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› Formative evaluation of the Expert Deployment Mechanism (EDM) project – Management response

# Formative evaluation of the Expert Deployment Mechanism (EDM) project – Management response

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<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Accepted/ Accepted but Modified/Rejected</b>	<b>Commitments</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility Centre</b>	<b>Target Completion Date (Y/M/D)</b>	<b>Revised Target Date (Y/M/D)</b>
1. The Canadian executing agency (CEA) should take steps to ensure that project activities are relevant to all stakeholders, and particularly to private sector organizations (PSOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). This will involve updated Country Needs Assessment Plans (CNAPs), inclusion of PSO and CSO representatives in CNAP revision, and generation of new, more inclusive technical assistance activities (TAAs) as a result of a participatory CNAP revision process.	Accepted	1.1 Innovative Finance for International Assistance (MLI), with the support of Trade Negotiations (TCW), will collaboratively work with key stakeholders to strengthen existing measures that allow recurrent reviews and updates of CNAPs. Active effort will be made to identify and encourage the participation of PSOs and CSOs, and generate more inclusive technical assistance requests (TARs).	1.1.1 In discussion with Cowater International (the CEA), identify practical approaches that support ongoing documentation and analysis of emerging stakeholder needs and priorities. The results will be integrated into annual project workplans to strengthen efforts for the generation of more inclusive TARs.	MLI with support from Trade Negotiations (TCW)	2025/03/31	
			1.1.2 Encourage Cowater International to increase the level of effort for its engagement with Canadian missions in project countries with the aim of obtaining support in mobilizing local CSO and PSO consultations, as part of CNAP updating exercises.	TCW with support from MLI	2024/05/30	

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2. The CEA should work to strengthen a sense of ownership of the project among partner country governments, which are the main interlocutors in implementing project processes. This will necessarily involve further consultation and messaging with key partners, including Canadian missions abroad, about the importance of PSO and CSO involvement in trade negotiation and implementation, and of gender equality, social inclusion, human rights and environmental sustainability in EDM to generate technical assistance activities (TAAs) that are inclusive.	Accepted but modified	2.1 The recommendation to strengthen a sense of project ownership among country governments is viewed as a long-term objective that goes beyond the scope of the project's current mandate, which focuses on providing demand-driven technical assistance to build capacity for negotiating or implementing trade agreements with Canada. In this light, MLI will be committed to encouraging Cowater International to develop a more effective strategy that leverages the participation of PSOs and CSOs in the planning and delivery of inclusive TAAs.	2.1.1 Use annual project workplanning cycles and other opportunities for engagement (such as project advisory committee meetings) to initiate discussions on avenues of increased PSO and CSO participation in TAAs.	MLI with support from TCW	2024/05/30	
			2.1.2 Canadian missions in project countries will be encouraged and given support to promote awareness of opportunities for participation in the EDM project among PSOs and CSOs.	TCW with support from MLI	2024/12/30	

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3. It is essential for EDM to accelerate project activity. The CEA should conduct increased outreach to, and consultation with, governments, PSOs and CSOs to generate a sufficient number of new technical assistance requests (TARs) to contribute to EDM intermediate results. GAC should prioritize, to the extent possible, identification of new country partners for implementation of EDM and introduction of the project to key national government partners.	Accepted but modified	3.1 . The EDM project responds to developing countries' demands for technical assistance and, as such, GAC cannot identify new EDM partner countries. However, MLI will encourage Cowater International to intensify efforts to increase consultations with governments, PSOs and CSOs, with a dual purpose of raising awareness of the project and incentivizing the generation of more TARs and TAAs.	3.1.1 Use annual project workplanning cycles and other opportunities for engagement (such as project advisory committee meetings) to initiate discussions on stakeholder consultations that create conditions for the generation of an increased number of TARs and TAAs.	MLI with support from TCW	2024/05/30	

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		3.2 In recognition of the operational challenges (especially COVID-19 pandemic restrictions), a no-cost extension of the project to 2028 will be considered, allowing the deployment of more TAAs that further advance intermediate outcomes and the sustainability of results.	3.2.1 Consider a no-cost extension of the project to 2028.	MLI	2024/03/31	

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4. The CEA should undertake a revision of its current budget allocations so that unspent funds can be used to support such activities as increased project representation and promotion, Country Needs Assessment Plan revision, further investigation of country contexts and contextual issues such as the trade/development nexus. Funding should also be allocated to develop more TARs on environmental sustainability and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) issues. Sufficient resources to reach CSOs and small and medium-sized enterprises must also be allocated and justified to achieve results.	Accepted	4.1 MLI will work with Cowater International to improve efficiency in project expenditure planning, with an emphasis on the flow of more funding toward hard-to-reach stakeholders, including PSOs, CSOs and marginalized social groups, and toward TAAs that address GESI issues.	4.1.1 In discussion with Cowater International, revise the current project budgeting allocation method in ways that allow flexible responses to emerging needs and priorities at all levels of project implementation.	MLI	2024/05/30	

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5. As part of the revised management and budget for the remainder of the project, the CEA should develop a sustainability/exit strategy and plan that includes targets for sustainability. The sustainability strategy should be participatory, designed with input from partners and beneficiaries and carefully monitored through the remainder of the project.	Accepted	5.1. MLI will hold discussions with Cowater International to put in place support systems (including adequate finances) that allow rigorous monitoring and reporting on results as well as the development of an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of results. The annual workplans will be used to discuss action strategies that advance these 2 objectives, including sound approaches to consulting stakeholders in the process.	5.1.1 Work with Cowater International to carefully determine the task and resource requirements for project monitoring and the sustainability strategy.	MLI	2024/05/30	
			5.1.2 As part of reviews of annual workplans, initiate discussions to assess progress on the application of improved monitoring and reporting system and on results sustainability.	MLI	2024/10/31	

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		5.2 Explore opportunities to increase the frequency of project advisory committee meetings from once a year to twice a year in order to allow more frequent reviews of performance gaps and seek measures to address them. This includes considering the expansion of committee membership to include representatives from Canadian missions in project countries.	5.2.1 Hold discussions with Cowater International to agree on the modalities of an expanded mandate for the project advisory committee.	MLI with support from TCW	2024/05/30	
6. The CEA should build on gender equality knowledge amongst consultants and beneficiaries to directly address barriers that prevent women from participating in international trade.	Accepted	6.1 MLI will support continuing current efforts to address gender-based barriers to women's participation in international trade.	6.1.1 Encourage Cowater International to continue building knowledge resources on gender equality to support consultants and beneficiaries in their efforts to address gender equality issues in international trade.	MLI with support from TCW	2024/06/30	



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7. The CEA needs to consider a more holistic approach to human rights in TAAs that recognizes and addresses the adverse effects of increased international trade on women, Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, children and adolescents, as well as other vulnerable groups.	Accepted	7.1 MLI will encourage Cowater International to ensure that affected groups are consulted in the preparation of TARs and TAAs to address potential areas of concern related to the project's mandate that is limited to the promotion of policies, regulations and standards governing mutually beneficial trade agreements between Canada and trading partner countries.	7.1.1 As part of the review of annual project workplans, seek opportunities to consult marginalized groups in the preparation of TARs and TAAs to address their concerns.	MLI with support from TCW	2024/05/30	

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8. Further capacity building is needed by the CEA to address country and sectoral environmental sustainability issues to develop mutually supportive trade and environment policies.	Accepted	8.1 MLI will encourage Cowater International to adapt a more rigorous approach to integrating environmental issues into the preparation of TAAs as a strategy to foster the building of country governments' capacity to develop environmentally sustainable trade policies and practices.	8.1.1 As part of reviews of annual project workplans, ensure that TAAs focus on enhancing the capacity of country governments to develop environmentally sustainable trade policies and practices.	MLI with support from TCW	2024/05/30	

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