or for adjusting Action's design or plans 		
		
Strengths	Weaknesses	Score
Contractor's comments	Contractor's comments	
6. Appropriateness of lessons learnt analysis (if requested by the ToR or included by the evaluators)		

This criterion is to be assessed only when requested by the ToR or included by evaluators and is not to be scored. It analyses the extent to which:



- Lessons are identified
- When relevant, they are generalised in terms of wider relevance for the institution(s)

Strengths		Weaknesses	
Contractor's comments		Contractor's comments	
Final comments on the overall quality of the report			Overall score

ANNEX VI: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX (LOGFRAME) OF THE EVALUATED ACTION(S)

Project Description	Verifiable Indicators	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions/Risks
<p>Overall Objective: To improve the participation of SADC member states in regional and international trade in order to contribute to sustainable development in the SADC region.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable political and economic relations between SADC MS and the EU is maintained. • Commitments towards SADC regional integration remains strong.
<p>Specific Objective (purpose): To enhance the implementation of the commitments made in the SADC Trade Protocol and the EPA to increase intra-regional and inter-regional trade flows of the concerned Member States</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of compliance in the implementation of STP commitments by SADC Member States • Level of intra-SADC trade (%) • Status of Institutions, policies and regulatory frameworks in Member States to implement SADC-EU EPA commitments • Level of trade between the SADC EPA Group and EU • Share of manufacturing value added in GDP (%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reports on the state of implementation of the Protocol/EPA • www.tradebarriers.org • EU Market Access Database • Joint SADC-EU Trade Council Reports • Annual World Bank Doing Business Reports • TRF progress reports • Member State reports • Surveys to business associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SADC MS remain committed to the implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol in goods and services. • SADC EPA Members States and the EU remain on track for the conclusion of a comprehensive SADC-EU EPA and its implementation schedule.
			<p><i>Page 27 of 46</i></p>

Expected Results:			
<p>Key result 1: Higher level of compliance and implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol's commitments by the SADC MS is achieved.</p> <p><i>(Immediate outcome indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of implementation of the commitments taken in the STP by end of the TRF. • The number of annual reported NTBs compared to the base line year by end of the TRF. • The number of days needed to conduct cross border trade (export and import) compared to the base line scenario by end of the TRF. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRF reports • MS Government reports to the TRF • Steering committee meeting reports • SADC Secretariat reports and website • World Bank (Logistics Performance Index and Ease of Doing Business reports) • World Economic Forum (Global Competitive Index reports) • UNDP reports • TradeMark South Africa reports • Media reports • www.tradebarriers.org • Minutes of SADC Technical Committees (Services, TBT SPS and Customs) • Evaluation reports (mid term and final) • www.TradeMap.org • worldbank.wits.org • IMF balance of payments data and National Statistics Data • REIS reports 	<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS may not have enough interest and motivation to apply for the TRF facility. • Political interference at the level of the Steering committee may influence the decisions on funding. • SADC Member States may not have sufficient accountability and control systems in place to ensure funds are utilized according to their objectives. • Member States may not have the resources, capacity or discipline to report to the FSU according to the requirements in the TRF guidelines and Financial Agreements. <p>Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable political and economic situation in SADC MS is maintained.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs clearance time in comparison to baseline period by the end of the project. • Share of manufacturing value added in GDP by the end of the TRF) <p><i>Outputs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs clearance systems and border procedures automated • Customs policies and procedures benchmarked to international best practice • One stop borders established • Coordinated/integrated border management programmes developed and implemented • Electronic system for issuance of certificates of origin implemented • Electronic single window systems developed and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of countries with automated customs clearance systems • Number of one-stop border post projects developed and implemented 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SADC MS remain committed to the implementation the SADC Trade Protocol. • Tripartite process complements and does not supersede the SADC Trade Protocol • Contribution Agreement modalities and procedures effectively implemented by SADC and FSU.
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<p>implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and regulatory reforms to eliminate NTBs undertaken • National NTB focal points and national monitoring committees strengthened • Impact assessment studies on products and sector specific rules of origin undertaken • Systems for effective implementation of rules of origin established • Regulatory impact assessments and reform for TBTs and SPS undertaken • Technical capacity for implementation and monitoring of SPS and TBT measures developed • Conformity Assessment Bodies accredited • SPS measures notified to the WTO by end of the TRF. • Regulatory frameworks for managing trade in services established • Sector specific industrial policy strategies developed • National trade promotion strategies and programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of countries implementing Coordinated Border Management projects • Countries issuing certificates of origin electronically • Electronic Single Window projects developed and implemented • Number of countries undertaking assessment and reforms in SPS and TBT • SPS measures notified to the WTO • Complaints on NTBs • Countries with functional NTB's National Monitoring Committees • The number of accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies and the number of industries with accredited certification. • Countries undertaking regulatory reforms and commitments in prioritised services sectors • Countries undertaking measures to promote regional and international trade • Countries implementing policies and strategies in support of regional industrial 		
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<p>developed</p>	<p>development initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rank of SADC MS in the Ease of Cross Border trading • The rank of SADC MS in the logistics performance index 		
<p>Key result 2: SADC EPA MS are better prepared to effectively implement and monitor concluded elements of the EPA.</p> <p><i>(Immediate outcome indicators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of implementation of commitments under EPA and necessary capacities for such implementation • Level of SADC EPA MS's exports to EU compared to base line data by the end of the TRF. • Time to export to the EU market compared to baseline period • Documentation required to export to EU market compared 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRF reports • MS Government reports to the TRF • Steering committee meeting reports • SADC Secretariat reports and website • World Bank (Logistics Performance Index and Ease of Doing Business reports) • World Economic Forum (Global Competitive Index reports) • UNDP reports • Media reports • Minutes of the EPA implementation structures (Joint Council, SADC EPA Technical and Ministerial meetings) • Evaluation reports (mid-term and final) • REIS reports 	<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS may not have enough interest and motivation to apply for the TRF facility. • Communication between the TRF and MS may not be effective. • Political interference at the level of the Steering committee may influence the decisions on funding. • SADC Member States may not have sufficient accountability and control systems in place to ensure funds are utilized according to their objectives. • Member States may not have the resources, capacity or discipline to report to the FSU according to the requirements in the TRF guidelines and

<p>to baseline period)</p> <p><i>Outputs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade remedy authorities established • Trade remedy legislation developed or revised • Adjustment measures to deal with revenue losses identified and implemented • Strategic frameworks to deal with revenue losses are identified and put into practice • Competition policy framework established/strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries with trade remedy institutions • Countries with trade remedy legislation Studies on revenue implications of EPA implementation • Countries with competition policy frameworks 		<p>Financial Agreements</p> <p>Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable political and economic situation in SADC MS and the EU is maintained. • SADC EPA Member States and the EU remain on track for the conclusion of a comprehensive SADC-EU EPA and committed to its implementation. • Contribution Agreement modalities and procedures effectively implemented by SADC and FSU.
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ANNEX VII: RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP FIRST MTR

MTR RECOMMENDATIONS				
Folio	Recommendation	Comments/Remarks	Follow-up action	Report/Update
1. Governance	The role and function of the Steering Committee needs to be strengthened, so as to become a body that steers by its decisions, rather than mainly being informed.	Steering Committee is already foreseen as 'steering body' and takes decisions	None	Complete
	The Steering Committee needs to be more comprehensively, timely and systematically informed. It needs to receive quarterly reports (technical and financial) on TRF performance and on its plans. However, it should not be involved in the TRF day to day management.	Quarterly reports proposed.	FSU to submit Quarterly reports to SC members, aligned to the frequency of SC meetings	The reporting cycle was interrupted as Steering Committee could not convene quarterly meetings as planned
	The reports need to have a standard format and be concise	Templates already exist	None	Complete
	The SC membership should be reduced to be effective. Except for the EUD, the rapporteur and the supervised body (TIFI management), it should not have observing members. Rapporteur should be the FSU Team Leader	Recommendation not accepted as the composition of the SC is defined by the Contribution Agreement and justification is not considered adequate	None	Complete
	TIFI Directorate, the implementing body, should report, not have a voting membership in the Steering	Recommendation not accepted as the composition of the SC	None	Complete

	Committee.	is defined by the Contribution Agreement and justification is not considered adequate		
	Decisions of the Steering Committee should be shared within the TRF network	To be shared with Focal Points and PMU as appropriate	FSU to distribute SC decisions to Focal Points, PMU's and SC Members and Observers	Record of Steering Committee meetings now available on drop-box and is shared with PMU's and SC Members
	The EUD in Botswana should continue to play an active role. The EU Delegations in the Member States where submissions are prepared and projects implemented should be invited to give their assessments to the Steering Committee.	Already taking place in an informal manner through the services of the EUD in Botswana	None	Complete
	All relevant documentation, i.e. the quarterly reports and supporting documents, should be provided to Steering Committee members latest one week ahead of meetings.	Agreed	FSU to avail documentation to SC Members a week before meeting	Documentation to be availed to SC Members at least one week before meetings and also through the drop-box
	There should be no requirement for consensus in decisions (as prescribed in the Operational Guidelines	Recommendation not accepted as the decision-making process of the SC is defined by the	None	Complete

		Contribution Agreement and operational guidelines and justification is not considered adequate		
2. FSU	<p>The reporting requirements for FSU should be reduced (currently it takes major time):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One-page monthly report - on intranet. ➤ Quarterly standard report (to TIFI and Steering Committee), ahead of the quarterly meetings. ➤ Annual report. ➤ These reports should be concise and according to a prescribed structure. They may be supported by documentation. 	Agreed	<p>FSU to report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -monthly one pager; -Quarterly standard format -Annual report 	On-going
	<p>The functions of the FSU should emphasize its substantive technical role, rather than an administrative function. The substantive functions should include support to Member States in preparation of applications,</p>	<p>Recommendation is not accepted as the FSU is already playing primarily a technical role; administrative role of FSU is limited to</p>	<p>FSU functions going forward will be on monitoring and evaluation and technical support for implementation</p>	Complete

	participation in their evaluation, advice on implementation of the projects where necessary and required, and monitoring implementation. The involvement of short term experts should not be necessary.	reporting and management of the call for applications (which is a major component of TRF implementation)	of projects	
	The open EPA expert post should be filled with an expert with substantive EPA experience. Beyond support to possible additional applications to the EPA window, the implementation of respective projects and their monitoring will require expertise that is not available within the Secretariat.	Not relevant as position was filled prior to the finalization of the evaluation exercise	None	Completed
	The FSU experts should participate in the two evaluation steps in cases where they have subject and/or country expertise. Decisions at both evaluation steps should be well documented in concise reports.	Not relevant as the evaluation of applications was finalized prior to the conclusion of the MTR report	None	Completed
	The FSU should only be accountable to TIFI. The entire TRF programme, in turn is accountable to the SC, the oversight body.	This is the set-up as reflected in the Contribution Agreement where the FSU is the secretariat for the SC which has oversight over the	None	Completed

		programme		
	Less use should be made of short-term experts. Support to Member States should be made by FSU staff. The M&E framework and communication policy should be done in-house.	Partly agreed, but STE will be necessary for specialized inputs where currently FSU does not have direct expertise	FSU developed Communication and Visibility plan but has used STE for M&E support. Going forward FSU Experts and SADC staff will provide technical support to Member States as required	On-going
	The documentation system should be strengthened. Key documents (project document, Inception Report, quarterly reports) should be made available on an intranet.	Agreed	FSU to create project documentation directory	A shared drop-box folder has been developed which provides access to key project documentation
3. Relation to TIFI	The TRF Task Manager needs to have terms of reference and a clear role known to all stakeholders. S/he should have authority to lead FSU. The Team Leader of the FSU should have a managing role and report to the Task Manager.	Recommendation is not accepted as the TOR for the task manager are already in place	None	Completed
	Possibilities to relocate the FSU either to the Secretariat or to the sub-office where the REIS programme is located. This would improve the information	Recommendation is not accepted, due to limitations in office space within SADC buildings (REIS is also	None	Completed

	flow and stimulate better coordination.	housed in an external building and would not add value in terms of information sharing)		
	TRF should be treated as an autonomous body and be measured and managed according to its own results. Its members should generally not be required to attend TIFI meetings. Rather, they should receive their minutes where relevant.	Recommendation is not accepted as it is factually incorrect; TRF is a programme within the department of TIFI and as such reporting against TRF achievements is part of regular TIFI reporting; TRF staff is not required to attend/substitute TIFI staff but is invited for reasons of information sharing	None	Completed
	TRF should be integrated into SADC website based communication system (as REIS is).	The TRF Web-page is hosted on the SADC Web-page under the TIFI Directorate as are other projects. Information and updates are uploaded on the web-page and information articles are included in the monthly SADC Newsletter which is also published on the	None	Completed

		website		
4. Logical Framework	It should be reformulated to reduce and limit performance indicators. These should monitor TRF activities and outputs, rather than attempting to measure the wider integration process (see attached proposal for revised logical framework in Annex 7).	Recommendation is accepted and will be taken up as part of the development of the TRF M&E framework	TRF M&E Framework being formulated and logical framework elements to be included;	This is on-going. Indicators of performance for both the Overall Programme and national projects have been rationalized with regional focus being on implementation of STP and EPA commitments and national projects being assessed on completion of outputs.
5. Communication and Visibility and Information	-The information flow and exchange with other programmes, notably REIS, should be strengthened. -Information provision to stakeholders should be strengthened, notably on the progress of country programme implementation and their progress.	Agreed	FSU to facilitate information sharing with active EU and other Donor supported programmes, Steering Committee Members and Observers and Focal Points and PMU's in Member States	This is on-going through publications on the TRF web-page, Articles in the Inside SADC newsletter and through postings on drop-box in the shared folder and in national project folders
	An intranet with limited access for those involved in project	Agreed	FSU to create project documentation	A shared drop-box folder for relevant project

	implementation should be established with core information on projects.		directory and information sharing system	documentation has been created and is operational
	Peer-learning among Member States in programme implementation should be encouraged. Lessons from application preparation, implementation and monitoring should be exchanged.	Agreed	FSU to arrange Annual Coordination meetings and platforms for sharing knowledge. FSU to further share updates on implementation of projects in Member States among the 12 Beneficiary countries to facilitate peer review and sharing of experiences	The TRF Publicity Event held in Pretoria in August 2017 provided such a platform. This is to be followed up with similar events in July 2018 and in August 2019 where presentations will reflect successes and failures being experienced in the implementation of national projects.
	The communication and visibility plan should be revisited. Planned outputs should be reduced. The work should concentrate on the website. Interest can be built up through regular updates.	Recommendation is partially accepted and the communication strategy will be revised; the communication efforts should not concentrate only on the website however and this part of the recommendation is rejected	TRF Communication and Visibility Plan revised as recommended	Completed

6. Prescribed use of SADC Finance and Procurement	According to comments from some Member States, the use of EDF rules on country level should be considered because of the large number of EDF projects implemented in Member States. These rules are known by Member States. In the RISM programme (using EDF rules) the experience has been that while countries had initial problems to apply these rules and procedures, they eventually learned them and the National Authorizing Officers have been able to assist and advise	Recommendation not accepted as the use of SADC procurement procedures is defined by the Contribution agreement and justification is not considered adequate	None	Completed
7.	Relations to the stakeholders need to be strengthened, beyond awareness rising. In particular, relations and interaction with the private sector should be strengthened, among others through regular updates. This engagement could have several pillars. First, more provision on the aims and particularly on the progress of the TRF should be provided (on country programmes).	Agreed	FSU to create platforms and instruments for more dissemination of project related information. The Programme is now beyond the awareness raising stage and will now be disseminating updates on implementation of national projects through various media such as SADC Newsletters, Brochures and	The main vehicles for such communication will be the drop-box, TRF web-page, Inside SADC Newsletter and periodic TRF Progress Updates on project implementation. There will also be independent assessments on benefits arising from implementation of national projects and these will be distributed as

			through Focal Points and national PMU's	reports and case studies
	<p>Second, the involvement of the private sector representative organisations (chambers of commerce, sector associations where appropriate) at the different stages of the project preparation and implementation should be discussed with the National Focal Points. Even when projects focus exclusively on activities and capacity building of public agencies, these would gain from feedback of the private sector. After all, in almost all cases the private sector is involved in international trade.</p>	Agreed	<p>FSU and Secretariat to share information on programme implementation with private sector APEX bodies. The FSU will actively establish communication lines with APEX bodies in Member States implementing TRF projects for dissemination of information and will encourage Focal Points and PMU's to incorporate Private sector representation on national project Steering Committees</p>	As above
	<p>Third, although most regional umbrella bodies of the private sector are weak, the project should interact with them both by providing</p>	Agreed and already being implemented	Private sector representatives are members of the Steering Committee	Complete

	information and requesting advice.			
	The SADC Secretariat needs to consider ways to reduce the complexities and rigidities of its procedures; particularly in terms of tendering, contracting, monitoring and the processing of disbursing funds.	Recommendation is not accepted as it goes beyond the scope of the TRF programme; moreover, SADC procedures are not deemed more complex than other procedures for international organizations	None	Complete
	Consideration needs to be given to improving and monitoring the quality of reports prepared by short-term experts. Some consideration should be given to the revision of short-term experts' ToRs to tailor them more to specific cases.	Agreed	Preparation and monitoring of STE inputs will be strengthened through internal control and quality assurance processes	Complete
Request Handling	There are some areas that need improvement with regard to the efficiency of request handling. One is the need to address the significant delay in processing requests from Member States. The provision of timely and appropriate feedback to beneficiaries who submitted requests should also be given due emphasis.	Agreed	FSU to provide timely responses and information to Focal Points and relevant authorities in Member states. FSU to develop service standards and communicate	On-going and being actively monitored

			them to Focal Points and PMU's	
Programme monitoring and follow-up	The monitoring activities and outputs under the TRF programme so far have focused mainly on the status of requests. When the implementation of the projects will start, the FSU technical advisers will have to focus on collecting and synthesising information on the qualitative results and achievements of supported projects. In particular, the monitoring system does not include mechanisms to follow up the results and impacts of completed projects. Therefore, it is recommended to put in place a monitoring system that captures adequately the progress and achievements in terms of meeting programme results and objectives. If the monitoring and evaluation system needs to be focused on spending and percentage of activities implemented, this monitoring and evaluation system has also to concentrate on content as the national level proposals are so diversified.	Agreed	FSU establishing an M&E framework that focuses on results	The main monitoring instrument is the Performance Assessment Framework focussing primarily on completion of outputs. This means that the TRF programme will have limited scope to assess outcomes and impacts.
SADC Secretariat should increase its engagement and monitoring efforts	FSU should be integrated within TIFI. The only condition is that FSU technical advisers will only have to	Recommendation is not accepted as this is already the case; relocation of TRF to the	None	Complete

	<p>work on the TRF and not on other TFI issues. The relocation to SADC is recommended to strengthen coordination. TRF work plans and reporting are understood to be integrated into TIFI plans and reporting.</p>	<p>main SADC building is not feasible due to limitations of space</p>		
	<p>It is recommended that SADC Secretariat gets more actively engaged in supervision and follow-up of the TRF programme, without necessarily interfering with project management.</p> <p>This would potentially enhance effectiveness and efficiency, in addition to the overall transparency and accountability of the FSU. This may include SADC Secretariat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Insisting on a clear results-based framework with realistic/measurable indicators. ➤ Organising during Steering Committees consultations on project progress and implementation, including close on-going monitoring and 	<p>Agreed on close on-going monitoring and follow up of project reports</p>	<p>ID&T and Other relevant SADC Secretariat Directorates to be involved in monitoring and support of implementation of TRF supported projects</p>	<p>The TRF Programme has been mainstreamed in activities of technical officers in the ID&T Directorate</p>

	<p>follow-up of project reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Demanding very strict audit procedures of implementing organisations and establishing strict measures that can be used if they are not followed;➤ Engaging with other existing and potential donors in the same area of support.			
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Annex II – Evaluation matrix

Evaluation question		Evaluation instruments/methods					
		Organisational assessment	Document review	Value for Money	Contextual analysis	Process review	Country impact case studies
<p>Assessing Efficiency (sound management and value for money)</p> <p>How well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results (sometimes referred to as outputs), in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Comparison should be made against what was planned at both regional and national levels.</p>	<p>⇒ How far can the quality of day-to-day management be deemed 'efficient', for example in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ operational work planning and implementation (input delivery, activity management and delivery of outputs), and management of the budget (including cost control and whether an inadequate budget was a factor); ○ management of personnel; ○ whether management of risk has been adequate, i.e. whether flexibility has been demonstrated in response to changes in circumstances; ○ the quality of information management and reporting, and the extent to which key stakeholders have been kept adequately informed of project activities (including beneficiaries/target groups); ○ respect for deadlines. 	X	X	X		X	X
	⇒ To what extent have the intended beneficiaries participated in the intervention?		X			X	X
	⇒ Regarding technical assistance: how well did it help to provide appropriate solutions and develop local capacities and produce results?		X			X	X
	⇒ How the TRF has influenced the quality of monitoring, its existence, accuracy and flexibility and the use made of it; adequacy of baseline information.	X	X			X	X
	⇒ Did any unplanned outputs arise so far?	X	X			X	
<p>Assessing Effectiveness (achievement of purpose)</p> <p>How far the project's results were attained, and the project's specific objective(s) achieved, or are</p>	⇒ To what extent have the planned benefits been delivered and received, as perceived by all key stakeholders?	X	X			X	X
	⇒ To what extent can the costs of the project be justified by the benefits; whether or not expressed in monetary terms in comparison with similar projects or known alternative approaches, taking account of contextual differences and eliminating market distortions?		X	X	X		
	⇒ How flexibly has management adapted to ensure that the results would still achieve the purpose; and how well has it been supported in this by key stakeholders including the SADC Secretariat, the EU Delegation and the Steering Committee?	X	X			X	X
	⇒ How far can the balance of responsibilities between the various stakeholders be deemed appropriate?	X	X			X	X

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expected to be achieved.								
Assessment of Impact (achievement of wider effect)	⇒ Impact of policy at national level.		x			x	x	
	⇒ Impact of interventions on regional policy instruments.		x		x		x	
	⇒ Extent of collaboration of Member States in areas of common interest (that promote the regional economic integration agenda).	x			x		x	
	⇒ Extent of collaboration of member states towards enhancing the SADC EPA.	x			x		x	
Assessing Sustainability (the likely continuation of achieved results) How well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results (sometimes referred to as outputs), in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Comparison should be made against what was planned at both regional and national levels.	⇒ Evaluating the ownership of objectives and achievements, e.g. how far all stakeholders were consulted on the objectives from the outset, and whether they agreed with them and continue to remain in agreement.	x					x	
	⇒ Regarding policy support and the responsibility of the beneficiary institutions, e.g. how far donor policy and national policy are corresponding, the potential effects of any policy changes; how far the relevant national, sectoral and budgetary policies and priorities are affecting the project positively or adversely; and the level of support from governmental, public, business and civil society organizations.	x					x	
	⇒ Evaluating institutional capacity, e.g. (i) of the Governments (e.g. through policy and budgetary support) and counterpart institutions; the extent to which the project is embedded in local institutional structures; whether the institution appears likely to be capable of continuing the flow of benefits after the project ends (is it well-led, with adequate and trained staff, sufficient budget and equipment?); whether counterparts have been properly prepared for taking over, technically, financially and managerially; and (ii) of SADC Secretariat (through technical assistance and budgetary support) the extent to which it can mobilise expertise internally to manage similar programme and build synergies with other cooperating partner institutions; the extent to which other programmes have been supported in sustaining their results for the future.	x						x
	⇒ How adequate was the project budget for its purpose particularly phasing out prospects?	x	x	x				
Value of EC contributions Connection between EC contributions and/or value added to the interventions of Member States.	⇒ Extent to which the project/programme (its objectives, targeted beneficiaries, timing, etc.) is complementary to the intervention of EU Member States in the region.	x			x		x	
	⇒ Extent to which the project/programme (its objectives, targeted beneficiaries, timing, etc.) is complementary to the SADC regional economic integration agenda.	x			x		x	

Annex III – Field mission country annexes

- Botswana
- Eswatini
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Tanzania

Botswana country mission summary report

Country	Botswana
Dates visited	4 - 6 November 2019
Organisations interviewed	PMU Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry – Department of International Trade Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry – Department of Trade and Consumer Affairs Botswana Bureau of Standards Botswana Trade Commission Ministry of Agriculture Botswana Competition Authority Botswana Unified Revenue Service European Delegation to Botswana

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 2,600,000
Advance disbursements (as of 31 Nov 2019)	€ 2,080,000 // 80% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of 30 Sep 2019)	€ 770,761 // 29% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 469,850 // 18% of Total value
Potential ineligible expense (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 12,472 // 2.5% of Total expenditure

Botswana has been hampered with a slow progress of implementation, with only 30% of funds advanced and delays in expenditure verification/audit causing hiatus in activities by the time of the country mission.

The PMU had only 15 months remaining to deliver the remaining 70% of the funds, including releasing 3rd tranche of 20% due in March-April 2020, with the contracted project manager due to finish by the end of the year.

The implementation arrangements were rather decentralised with the implementing partners playing an important role in procurement etc. This had led to a level of confusion about rules (SADC vs Govt), leading to delays in procurement processes and opening up risk of compliance once checks were being done. Fortunately Botswana has a relatively low (2.5%) level of potential ineligible expenses.

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
International trade administration & competition authority	€ 1,027,430 / 22%	Critical delays	BCA: high/medium BOTC: low/low
Enhanced capacity for implementation and regulation of SPS	€ 432,500 / 13%	Critical delays	high/medium

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Enhanced capacity for implementing/regulating TBT framework	€ 360,000 / 49%	Delays	high/high
Enhanced trade and development through E-commerce	€ 398,400 / 56%	Critical delays	high/high
Enhancing customs regulatory capacity	€ 180,000 / 10%	Delays	high/high

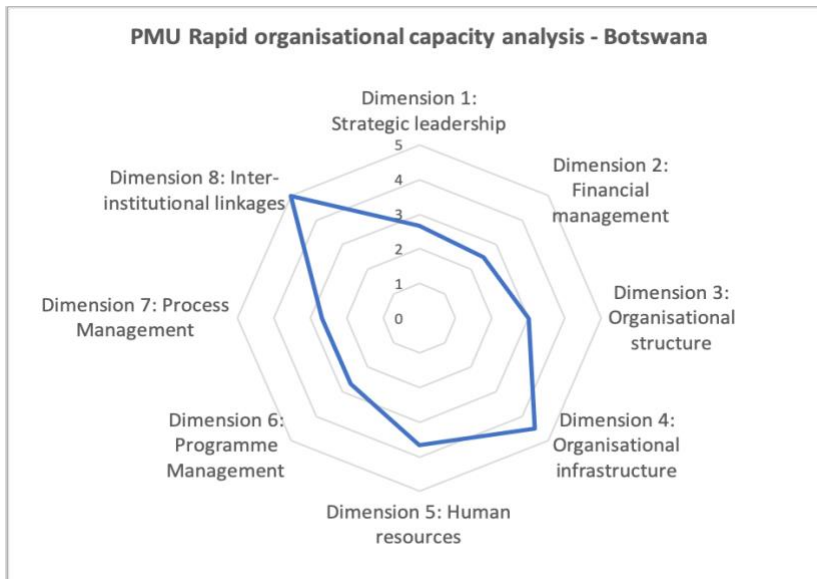
*assessment based on Evaluators' view

Given the status of implementation across the portfolio and track record for delivery, it is:

1. Highly unlikely that all planned activities will be completed by March 2021
2. Highly unlikely that Botswana will be able to call-down final tranche of funds (20% or €520,000) by March 2020
3. It will be highly likely that there will be considerable unspent balances from the planned overall budget unless the portfolio is actively rearranged

Each point above will have considerable impacts for the implementing partners, many of who have factored the TRF funds and activities into their strategic planning processes.

Rapid organisational assessment of the PMU



Concerns:

- **Leadership:** Apparent lack of leadership from MITI to drive TRF: Regular delays in central processes, reports of confusion about rules
- **Financial management:** Not using flexibilities available in TRF
- **Programme management:** Track record of implementing projects is slow and must be improved if TRF is to be successful in Botswana
- **Process management:** Significant delays in making decisions and finding solutions to challenges

Positives:

- **Inter-institutional linkages:** Varied portfolio of stakeholders

- **Organisational infrastructure:** Supporting infra in place

Recommendations

- All efforts must be made to **streamline approvals** across the board: *turnaround times to be in hours and days rather than weeks and months*
- **Confusion related to SADC vs Govt rules** must be urgently addressed
- In order to facilitate the anticipated increase in volume of activities/transactions, seek ways to **increase PMU management capacity**
- **Use FSU more actively** for support – and **hold SADC Secretariat accountable** for their role in managing the programme

Eswatini country mission summary report

Country	Eswatini
Dates visited	30 October 2019 – 1 November 2019
Organisations interviewed	PMU Ministry of Trade – Department of Trade Eswatini Revenue Authority Customs Clearing Agency Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Tourism Competition Commission Investment Promotion Authority Swaziland Standards Authority European Delegation to Eswatini

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 2,600,000
Advance disbursements (as of 31 Nov 2019)	€ 1,625,000 // 63% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of 30 Sep 2019)	€ 1,023,342 // 39% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 617,569 // 24% of Total value
Potential ineligible expense (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 9,248 // 1.5% of Total expenditure

Eswatini is making good progress in terms of spending its allocated funds and most implementing departments spoke about progress made, except for the Swaziland Standards Authority that has hit a major stumbling block in its implementation. Whereas it applied for accreditation, it failed at this attempt, which prompted senior staff to leave the organisations. Eswatini, like other countries has struggled with budget allocations that were too low to attract the relevant consultants to execute highly technical work and have had to re-tender, causing delays. This has also led to escalating costs of specific activities, which in turn means that some activities will have to be foregone.

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Customs cooperation	€ 640,310 / 25%	Delays	medium to high/medium
TBT	€ 568,300 / 22%	Delays	medium/low
SPS	€ 130,000 / 5%	Delays	low/very low
Rules of Origin	NA	NA	NA
Trade Facilitation	€ 81,900 / 3%	Delays	medium/low
Industrial Development	€ 179,560 / 7%	Delays	medium/low
Trade Promotion and development	€ 51,245 / 2%	Delays	medium/low
Trade in Services	€ 55,390 / 2%	Delays	medium/low
Trade Defence instruments**	€ 30,795 / 1%	On time / complete	high/medium

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Trade related adjustment**	NA	NA	NA
Competition policy**	€ 472,500 / 18%	Delays	medium to high

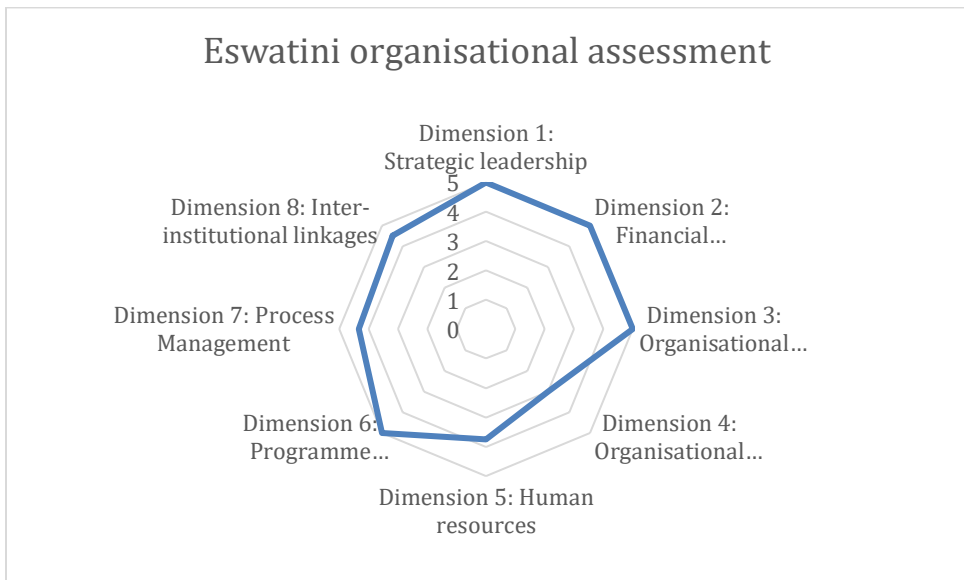
*assessment based on Evaluators' view

** only for SADC EPA signatories

The Competition Commission is one of the implementing agencies that has made impressive progress. It has moved from being almost non-functional to recruiting appropriate staff, training broadly from judges down to technical officers, has developed guidelines and has developed an integrated electronic system to ensure that the case-load of the commission is centralised. It is also making progress in sensitising citizens on the work of the commission and how the commission serves the consumer. It has, however, struggled to get Members of Parliament on board.

The work under customs, TBT, SPS and Rules of Origin are progressing towards allowing Eswatini to have an integrated customs system. Some work has been done on the honey and water bottling value chains, but no significant progress was reported on.

[Rapid organisational assessment of the PMU](#)



Eswatini has managed its PMU in such a way that it will remain in place at least until March 2021, at which point contracts will come to an end. Eswatini has the added advantage that it is also a member of COMESA and has benefitted from cross-pollination with the COMESA RISM project. Staff could be recruited that had good project implementation experience and that could learn from how the COMESA project was being implemented. However, attention will need to be paid to whether the relevant staff will be available to close down the TRF between April and September of 2021.

From interaction with the various implementers it seems as if they all were on top of their activities, knew exactly where they were at in terms of progress and spend. The Steering Committee includes the implementers and they regularly meet to report on progress made and

where stumbling blocks are being experienced. The PMU also has a very strong relationship with the European Delegation to Eswatini, which has helped in terms of ironing out stumbling blocks. It may be noted that the contact person in the EUD is a local Swazi, which may have helped in building the relationship rather than having to rely on EU staff that change frequently.

The one worry remains that the Standards Authority will be unable to complete the process towards accreditation before the TRF closes as key positions still need to be filled and the organisation equipped to pass the requisite accreditation tests.

Key findings

- The PMU and the implementing departments work extremely well together, with good communications amongst them and with the FSU and SADC Secretariat
- Eswatini has benefitted from implementing the COMESA RISM, which meant the TRF had already learnt lessons and were adept at handling and understanding the implementing environment.
- The Standards Authority is facing major challenges and may not be able to complete its activities before the TRF closes in 2021.

Recommendations

- Despite the PMU being in a good position to keep operating until March 2021 a clear plan needs to be developed in order for SADC to work with the country in terms of closing the TRF down.
- An assessment needs to be made in areas where costs have escalated due to expensive consultants in order to identify activities that can be foregone.

Continued pressure should be placed on the Standards Authority to increase the speed at which they are replacing staff and readying themselves for a second attempt at accreditation

Lesotho country mission summary report

Country	Lesotho
Dates visited	28 October 2019-30 October 2019
Organisations interviewed	PMU Permanent Secretary Ministry of Trade Department of Trade Department of Standards and Quality Assurance Ministry of Agriculture Visit to Maseru Bridge border post Lesotho Revenue Authority EU Delegation to Lesotho

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 2,600,000
Advance disbursements (as of 31 Nov 2019)	€ 1,799,785 // 69% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of 30 Sep 2019)	€ 870,000 // 33% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 569,965 // 22% of Total value
Potential ineligible expense (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 102,848 // 15% of Total expenditures

Lesotho was progressing well with its implementation but has now hit a serious roadblock as its PMU has been dissolved. The PMU employed the Project Coordinator – who has been absorbed into the Ministry of Trade, but the procurement and financial officers were contracted from outside government and their contracts have ended. In addition, the PMU employed two technicians who were making use of the equipment bought for SPS certification purposes and to work at Maseru Bridge border post to test incoming cargo. Both are now working without salaries and cannot be relied on to continue to do so. It is imperative that a solution is found to reconstitute the PMU as ministerial finance and procurement officers have not been trained on SADC rules and regulations and are unable to complete reports for the FSU and SADC Secretariat, which could well mean that Lesotho will become ineligible for any further funding.

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Customs cooperation	€ 195,000 / 8%	Critical delays	medium/very low
TBT	€ 610,000 / 25%	Delays	medium/low
SPS	€ 199,550 / 8%		Medium/low
Trade Facilitation	€ 400,000 / 17%	Delays	medium/low
Industrial Development	€ 584,500 / 24%		medium/low
Trade Promotion and development	€ 103,060 / 4%	Delays	low/very low
Trade Defence instruments**	€ 83,092 / 3%	Critical delays	low/low

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Competition policy**	€ 9,615 / 0.4%	Critical delays	very low/impossible
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*assessment based on Evaluators' view

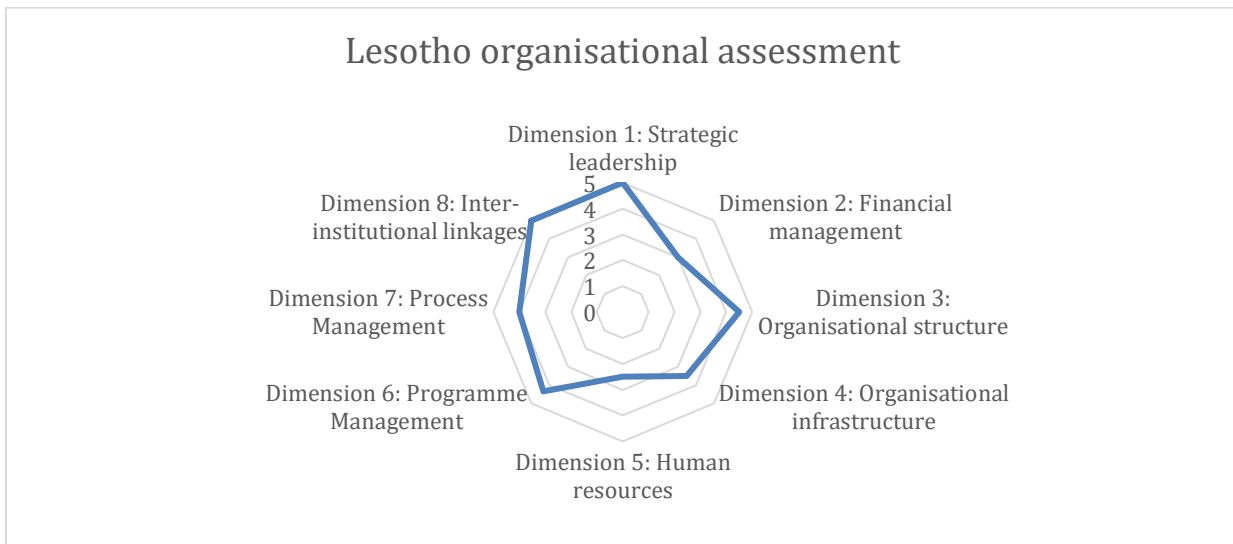
** only for SADC EPA signatories

As stated above Lesotho was making good progress against most of its projects. There are two areas of critical concern, apart from the one highlighted above with regard to the PMU. The first concerns the activities that affect Food Security under SPS. Given the highly contested political landscape in Lesotho, all the Ministries in the country tend to work in silos as they represent the different political interests of the main political parties. It has, therefore, been extremely difficult to execute activities that need the involvement of two or more ministries. In this case it is necessary that the Ministries of Trade, Health and Agriculture collaborate to work on food safety certification, but as yet the three have not been able to make any significant progress. It will take strong, senior political pressure to ensure that this happens.

The second problem encountered in Lesotho is that some activities need two laws to pass through Parliament before they can proceed. The first law concerns the Trade and Tariff Administration Law and the second, the Competition Law. Again, the political landscape in Lesotho is currently volatile as can be seen in cabinet reshuffles and talk of renewed elections early in 2020 in order to try and break the stalemate of the current coalition government. It is therefore, highly unlikely that these law will be passed anytime soon. What can be done in the interim is to engage the Legal Department to ensure that the two laws are given due recognition as important to the overall progress of the TRF.

Finally, the Steering Committee was changed during the initial months of TRF implementation from the implementing government departments to more independent participants, like the Private Sector Foundation. The Committee does not meet regularly as participants don't see the direct relevance to their work. It would make more sense to revert to the original composition which will allow the various implementers to share their experience of the TRF and advise and encourage one another on how to proceed. It can also serve as a forum within which regional initiatives can be discussed.

Rapid organisational assessment of the PMU



It was difficult to score Lesotho on the organisational assessment as the picture is completely different with a PMU in place and without one in place. Without a PMU the TRF has effectively ground to a halt. However, prior to 30 September 2019, the PMU was working effectively despite the high number of ineligible spend that was identified by the Auditors – this again also relates to the fragile political landscape as PS's can authorise spend without due recognition to SADC rules and regulations. The chart above tries to give recognition to the visible dedication of the Project Coordinator to the TRF but also to sound the alarm bells in terms of his current position with the Ministry of Trade and the fact that nothing seems to be moving without the other staff members. There still remains a strong relationship with the FSU.

Key findings

- Lesotho will not finish implementing its TRF activities without the PMU being reconstituted.
- The volatile political landscape in Lesotho is having a negative impact on TRF implementation.
- Designers of TRF-like programmes and activities should recognise that relying on laws to pass through parliament as precursors for further activities carry too high a risk.

Recommendations

- The PMU needs to be reconstituted so that projects can be completed and the programme successfully closed
- The Ministry should consider how the achievements of the project can be better sustained during the extension period
- The SADC Secretariat needs to engage at the highest political level to exert pressure to encourage the various ministries to work together under the food safety activities.
- The Lesotho PMU should rethink the activities that need the Tariff and Trade Administration Law and Competition Commission Law to pass and find a way around this stumbling block by already preparing for next steps or do groundwork within which the laws can be effectively implemented.

Malawi country mission summary report

Country	Malawi
Dates visited	30 October – 1 November 2019
Organisations interviewed	PMU Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism Ministry of Agriculture Talimbika National Authorising Officer Oil Seeds Producers and Processors Association Malawi Bureau of Standards Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce European Union Delegation to Malawi

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 1,400,000
Advance disbursements (as of 31 Nov 2019)	€ 1,120,000 // 80% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of 30 Sep 2019)	€ 942,068 // 67% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 55,857 // 4% of Total value
Potential ineligible expense (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 617,213 // 92% of Total expenditures

Malawi has been identified as one of the front-runners of the TRF. The PMU has been managed entirely internally by the Ministry of Trade, which has experience from previous engagements via a COMESA support programme that preceded TRF. From a financial perspective, Malawi had been able to release funds for the 2nd tranche early, which had enabled them to undertake a considerable amount of activities, meaning that they have progressed well. The major concern for Malawi, however, is the staggeringly high level of potentially ineligible expenditures – based on the audit report conducted by the SADC Secretariat, the highest in any country. A contributing factor here has been the use of SADC rules, but also the change in finance and procurement staff within the designated PMU team.

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Improved capacity for effective administration of rules of origin	€ 205,900 / 61%	Delays	high/high
Enhanced agrobased industrial development	€ 821,300 / 56%	Critical delays	high/high
Trade promotion and development enhanced	€ 442,000 / 17%	Delays	high/medium

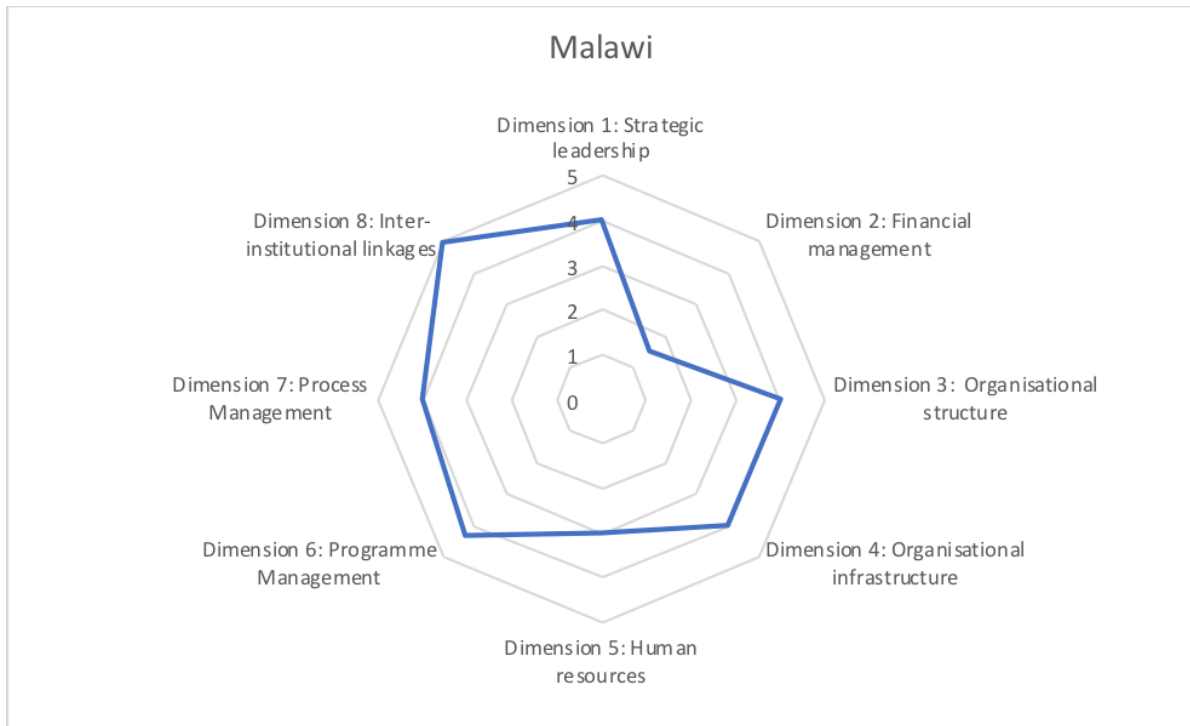
*assessment based on Evaluators' view

As a TRF project, Malawi has been a relative success, as identified by the FSU's tracking documents. They have had three projects, one focusing on oil seeds, another one on trade

development and the smallest one on Rules of Origin. Most planned outputs seem to have been delivered in reasonable order and appear to have achieved emerging outcomes, as verified by commissioned monitoring that is still partly ongoing. Malawi is likely to need only 12 more months to complete the remaining strands of the programme, rather than the full 21 months.

The budget line for administrative expenses is almost fully utilised and without the Steering Committee lifting the 15% cap, it is hard to see how the team will successfully manage the outstanding project activities to completion. This is not being made any easier by reports that the responsiveness of the FSU / SADC has gone down in parallel to the responsibilities of FSU handing over responsibilities to the Secretariat.

Rapid organisational assessment of the PMU



The major bottleneck for the project for the remaining 12 months is that the contracted TRF Manager is currently finishing in December, and while the Ministry staff will be able to continue TRF at some level of intensity, it is evident that staff will be redirected to other tasks from March 2020. Stakeholders attested to a notable drop in the management capacity of the programme between the period when the previous TRF Manager quit (June 2018) and the new one started (January 2019). Moreover, the admin budget line is almost fully used and even if they could get a virement, this is likely to take several months.

A second concern is the Ministry’s capacity to manage the finances, HR and other supporting functions. There is significant urgency on the finances, where the expenditure verification issue is ongoing, although the Ministry hope that it will have been completed by late November to allow for the release of the final payment tranche in early 2020.

Key findings

- As the administrative funds are exhausted, the project will face significant risk of not being able to deliver its objectives. The necessary funds for virement can be found in savings under other areas, so there is no need for additional funds.
- Malawi has waited for the processing of relatively straightforward virement request from the SADC Secretariat for over 6 months. While this may be linked to the challenging situation presented by the large volume of ineligible expenses faced by Malawi, such performance is not conducive to the intended outcomes of TRF. Indeed, due to the delays in the approval process, the opportunity to deliver post-harvest training was missed as funds were not available during the harvest.
- Malawi's project was tightly designed to focus primarily on support to oil seeds, which is a priority within the National Export Strategy. However, there is significant support to this from the national EUD as well as other donors and the value added of the TRF was perhaps slightly limited due to this. Future iterations of TRF could consider a more defined set of criteria to encourage grant applications for project that more directly enhance regional economic integration.

Recommendations

- Malawi should apply to the TRF Steering Committee for an exemption of the 15% administrative requirement to enable it to finalise project delivery
- The expenditure verification issues should be addressed as a matter of urgency to clear uncertainty about how much funds are available under the project, what liabilities may remain with the Ministry and what can be achieved in the remaining programme period

Mozambique country mission summary report

Country	Mozambique
Dates visited	4 – 6 November 2019
Organisations interviewed	PMU Ministry of Trade Cotton Institute Department of Customs and Excise Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Standards Authority Department of Forestry Legal Department Department of Fisheries European Delegation to Mozambique

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 2,600,000
Advance disbursements (as of 31 Nov 2019)	€ 1,780,000 // 68% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of 30 Sep 2019)	€ 1,541,753 // 59% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 1,057,984 // 41% of Total value
Potential ineligible expense (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 94,141 // 8% of Total expenditures

Mozambique's PMU only started operating in September of 2017 and therefore they can remain operational until March 2021. Whereas spending was consistent, and progress was being made, they have a new Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade that has to sign off on all spending requisitions. As she is new to Trade and new to the TRF, some delays have crept in for her to come up to speed. Mozambique has found the SADC rules and regulations to be less onerous than national rules and regulations.

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Rules of Origin	€ 139,000 / 5%	Delays	medium /low
Trade-related Adjustment	€ 143,000 / 6%	Not commenced	low /very low
Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	€ 442,000 / 17%	Critical delays	medium /medium
Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures	€ 185,000 / 7%	Critical delays	medium /low
Trade Defence Instruments	€ 80,000 / 3%	Delays	medium /medium
Industrial Development – Cotton / Textile Value Chain Development	€ 703,500 / 27%	Delays	high /medium

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Industrial Development - Forestry / Wood Value Chain Development	€ 517,500 / 20%	Critical delays	medium /low
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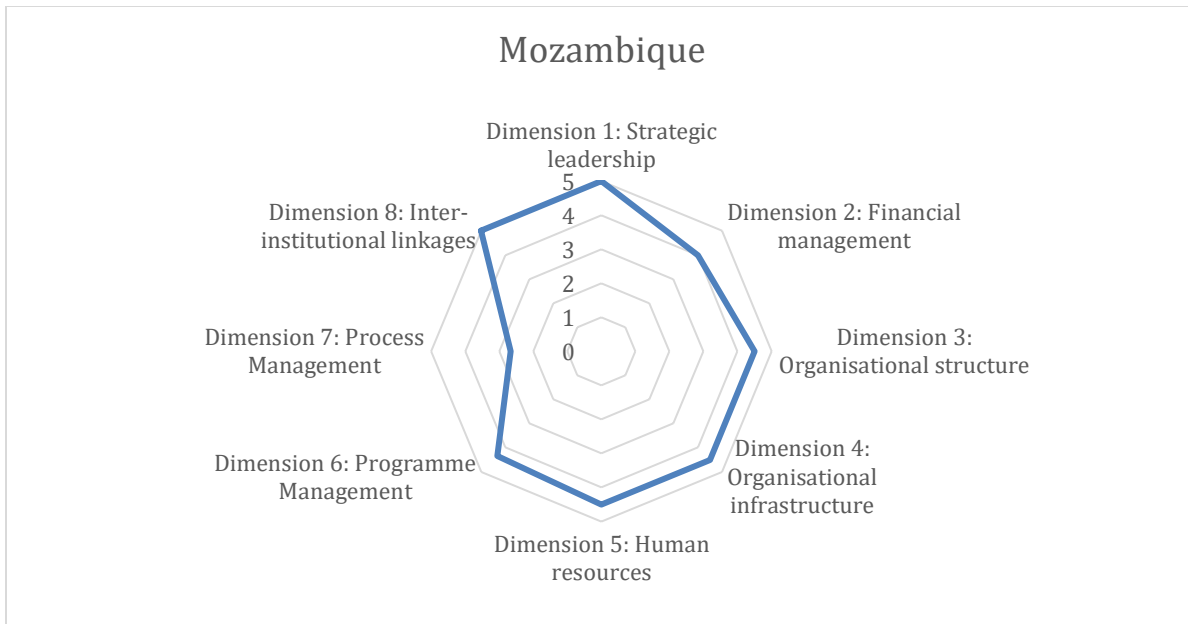
*assessment based on Evaluators' view

Most of the activities are making progress, however, Mozambique has had some challenges in terms of recruiting consultants that have the necessary expertise and are willing to work for the allocated budget. This has been especially the case with activities that relate to SPS and TBT.

The work being done by the cotton sector is very interesting in that the Cotton Institute went on a study tour to India and came back with numerous ideas on how to develop its small cotton industry. In the first instance, Mozambique will aim for organic certification, secondly, they will develop the local artisanal industry as they have bought hand operated looms that can spin cotton into fibres and lastly, they are aiming to produce hospital cotton. Hospital cotton has traditionally been imported from India but could be produced locally. By contrast the work done in the forestry sector has not progressed past value chain mapping exercises, so no real progress could be measured.

The PMU estimates that almost all of the activities still planned will be completed by March 2020, although delays are likely to creep in. This leaves a large gap until the TRF is supposed to start closing down and careful attention needs to be paid to ensure that closing down activities are started as soon as possible before key staff have dispersed.

[Rapid organisational assessment of the PMU](#)



The Mozambique PMU sits in a different building to the Ministry of Trade, albeit not a very far distance away. The physical distance does not seem to have hampered PMU integration or the sense of ownership the Ministry has over the TRF. Some procedural delays have recently been experienced due to a new Permanent Secretary that is still familiarising herself with the tasks at hand. The PMU speaks highly of the support received from the FSU. Generally, there is a conflation for PMU staff of the FSU and the SADC Secretariat as the PMU staff's main

interaction is with the FSU and not the Secretariat. Both the procurement and financial officers were well versed in the work being done and progress being made.

Key findings

- Mozambique is on track and likely to finish most of its planned activities by March 2020.
- The PMU is set to dissolve in March 2020, which will leave a gap of a year before SADC will start to close down the TRF and key knowledge necessary for reporting might be lost in the interim.
- The Cotton Industry has started doing some interesting work on developing the sector and should be supported as much as possible.

Recommendations

- If it is clear that other MS will not spend all of their allocated funds before the close of the TRF, one could consider giving Mozambique another year and develop a few additional activities to keep the PMU in place until the TRF officially winds down. This will allow for some crucial next steps to be taken under the areas of SPS and TBT as well as in the cotton and forestry sectors.

Tanzania country mission summary report

Country	Tanzania
Dates visited	11 – 13 November 2019
Organisations interviewed	PMU Ministry of Industry and Trade Tanzania Bureau of Standards TANTRADE Ministry of Agriculture European Delegation to Tanzania

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 1,400,000
Advance disbursements (as of 31 Nov 2019)	€ 1,060,000 // 76% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of 30 Sep 2019)	€ 540,987 // 39% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 263,941 // 19% of Total value
Potential ineligible expense (as of 31 March 2019)	€ 96,442 // 27% of Total expenditures

- **Interesting and varied portfolio** of activities addressing system issues across multiple key stakeholder groups along the Sunflower Value Chain
- **Slow progress of implementation**, with 70% of funds advanced and significant proportion of ineligible expenses risking hiatus in activities
- **Only 15 months remaining to deliver 60%** of the funds, including releasing 3rd tranche of 20% by March
- Concerns about compliance to financing agreement (e.g. monthly reporting) as the PMU had not submitted monthly reports to the FSU on time in August, September or October 2019

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Support the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen the SPS system along the Sunflower Value Chain	€ 353,350 // 61%	Critical delays	high/medium
Develop a National Industrial Policy	€ 150,000 // 15%	Critical delays	medium/medium
Sunflower Value Chain upgrading	€ 391,863 // 42%	Critical delays	high/medium
Trade Development	€ 200,000 // 30%	Critical delays	high/low
Trade in Services, Trade Facilitation and Rules of Origin	€ 194,785 // 8%	Critical delays	medium/low

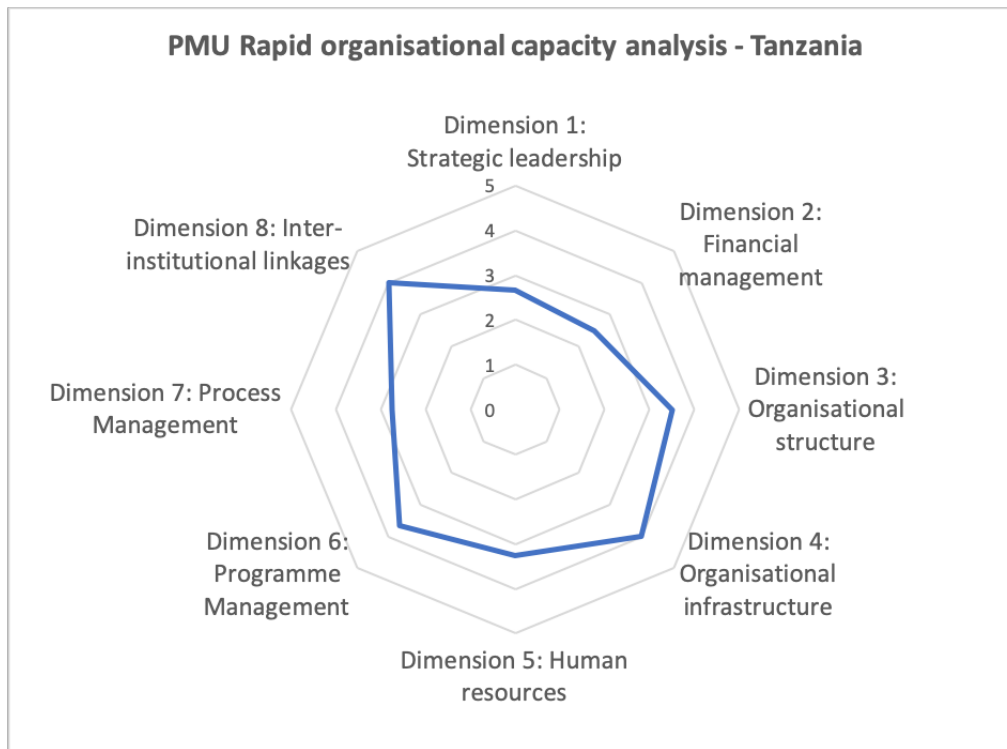
*assessment based on Evaluators' view

Given status of implementation across the portfolio and track record for delivery, **unless there is a significant increase in efficiency across all levels** (SADC, PMU/MITI, implementing partners), it is:

1. Unlikely that all planned activities will be completed by March 2021
2. Likely that there will be considerable unspent balances from the original budget as the TRF programme will have to close

This will all have considerable impacts for partners many of who have factored in these funds and activities as part of their strategic planning process.

[Rapid organisational assessment of the PMU](#)



Concerns:

- **Leadership:** The impression from the evaluator was that the TRF had been slightly forgotten, although the MTR mission visit seemed to have provided a good opportunity to re-establish contact with some of the implementing partners and to reinvigorate relationship for final 12-15 months
- **Financial management:** Value of ineligible expenses currently a concern (although the PMU assured that these were being addressed). Role of the Ministry of Finance presents a risk for delivery as they can introduce delays in the process.
- **Process management:** While positive that PMU can make quick decisions, communications and M&E with implementing partners has been lacking
- **Human resources:** PM currently missing, but being replaced 'shortly'.

Positives:

- **Inter-institutional linkages:** Rich portfolio of different stakeholders involved in trade
- **Organisational infrastructure:** Supporting infra in place, although location to Dodoma has complicated implementation and monitoring
- **Programme management:** PMU has managed to complete some activities with partners end-to-end, which shows it can be done. Now has to be scaled up

Recommendations

- All efforts must be made by all parties to **streamline approvals** across the board: *turnaround times to be in hours and days rather than weeks and months*
- In order to facilitate the anticipated increase in volume of activities/transactions, seek ways to **build communications channel between PMU and partners**
- PMU to **increase monitoring outcomes of activities as these are being implemented**

Annex IV – Desk based country annexes

- Madagascar
- Mauritius
- Namibia
- Seychelles
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Madagascar country summary report

Country	Madagascar
Date interviewed	20 November 2019
Organisation interviewed	PMU

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 1,400,00
Advance disbursements (as of Nov 2019)	€ 420,000 // 30% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of Oct 2019)	€ 285,782 // 20% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of March 2019)	€ 125,334 // 9% of Total value

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Rules of Origin (RoO)	€ 270,000 / 19%	Critical delays	medium /low
Trade Defence Instruments	€ 100,000 / 7%	Delays	low /very low
Trade Facilitation	€ 200,000 / 14%	Delays	medium /low
Trade in Services	€ 120,000 / 9%	Critical delays	low /very low
Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	€ 215,000 / 15%	Delays	medium /low
Industrial Development	€ 295,000 / 21%	Critical delays	low /very low

*assessment based on Evaluators' view

Madagascar only joined the TRF after some countries were already busy implementing. In addition, they had high staff turn-overs with the TRF Focal Point changing three times within the first fifteen months of operations. Some progress has been made although Madagascar also struggles with finding relevant consultants at the prices budgeted for. They are forgoing some activities in order to re-tender.

Their main difficulties with ineligible spend originates from the fact that VAT was charged on a number of procurement items. The PMU is waiting for Government to refund the VAT in order to bring down their % of ineligible spend.

Key findings

- Madagascar has found that seconded staff across various donor programmes are being paid differently in terms of top-ups. In order to avoid any infighting, the Ministry of Commerce wants to standardise such top-ups, which will include what the PMU is currently paying TRF staff.

Recommendations

- Despite the PMU's optimism that all activities can be completed within the given timeframe, close attention will need to be paid as all activities need to be stepped-up.
- Madagascar has benefitted from regional workshops and would continue to learn and integrate with the rest of SADC if these regional workshops can be held at regular intervals.

Mauritius country summary report

Country	Mauritius
Date interviewed	28 November 2019
Organisation interviewed	PMU

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 1,400,00
Advance disbursements (as of Nov 2019)	€ 420,000 // 30% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of Oct 2019)	€ 271,879 // 19% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of March 2019)	€ 236,994 // 17% of Total value

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Trade facilitation and TBT	€ 925,000 / 19%	Critical delays	high/medium
Trade promotion and development	€ 474,800 / 21%	Delays	high/medium

*assessment based on Evaluators' view

The PMU has consisted of an external expert as a project manager who was in post from June 2017 to September 2019. Other colleagues from the Ministry are still working on the team, but are lacking a little bit of capacity even with an administrative assistant, finance and procurement managers supporting the project and the Deputy Permanent Secretary as Chairperson.

The main issues for Mauritius have related to procurement and availability of suitable market responses for the required procurements. As a result, it is now expected that the TRF work will go on until June 2020 or possibly late 2020.

Key findings

The PMU had gathered a number of learnings from programme implementation. These included:

- When managing bid committees for procurements one challenge was that during the lengthy processes (extenuated by SADC Secretariat response times), designated experts may have moved post, which led, at times, to the replacement of a Chairperson, leading to further delays
- There are trade-offs in the choice of procurement modalities. While a limited bidding exercise may expedite the process, it does not ensure that the Ministry would receive a sufficient number of compliant bids. So outreach to the market by implementing partners was crucial.
- The SADC Procurement procedures were seen as stringent and there was a definite learning curve when using these
- Procurement is process and rules driven and when there are questions or uncertainties of procedure, there is a risk in a bureaucracy that procurements will end up 'bouncing' between approval levels as clarifications are sought, introducing further delays

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- Managing a large number small activities was seen as a challenge and extremely cost intensive. It is likely that focusing on one or two larger projects would have produced better value for money.
- For future programmes like this, it may be more beneficial for Mauritius to apply for the budget support modality rather than project support. The additional capacity development from programme management does not appear to justify the transaction costs for managing the programme.
- The FSU was seen as very helpful, especially during the early part of the programme. Phasing it out would be problematic as PMU has concerns about being able to receive the required support from the SADC Secretariat (e.g. on procurement issues) in a timely manner.

Namibia country summary report

Country	Namibia
Date interviewed	28 November 2019
Organisation interviewed	PMU

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 2,600,000
Advance disbursements (as of Nov 2019)	€ 1,274,000 // 49% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of Oct 2019)	€ 849,601 // 33% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of March 2019)	€ 494,369 // 19% of Total value

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Rules of Origin (RoO)	€ 135,000 / 5%	Critical delays	medium / low
Trade Facilitation	€ 600,000 / 23%	Critical delays	medium /low
Sanitary & Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) Measures	€ 302,000 / 12%	Critical delays	medium /low
Trade Promotion & Development	€ 63,000 / 2%	On time / complete	low /very low
Competition Policy	€ 263,000 / 10%	Critical delays	medium / low
Trade in Services	€ 114,000 / 4%	On time / complete	low /very low
Industrial Development	€ 839,000 / 32%	Critical delays	medium /low

*assessment based on Evaluators' view

The PMU has a very clear vision of different stages of implementation for Namibia's activities. Whereas there has been slow progress to date this is due to the fact that they are in Phase 1 during which saw most of the procurement of consultants to do baseline studies and other work. Towards the end of 2019, start of 2020, these studies should be completed which will result in an uptick of spend as consultants are paid. During Phase 2 and 3 there will be additional increases in spend as the recommendations from the consultant's work is implemented in terms of procuring equipment and hosting of training and validation workshops.

Namibia's ineligible spend relates to VAT being charged on specific procured items and these funds will be returned to the TRF within 2020, which should negate all ineligible spend recorded for Namibia.

Key findings

Namibia's PMU is deeply integrated into the Ministry of Trade and most activities were designed in-house with little to no outside inputs. This has an impact of good ownership over the TRF despite the fact that there has been high staff turn-over. Namibia is experiencing some challenge in working across various Ministries but there is ample scope for the TRF to escalate matters via their Ministry to executive levels.

Recommendations

- Namibia seems committed and is effectively implementing the TRF, the second tranche payment should be made as soon as possible given the very low percentage of ineligible spend that can all be attributed to VAT payments.

Seychelles country summary report

Country	Seychelles
Date interviewed	21 November 2019
Organisation interviewed	PMU

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 1,400,000
Advance disbursements (as of Nov 2019)	€ 1,120,000 // 80% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of Oct 2019)	€ 534,229 // 48% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of March 2019)	€ 434, 532 // 31% of Total value

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€) and spend (%)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Customs Co-Operation	€ 645,000 / 46%	Critical delays	good /low
Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	€ 418,000 / 30%	Critical delays	medium / very low
Trade Facilitation	€ 144,000 / 10%	Critical delays	medium to low / very low
Trade Defence Instruments	€ 178,000 / 13%	Critical delays	medium / very low

*assessment based on Evaluators' view

The Seychelles currently has a number of activities that have not been started as yet, but it is optimistic that it can complete the activities within 18 months, leaving a window to complete reporting before September 2021. Regardless, the PMU should be assessed to see whether it has enough support and staff members to ensure that this is the case. From current spend it seems that equipment procurement has progressed, but training and validation workshops still need to take place. Some activities had to be foregone in order to make allowances for more expensive consultants and equipment.

Key findings

A number of activities have not made good progress of late with challenges in working with parastatals and cross-Ministerial collaboration. For instance, working with the National Bio-Security Agency has been difficult with little progress to show. In addition, activities on SPS have stalled given challenges with recruiting a consultant, who would also be responsible for drafting of the training manual. In essence, there are some key activities that are blocking progress on activities that can only follow once consultants have finished up their work.

Recommendations

- The FSU in conjunction with the PMU will have to do a quick assessment of the PMU to see where it can be capacitated to ensure that all activities can be completed.
- A regional forum can be held to discuss the issue of consultants, their fees and the small pool of experts that can work on highly technical issues – lessons learnt from other countries could assist the Seychelles. And where the Seychelles has made progress, the other MS can learn from their experiences.

Zambia country summary report

Country	Zambia
Date interviewed	28 November 2019
Organisation interviewed	PMU

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 1,400,000
Advance disbursements (as of Nov 2019)	€ 1,220,000 // 87% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of Oct 2019)	€ 1,006,131 // 72% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of March 2019)	€ 240,052 // 17% of Total value

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Enhanced Customs cooperation	€ 59,000	Delays	high/high
TBT/Quality	€ 214,400	Delays	high/high
Enhanced SPS environment	€ 209,900	Delays	high/high
Effective administration of RoO	€ 110,000	Delays	high/high
Trade Facilitation	€ 134,500	Critical delays	high/high
Trade promotion and development	€ 235,700	Delays	high/high
Enhanced Trade in Services capacity	€ 116,000	Completed	-

*assessment based on Evaluators' view

Out of all the Member States, Zambia is probably the furthest along in implementing TRF. They combine a high level of expenditure and maturity of planned activities with an adherence to SADC rules resulting in a comparatively low level of ineligible expenses. The TRF PMU has been managed by two full-time external project managers with a third expert to support on procurement issues planned. Given current expenditure, the TRF is likely to be able to sustain the PMU for almost up until the end of 2020, providing a high level of confidence in the Ministry's ability to wrap up the programme in good time,

Key findings

The PMU shared a number of learning based on their experience managing the programme:

- There have been some management issues at technical level: buy-in from implementing partners in other ministries, departments and agencies can sometimes be a challenge. However, these can be mitigated by a sensitive and well-resourced PMU

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- Due to the nature of TRF, there is a lot of procurement, which is a challenge: it is easy to under-budget, or end up in a situation where there are no eligible bidders.
- There has been a lack of coherence and understanding between SADC and MS on rules across the programme life cycle, which has confused implementation at different stages
- SADC team will conduct audit mission to check status of ineligible expenditure. The PMU is expecting to get close to 0% of ineligible expenditure. Major concern is fuel due to different established practises nationally.
- Overall, support positive from FSU, guidance on procurement other technical issues, finance remains challenge. Would see a challenge to continue management of programme without FSU support

Zimbabwe country summary report

Country	Zimbabwe
Date interviewed	25 November 2019
Organisation interviewed	PMU

Finances

Total country project(s) value	€ 1,400,00
Advance disbursements (as of Nov 2019)	€ 1,220,000 // 87% of Total value
Actual expenses (as of Oct 2019)	€ 444,836 // 32% of Total value
Verified eligible expenses (as of March 2019)	€ 229,904 // 16% of Total value

Implementation progress

Project	Budget allocation (€)	Status as per Dashboard (08/19)	Likelihood to complete project with / without increased efficiency at all levels *
Developing a NQI policy and strategy	€ 75,800	Completed	-
Drafting of a legal and regulatory framework for TBT and SPS implementation	€ 120,000	Critical delays	high/high
Establishing a coordination mechanism for quality and SPS institutions for WTO notification	€ 134,000	Critical delays	high/high
Enhancing capacity of quality and SPS service providers	€ 586,000	Critical delays	high/medium
Supporting products from honey and vegetable SMEs to comply with regional and national standards	€ 197,000	Critical delays	high/high
Awareness creation on use of quality and safety standards in Zim society	€ 77,200	Critical delays	high/medium

*assessment based on Evaluators' view

Out of 16 outputs planned under the programme, four have been completed. Another 11 outputs were in progress, with an average of two activities outstanding per output. One output (related to awareness raising) had not been started due to sequencing issues, as the .

The PMU was a bit late to commence, with the TRF starting in July 2017 and the PMU only in December 2017. The PMU is aiming to complete the project implementation by June 2020, although slight delays are possible.

Key findings

- SADC rules have introduced some challenges that have made the programme implementation more cumbersome. Firstly, there has been a requirement for pre-payment of services by suppliers. This has required a bank guarantee, which has had to have been obtained in South Africa and is a process that is new especially to smaller suppliers in Zimbabwe. Similarly, the inherent delays in the procurement have led to the weakening of the Zimbabwe dollar, which has led to the original budget being insufficient to cover the appreciated cost of the procurement.
- In two or three procurements there have been insufficient responses to requests for expressions of interest, which have required the PMU to relaunch the procurements. This, again, has led to delays and budget insufficiency.
- There have also been challenges with the quality of the Terms of Reference that have been drafted by implementing partners
- The procurement process has been managed by the PMU who have overall responsibility for the procurement. The implementing partner drafts Terms of Reference and the Job Specification. The PMU puts the documentation into the SADC rules format. The partner participates in the bid evaluation process. Finally, the selection is passed on to Ministerial approval.
- FSU has been a backbone for technical support and it is seen important that they are in place to continue through the final phase of the programme.

Annex V – Members of the Reference Group

NAME	TITLE
[REDACTED]	European Union
[REDACTED]	Acting Director - Industrial Development and Trade
[REDACTED]	Senior Technical Advisor (EPA Unit) and Alternate Task Manager
[REDACTED]	Senior Programme Officer - Trade and Acting Task Manager
[REDACTED]	Procurement Officer
[REDACTED]	Finance Officer
[REDACTED]	Senior Programme Officer - Project Management Steering Unit
[REDACTED]	Project Manager/Team Leader, FSU
[REDACTED]	Trade Expert, FSU

Regional stakeholders interviewed

NAME	TITLE
[REDACTED]	Project Manager/Team Leader, FSU
[REDACTED]	Trade Expert, FSU
[REDACTED]	Senior Programme Officer - Trade and Acting Task Manager
[REDACTED]	Senior Programme Officer - Project Management Steering Unit
[REDACTED]	Senior Programme Officer - SPS and TBT
[REDACTED]	European Union
[REDACTED]	Project Management Officer (PPRM)
[REDACTED]	Senior Procurement Officer
[REDACTED]	Director, Finance
[REDACTED]	Project preparation and Development