UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Independent project evaluation:

South-South Integration and the SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative*

Independent Evaluation Unit
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BAPA	Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CAITEC	Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation
CIDCA	China International Development Cooperation Agency
COVID	COVID-19 Pandemic
DESA	The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DRC	Development Research Center of the State Council (DRC) of People's Republic of China.
ECIDC	Economic Cooperation and Integration among developing countries Branch of UNCTAD's Division on Globalization and Development Strategies (GDS)
G77	The Group of 77 at the United Nations
GDS	UNCTAD's Division on Globalization and Development Strategies
GVC	Global Value Chain
HRGE	Human Rights and Gender Equality
IGO	Intergovernmental organization
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
ICTA	Information and Communication Technology Agency (Sri Lanka)
INDEF	Institute For Development of Economics and Finance (Indonesia)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSI	Policy Studies Institute (Ethiopia)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMP	Sustainability Monitoring Period
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	The United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNPDF	United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund
WTO	World Trade Organization

Assessment rating on various evaluation criteria:

Rating	*Description*
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	*The project performed well overall against a particular evaluation criterion with no short comings.*
Satisfactory (S)	*The project performed well overall against a particular evaluation criterion with but had minor short comings.*
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	*The project performed moderately well against the particular criterion (performing satisfactorily against almost half of the evaluation questions) and has short comings and room for improvement.*
Somehow Satisfactory (SS)	*The project performed poorly overall against majority of the evaluation questions and there is need to take steps to improve the project aspect being evaluated.*
Not Satisfactory (NS)	*The project performed poorly in almost all the evaluation questions and there is need for immediate and significant changes to be made to improve project outcomes.*
Unable to Assess (UA)	*The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the independent evaluation of the project titled "South-South Integration and the SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative." The project was funded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund, which is part of the United Nations' Peace and Development Trust Fund, supported by the Government of the People's Republic of China. The project was implemented by UNCTAD from 01/11/18 to 30/04/22. Meeting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is inextricably linked with the process of structural transformation. This project aimed to share experience from China with first-hand experience in the transformation process and an ambitious foreign economic policy based on cross-regional infrastructure connectivity and productive investment known as the Belt & Road initiative (BRI) with other countries in the Global South.

The evaluation results matrix was revised and validated in the inception phase to clarify the theory of change and make it more evaluable. As per this revised framework, the overall objective of the project was to "accelerate sustainable and transformative development in the selected Belt & Road partner countries (and beyond)." It sought to achieve six outcomes to achieve this objective, which are: (1) Increase in self-reported knowledge of the participants; (2) Improved capacity of selected partner countries to engage the BRI with a deeper understanding of China's development experience in structural transformation and associated policy options; (3) BRI partner countries design and adapt better policy strategies and institutional mechanisms to obtain better development outcomes from BRI initiatives and associated structural transformation and achievement of SDGs; (4) Use of advisory services by the targeted stakeholders; (5) The software tool is adopted and used by the targeted stakeholders; and (6) Improved understanding of selected BRI partner countries on the economic shock from Covid-19 and appropriate policy options in responding to the shock.

Methodology: In line with the terms of reference (Annex I), the evaluation assessed the project on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, partnerships and synergies, coherence, sustainability, gender, human rights and disability inclusion criteria. Additionally, the evaluation was asked to make a preliminary assessment on the likelihood of the project making an impact. The evaluation followed a theory-driven, utilization-focused, mixed-methods, inclusive and participatory approach with adequate triangulation and counterfactuals to arrive at credible, reliable and unbiased findings. Using (a) UNEG Norms and standards; (b) UNCTAD Evaluation Policy; (c) OIOS protocol of evaluation during COVID-19, the evaluation utilized a mixture of primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data sources included, among others, stakeholder consultations with 22 key informants via individual and group interviews, observation of event recordings, and an online survey of 47 stakeholders (56% response rate). Secondary data sources included all key documents made available by UNCTAD and its stakeholders.

FINDINGS

Relevance: The project was highly relevant to the needs of not just the pilot countries of Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and Indonesia, but also to UNCTAD's mandates and the UN's SDG agenda. The project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of the participating countries. It was in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which calls for strengthening the important role of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations system for integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. Further, both Nairobi Maafikiano and Bridgetown Covenant acknowledge the importance of building productive capacity and South-South cooperation. The project was centered on UNCTAD's 6Subprogamme 1 that focuses on enhancing "economic policies and strategies at all levels for sustained growth, inclusive and sustainable development", including by promoting South-South cooperation. By providing a deep dive into the policies used by China, which is the second largest and fastest growing large developing economy in the world, the project helped bridge existing knowledge gaps on alternative development models, and thus was highly relevant to other developing

countries as well as their partner development organizations. There is a lot of pent-up demand for more South-South learning and cooperation. Stakeholder consultations indicated that participants were interested in learning evermore on how China grew so fast and how it managed to build large technology behemoths such as Ali Baba and Tencent in such a short period of time.

Efficiency: The project had a total budget of US$929,046 for the period 2018-2022. Most of the expenses were for staffing and travel costs. The project implementation modality had to suddenly shift to remote delivery for most of its work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which turned out to be a blessing from an efficiency perspective as it helped the project deliver more outputs than originally intended. A small, diverse and skilled team implemented the project in an efficient manner.

Effectiveness: The project made substantial progress in achieving six outcomes envisaged under its evaluation results framework. This progress is most visible in increasing knowledge of the targeted audience. Policymakers in the pilot countries had limited knowledge of China's policies in the areas of trade, industry, macro and finance, debt management and digital economy prior to the launch of the project, which improved substantially at the end of project intervention. The participants indicated that they had gained a new understanding of China's development experience. The evaluation also noted an increased capacity for utilizing China's development and structural experience in policy formulation. More than 15 relevant policy recommendations were identified, which were endorsed by the participants in UNCTAD webinars. The papers have been submitted to the governments and relevant policymakers. The most visible progress was observed in the adoption of a new digital strategy in Sri Lanka. These stakeholders also benefitted from peer-to-peer learning and advising. Some advisory services were also reflected in policy experience papers shared by China's government affiliated think tanks like the Centre for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD) and the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC). The evaluation noted that the project's services were not just utilized by beneficiary countries but were also in popular demand by other countries, who wanted similar studies conducted for their countries. The evaluation also concluded that the work of the project had gained increased relevance in view of the ongoing pandemic as well as due to increased importance of digital economy and ongoing trade negotiations at bilateral and multilateral forums.

Likelihood of impact: The project intervention achieved all the planned outcomes. More importantly, the interventions chosen were of the type that can sustain with little further support. Their delivery involved local stakeholders, who actively participated in the process, and thus likely have a significant degree of interest in owning the outcomes. The project generated extensive increase in the understanding of the policymakers in the pilot countries. Lessons from these policies for developing countries were well documented in a book prepared by the project team and uploaded on the UNCTAD BRI Platform for wider dissemination. These policy strategies and recommendations were broadly discussed in the project meetings with the participation comprising ministerial and high/senior level policy makers from the project countries and other developing countries. The findings of the research were recognized by policymakers, which is also evident from the requests received from other developing countries for similar projects for them (e.g. Algeria and Pakistan). However, it is not clear to what degree this extends to stakeholders beyond those directly participating in the project and to what degree their interest is likely to sustain without further support. Thus, it is too early to tell if the project will make a significant impact, which is defined as the change in socio-economic condition of targeted beneficiaries.

Partnerships and synergies: The project established significant partnerships, particularly with local governments and leading think tanks in the three pilot countries. These partnerships led not only to the research of policy papers but also to the incorporation of recommendations in national policies. However, the ongoing pandemic imposed some limitations on the availability of stakeholders as well as on developing deeper synergies among project participants (despite the mitigation measures undertaken by the project team). Overall, the project developed partnerships and synergies as best as possible under the circumstances.

Coherence: The project was complementary to other existing global programmes on sustainable development in pilot countries as well as for other developing countries. Its work supported various UNCTAD strategic frameworks such as the Bridgetown Covenant and Nairobi Maafikiano. However, not much work was undertaken at this stage to align work with UN Country Teams, UNDAFs as well as other UN and non-UN actors in supporting participating countries in achieving sustainable development. It is not clear to what extent this was realized of its own volition on ground.

Sustainability: The BRI platform is an open forum that will continue to share the project's outcomes with beneficiary countries and other relevant stakeholders towards continuing peer learning and capacity-building. This should help with the sustainability of the outcomes. There is some evidence that recommendations developed in the frame of the project are being picked up by pilot countries (e.g., design of digital policies in Sri Lanka). That said, it is too soon to determine any long-term or sustainable effects of the project. A continued follow-up to build on the project's results is required to sustain its delivered and second-order catalytic effects.

Human rights, gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion: The project made efforts to incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment in an indirect manner. There was no visible evidence to suggest that a significant level of effort was made to incorporate human rights-based approach and disability inclusion in the project design or its implementation.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

The evaluation noted following lessons learned and good practices that have relevance to UNCTAD projects of similar nature:

a) Institutionalization of collaboration emerged as both a good practice and lesson learned. Where the project co-opted institutions rather than individuals, it continued to make progress despite change in political circumstances. Elsewhere, the project needed to make quick adjustments to stay on track.

b) There is a lot of pent-up demand for more South-South learning and cooperation. Stakeholder consultations indicated that participants were interested in learning evermore on how China grew so fast. They want to learn from their peers, and not just from highly developed countries. Further, they want to learn from failures as much as from successes.

c) The importance of risk assessment and adaptability was reiterated in evaluation findings. It is to the credit of the project that it adapted so quickly to the challenges emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic and terror attacks in Sri Lanka. The project also showed adaptability in terms of considerably expanding the scope of work from two key policy areas to five.

d) The importance of a clear results chain and sequence of activities was duly recognized as a lesson by the project team. Having the right team with diverse experience and skill sets apparently facilitated this task.

e) The limitations of remote learning were highlighted throughout the evaluation. Stakeholders highlighted missing out on deeper learning and engagement.

f) The use of local institutions and researchers in all facets of the work is a best practice that is worthy of emulation across all UNCTAD projects. It has likely provided the foundations for local ownership and sustainability.

g) Finally, the evaluation observed the need for follow up to technical assistance provided. It is very rare that development projects achieve their impact by one-off interventions. UNCTAD should look to not just continue this project, but also expand its scope to cover other countries and thematic areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation recommends UNCTAD and its stakeholders to consider the following recommendations to build on the results achieved by this project:

1. ECIDC should seek additional resources for a second phase or a related new project to sustain and build on the momentum gained so far. It could:
    a. Identify and expand the current intervention to other countries and thematic areas. The project's work in pilot countries has generated interest among other countries as well as in other relevant thematic areas, which can be tapped into for building and sustaining the momentum generated by the project.
    b. Build on the lessons learned from other fast emerging and recently developed countries. Many stakeholders expressed an interest in peer learning from other countries as well as sharing with each other. This interest in south-south cooperation is worth sustaining in the aftermath of this project's success.
2. The project team (and ECIDC) should further explore ways to actively engage partners and stakeholders by:
    a. Transforming the BRI platform from a static knowledge dissemination platform to an active and engaged community. A static one-way communication platform competes with millions of webpages of similar nature and can quickly get outdated, whereas an active community can continue engaging in peer-to-peer learning with limited support.
    b. Conducting additional online and in-person (in conjunction with other UNCTAD) events with a focus on active participation of stakeholders to further disseminate the findings from this project.
    c. Developing a clear communication strategy to stand out from the crowded field in which multiple development organizations and projects are competing to spread the word about their findings.
    d. Strengthening engagement with other UN agencies, including Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in beneficiary countries.
3. ECIDC needs to increase attention to collecting data on key outcomes and impacts to document and learn about the changes occurring at different levels. National partner institutions from participating countries could be involved to help with this goal. By demonstrating impact of its work, the project would be in a better position to sustain its momentum.
4. ECIDC needs to further incorporate gender and human rights issues in key priority areas by:
    a. Strengthening research and analysis efforts on human rights, gender and disability inclusion (including conducting in-depth assessment of gender inequalities and disparities) should be considered in research reports and recommendations on operational or policy concerns within key priority areas.
    b. Systematically collecting gender and disability disaggregated data (See recommendation section for more details).

1. THE PROJECT, CONTEXT AND EVALUATION

1.1. Introduction and Purpose of the evaluation

1. This report presents the independent evaluation of the project titled "South-South Integration and the SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative." The project was funded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund, which is part of the United Nations' Peace and Development Trust Fund, supported by the Government of the People's Republic of China. The project was implemented by UNCTAD from 01/11/18 to 30/04/22. The report presents the evaluation's objective, scope and methodology, findings, conclusions, lessons learned and best practices, and recommendations. The evaluation proposes four key recommendations for consideration by UNCTAD and its stakeholders for future phases, if any, of this project or projects of similar nature.

2. The evaluation was conducted both for accountability and learning purposes. It provides accountability to UNCTAD management, the Management Team of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund / Capacity Development Programme Management Office (CDPMO) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's member States. It is forward-looking with a view towards optimizing results of future projects, including on operational and administrative aspects.

1.2. Context of the evaluation

3. Meeting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is inextricably linked with the process of structural transformation. This project aimed to share experience from a country (China) with first-hand experience in the transformation process and an ambitious foreign economic policy based on cross-regional infrastructure connectivity and productive investment known as the Belt & Road initiative (BRI) with other countries in the Global South. As stated in the Evaluation terms of reference (ToR):

"BRI is a development strategy and framework that focuses on connectivity and cooperation, involving more than 60 countries, which represent three continents, a third of the world's total economy and more than half of the global population. To unlock the transformative effects of BRI engagement, partner countries can find guidance and encouragement from a deeper understanding of China's past and current policy reform experiences – experiences which allowed China to not only attain the SDG's predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals, but to go well beyond them."

4. The project identified limitations in government capacity in many partner countries – particularly in the policy areas of investment, trade, finance/debt, and technology – as potential roadblocks to the transformative impacts of the BRI (and of foreign direct investment more generally). It aimed to facilitate partner countries' engagement with BRI-related projects by promoting a deeper understanding of China's economic reform strategy, which was expected to enable selective policy adaptations that better reflect their own respective national development objectives.

Source: "Emulating China's rise – can it be done?," BRI platform, 2019.

1.3.Subject of the evaluation

5. As per the original logical framework for the project, its overall objective was to strengthen national capacity-building for sustainable and transformative development in selected Belt & Road partner countries. Within this broader objective, the project aimed at three specific objectives: (1) Enhanced ability of partner countries to engage the BRI with a deeper understanding of China's development experience in structural transformation and associated policy options; (2) Improved capacity of BRI partner countries to design policy strategies and institutional mechanisms to increase the development outcomes of BRI initiatives on the process of structural transformation; and (3) Improved understanding of selected BRI partner countries on the economic shock from Covid-19 and appropriate policy options in responding to the shocks. Note the third of these specific objectives was added in May 2020 after the onset of the pandemic. Also note that this results framework and underlying theory of change were further developed in the inception phase of this evaluation to make it more evaluable.

6. In this process, the project sought to contribute to several SDG indicators, particularly for Goal 9: "To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation". This included raising manufacturing value-added as a share of real GDP and real per capita GDP (indicator 9.2.1), as well as raising manufacturing employment as a share of total employment (indicator 9.2.2). The project also aimed to contribute to Goal 17, more specifically in terms of developing global partnerships, mobilizing resources, technology and capacity development for South-South Cooperation (17.3, 17.6, 17.7, and 17.9).

7. The project selected three pilot partner countries for collaboration: Indonesia, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka. Each country was already closely involved with the BRI and had received significant volumes of Chinese overseas investment. Other criteria were included to incorporate degrees of diversity among pilot countries, such as: regional coverage (East Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia); population, economic, and geographic size; stage of development and government institutional capacity and stability. The perspectives of Chinese policymakers were also considered in the selection of project pilot countries.

8. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) conducted by each country, serve as a basis for the regular discussions by the high-level political forum (HLPF) at the ECOSOC, reportedly informed the project design and implementation. For instance, challenges identified by Ethiopia in relation to Goal 9 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation) pertain to serious limitations in government institutional capacities to execute and implement national plan targets that are central to achieving the SDGs. The VNR, which is integrated into the government's Second Five-Year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) identified major challenges with regards to processing and manufacturing such as the weakness of sectoral backward and forward linkages, the lack of skills, knowledge and access to current technologies, as well as the lack of technology transfer efforts by government agencies.

9. Similarly, Indonesia's National Medium Term Development Plan 2015-2019 seeks to improve infrastructure development by enhancing national connectivity, developing urban mass transportation, and improving effective financing. However, serious constraints have been identified in the form of availability of competent human resources, and technology capacity. To capitalize on Indonesia's rich biodiversity, the government has sought to foster industrial development by supporting several agro-industrial bases in sectors such as palm oil, sugar processing, wood and paper and fisheries. In addition, to strengthen the industrial structure and

increase value-added of (semi) raw minerals, the government has also supported the prohibition of raw minerals exports to promote the development of the smelter industry.

10. Lastly, Sri Lanka's 'Vision 2025' document sets out an ambitious plan that includes providing incentives to encourage educational institutions to partner with the private sector to invest in emerging industries such as robotics and cybernetics. In addition, the government seeks to establish regional technology centers as well as a new national development bank to support small- and medium enterprises with access to new technologies and access to long-term project-based financing. Challenges to improved growth in the manufacturing sector include lack of innovation, technology and management skills; poor diversification of products and quality of the domestic market; access to international markets; poor transport infrastructure, and lack of investment and coordination in science, technology, and research and development.

11. The project carried out activities aimed at laying foundations for improved government institutional capacities in these pilot countries. These activities included producing policy papers, conducting national level consultations, conducting six national level surveys on the state of industrial diversification in each country, producing six reports (two per pilot country) on the two key policy areas of structural transformation, and developing a software tool to enable policymakers in assessing debt sustainability scenarios under different policy options.

12. The key stakeholders of the project include government officials from relevant ministries, private sector entities including industry associations, technical research institutes and universities, Government of China planning and development experience related ministries and institutes, intergovernmental organizations (e.g., UN DESA, UNIDO, UNESCAP, UNECA, UNDP), traditional donor country technical research institutes, and relevant civil society organizations.

13. This project was implemented by UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Centre for International Knowledge on Development (China), and the Development Research Centre of the State Council (China), Policy Studies Institute (Ethiopia), Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA, Sri Lanka), and the Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (INDEF) Indonesia. These are premier policy research institutions of the Governments, providing policy support in the areas of macro finance, trade, industry, digital economy and debt sustainability.

14. The project started on 1 November 2018 with an approved budget of USD$$921,719 (inclusive of 4% support cost to UNCTAD) and was scheduled for completion on 31 October 2021. In September 2021, it was granted a six-month extension and finally concluded on 30 April 2022.

1.4. Evaluation Scope, Objectives and Questions

15. As per the terms of reference for this evaluation, the objective of this evaluation was to assess the degree to which the desired project results have been realized, including the extent of gender and human rights mainstreaming; and second, to identify good practices and lessons learned from the project that could feed into and enhance the implementation of related interventions. The evaluation sought to assess the project on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender and human rights and partnerships and synergies criteria. The original evaluation questions were rationalized to focus on key issues during the inception phase. The revised evaluation questions are included in the evaluation matrix. Lastly, the evaluation covered the entire project duration from November 2018 to 30 April 2022.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

16. This evaluation followed a theory-driven, utilization-focused, mixed-methods, inclusive and participatory approach with adequate triangulation and counterfactuals to arrive at credible, reliable and unbiased findings. Using (a) UNEG Norms and standards; (b) UNCTAD Evaluation Policy; (c) OIOS protocol of evaluation during COVID-19, the evaluation utilized a mixture of primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data sources included, among others, interviews with key stakeholders, focus group discussions, and an online survey of stakeholders. Secondary data sources included all the documents and archival data available from UNCTAD and its stakeholders that are relevant to the work of the project.

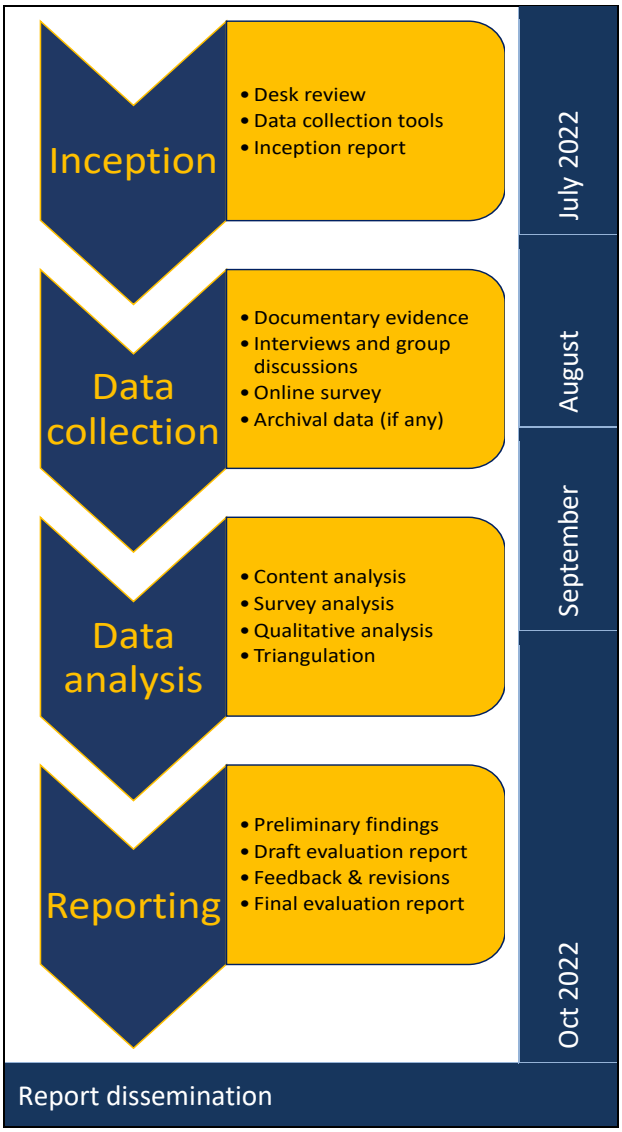


Chart 1. An overview of the evaluation process and methodology

17. The evaluation was conducted in four phases; some of which ran concurrently: (1) inception; (2) data collection; (3) data analysis; and (4) reporting. The inception phase was undertaken in July-August 2022, which involved desk review of the project documents. All important documents, including project documents, research, publications, reports, strategy documents, project materials, newsletters, brochures, videos, and other communications material, and financial and narrative annual reports were reviewed and coded to harvest outcome data. This included all 64 key documents included in Annex IV. It aimed at collecting concrete evidence on results that could be used to develop hypotheses and triangulate results data.

18. This phase also enabled reframing of the evaluation matrix, clarifying evaluation questions, crafting of the evaluation approach and methodology, and developing data collection tools including instruments for key stakeholder interviews and survey. Most notably, it included a review of UNCTAD's logframe to clarify causal connections between planned outputs, outcomes and objectives. It was developed on the basis of the results framework included in the project document, but it was revised (Annex III) to more fully conform with the UNCTAD, UNEG and OECD/DAC evaluation guidelines, as well as to make it more evaluation friendly. This reformulated logframe is also needed to demonstrate linkages between various levels of results. This revised logframe also helped clarify performance indicators, data sources and collection methods.

19. Finally, this phase also helped define the scope of the evaluation. To avoid duplication and better focus on key issues of importance, the evaluation questions were revised. For original evaluation questions, please see the terms of reference. Annex II provides the revised evaluation questions. Despite the reduction in the number of questions, the evaluation fully captures all of the issues and their intent as mentioned in the evaluation terms of reference.

20. **The second phase** of the evaluation began in August 2022. It involved content analysis of documents, virtual consultations by way of key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), online surveys, direct observations, and archival data sources as discussed below.

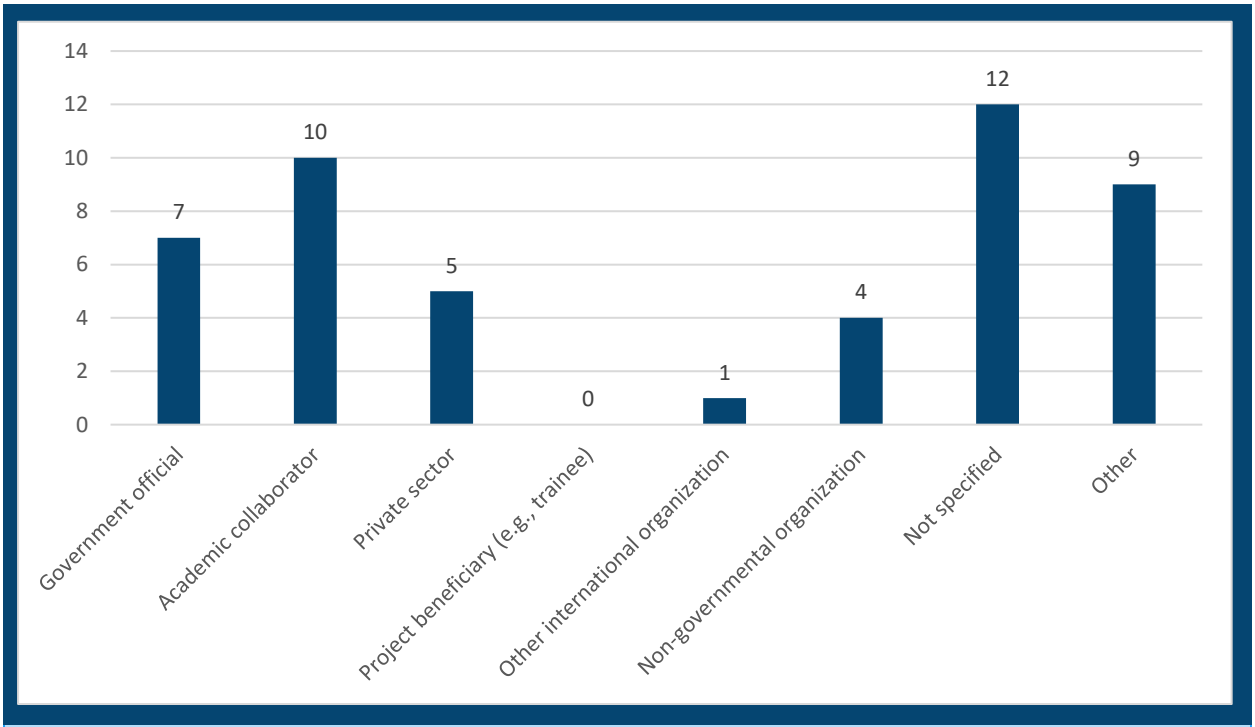
21. **Key informant interviews**: Consultations were undertaken with a wide variety of stakeholders, including UNCTAD staff members, government officials from relevant ministries, private sector entities including industry associations, technical research institutes and universities, Government of China planning-and development experience-related ministries and technical research institutes (e.g., CAITEC), relevant civil society organizations, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund management; either individually or in small groups. In all, 22 key informants (12M, 10F) were consulted virtually via individual and group interviews using MS Teams. These semi-structured interviews provided rich, in-depth qualitative information on all aspects of the work of the project. These interviews were conducted using interview guides that were tailored according to the role and involvement of the stakeholder(s) consulted. In addition to common questions outlined in the protocols, the evaluation probed issues that emerged during the interviews. Owing to the travel restrictions, all consultations were undertaken remotely. Two focus groups with academic stakeholders and one focus group discussion with the project staff were also undertaken to better understand the work, mission and expected and actual results of the project.

Stakeholder group	# informants consulted
Academia	8
Government (Central)	4
International Organization	2
NGO	1
Private Sector	2
Project team	5

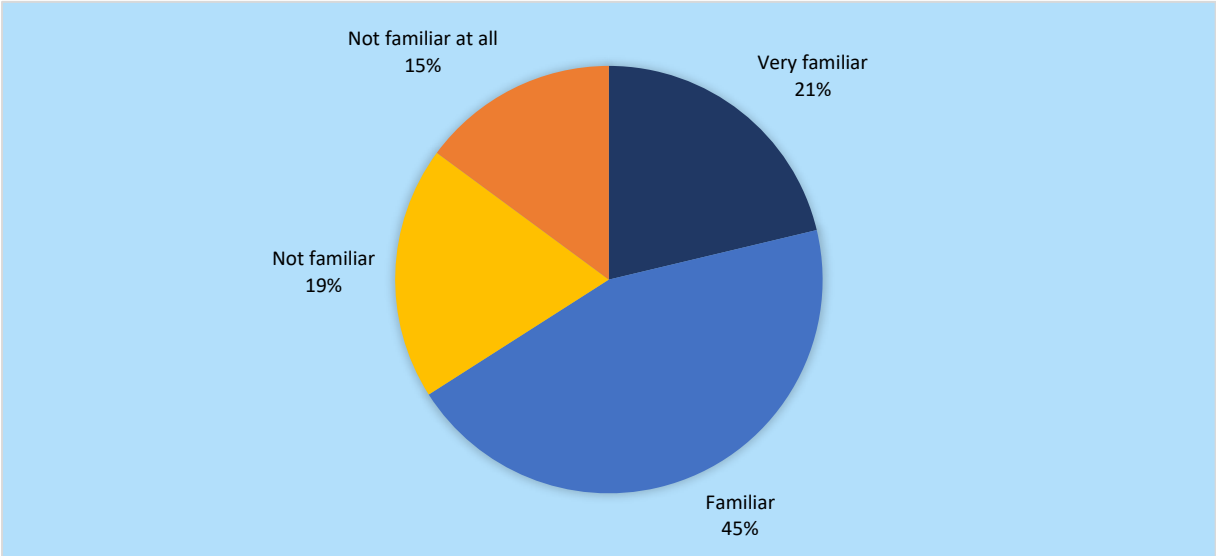
Chart 2. Evaluation interviewees by stakeholder group.

22. **Online survey**: The evaluation developed an online survey to elicit feedback from the project staff and external stakeholders on the specific outcomes identified in the evaluation matrix. A stratified random sample of 100 stakeholders was drawn, wherein the sample was stratified on the basis of gender, country and stakeholder-type. 47 of the 83 eventual recipients completed the survey (Response rate 56.6%: 69% M and 31%F). As depicted in Chart 3, these respondents have been associated with UNCTAD in a wide variety of roles.

Chart 3. Survey respondents at a glance.



Note: One person selected two roles, which was allowed. Hence, total responses above equal 48, though 47 persons responded to the survey.



23. **Direct observation**: There were no opportunities for direct observation of a live event as the project had already concluded prior to the start of the evaluation, however videos of the project events are available on the BRI platform. These videos were reviewed to understand the focus and outcomes of the project.

24. **Archival data**: The evaluation sought relevant archival data from UNCTAD. This included qualitative and quantitative data available (e.g., Google analytics, website downloads, or other data showing achievement of outcomes). However, most of such data was not available, the exception being statistical information from UNCTAD and World Bank reports and databases.

25. **Data analysis:** The evaluation used a combination of complementary tools for analysis of the data collected. Content analysis was used to convert content from the documents and interview notes into quantitative data according to the evaluation matrix. Quantitative analysis was used with the survey and archival data.

Limitations and mitigation strategies

26. There was no major limitation. The evaluation was conducted entirely online and there were no opportunities for field missions and direct observations, however extensive data collection including virtual stakeholder consultation helped mitigate this limitation.

27. Overall, the evaluation utilized a theory-based, utilization-focused, mixed-methods, inclusive, and participatory approach with adequate triangulation to arrive at credible, reliable and unbiased findings.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

EQ1. To what extent the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of the participating countries, considering UNCTAD's mandates and UN's 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals?

- The evaluation finds that project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of the participating countries, considering UNCTAD's mandates and UN's 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals.

Assessment Rating: Highly satisfactory

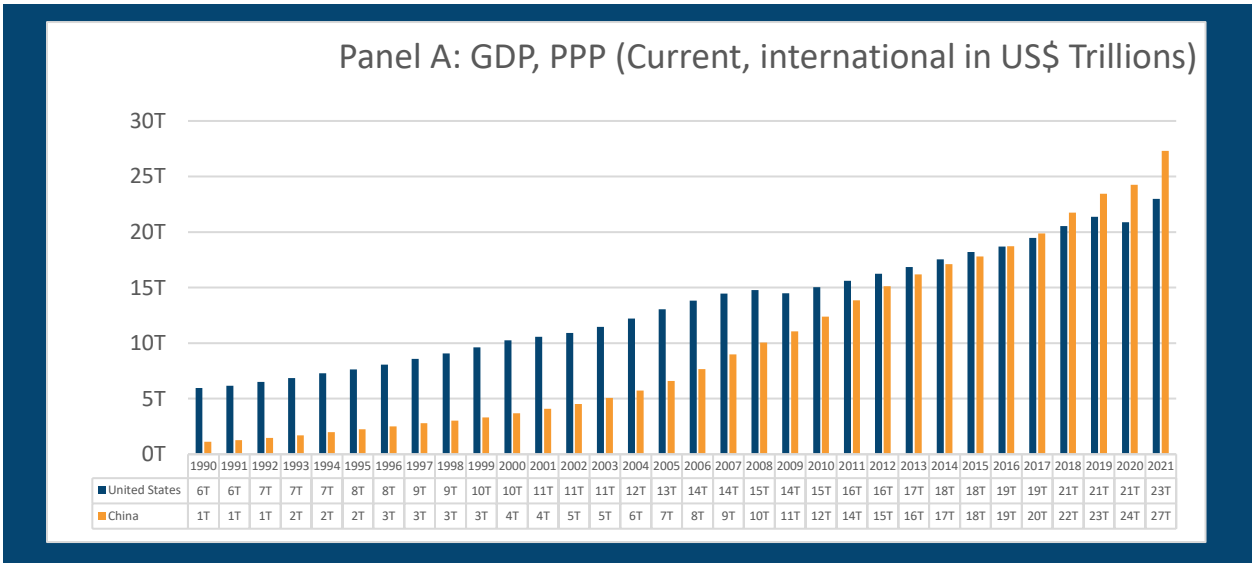
28. Relevance broadly pertains to the strategic fit achieved by the project within its broader environment and mandates. The larger the fit between strategy and environment, the greater is the relevance of the project to UNCTAD and its key stakeholders, including Member States and participating UN agencies.

29. As articulated in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), UNCTAD serves as the focal point within the UN system "for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development – policy areas that are coherently addressed." Aligned with its mandates, the project is centered on UNCTAD's 16Subprogramme 1 that focuses on enhancing "economic policies and strategies at all levels for

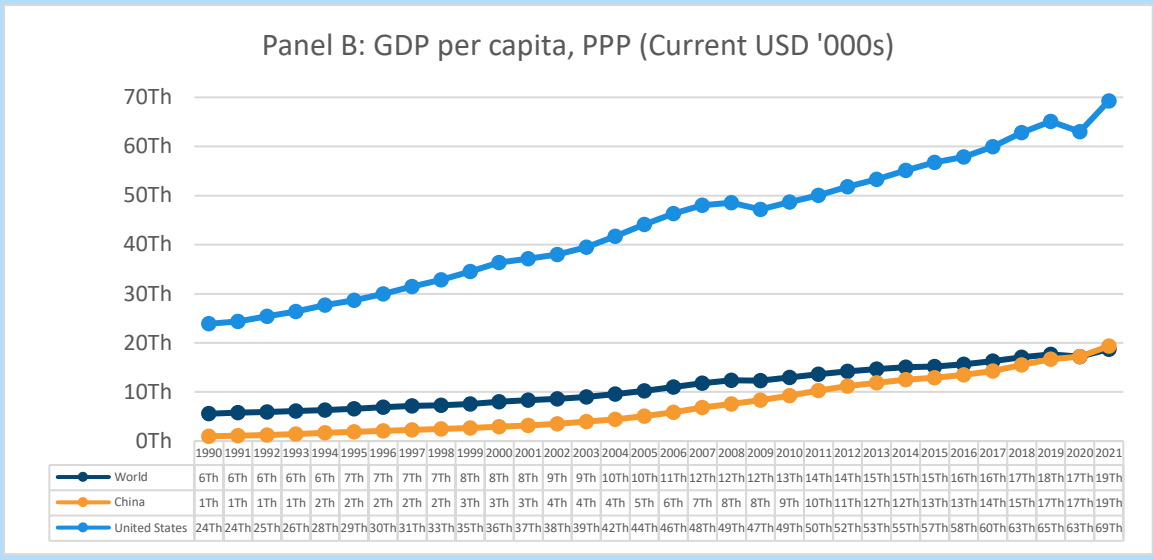
sustained growth, inclusive and sustainable development", which also includes South-South cooperation.

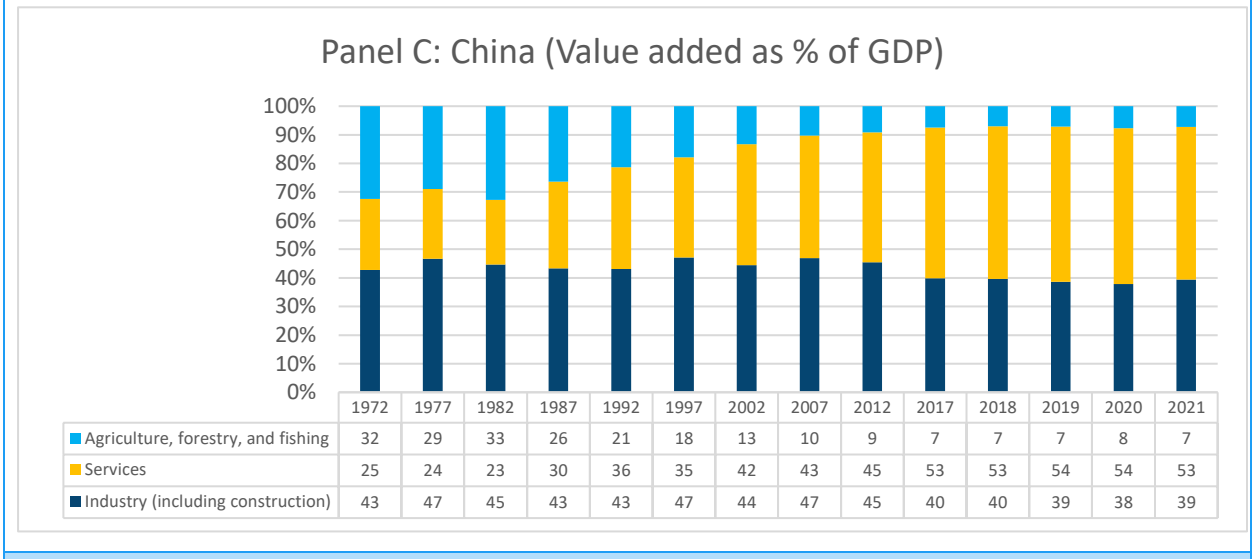
30. The desk review provided initial evidence to indicate that the project design, activities and deliverables, which aimed to draw lessons on China's development experience and reform approach among developing country policymakers, were relevant to pilot countries' policymakers, who had limited knowledge of China's policies in the areas of trade, industry, macro and finance, debt management and digital economy. The project sought to assist select countries in improving their institutional capacity for designing and implementing policies aimed at promoting structural transformation, which is being increasingly recognized to be important for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Further, both Nairobi Maafikiano and Bridgetown Covenant acknowledge the importance of building productive capacity and South-South cooperation. Thus, sharing lessons from China's experience, which has experienced rapid growth and transformation, could provide invaluable information for other countries.

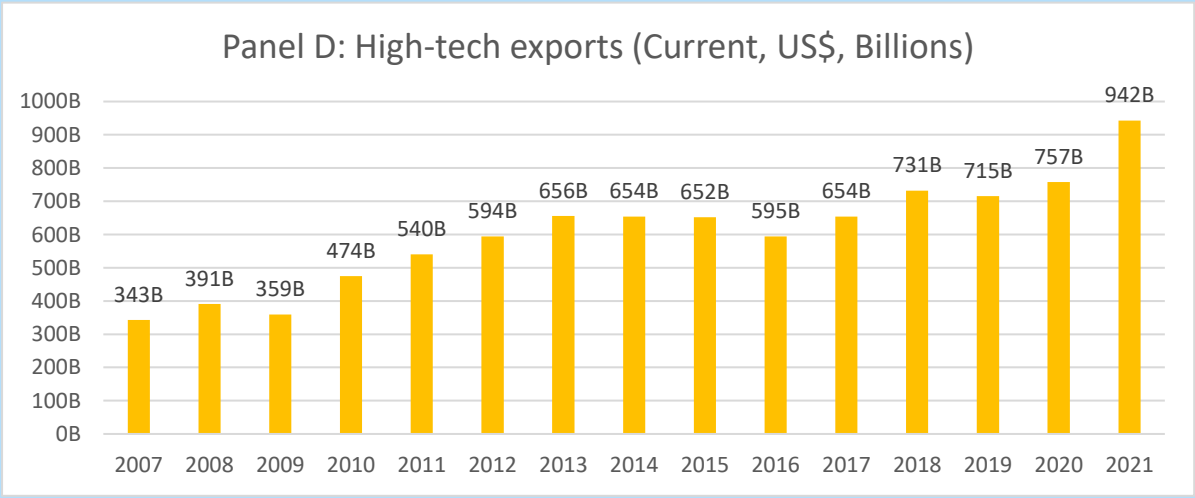
Chart 4. The growth and structural transformation of Chinese economy

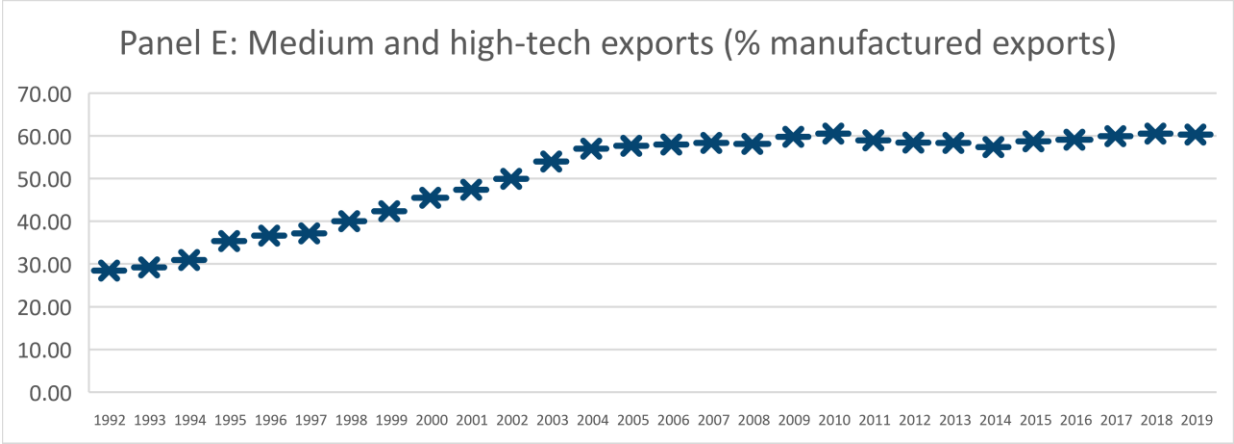


	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
United States	6T	6T	7T	7T	7T	8T	8T	9T	9T	10T	10T	11T	11T	11T	12T	13T	14T	14T	15T	14T	15T	16T	16T	17T	18T	18T	19T	19T	21T	21T	21T	23T
China	1T	1T	1T	2T	2T	2T	3T	3T	3T	3T	4T	4T	5T	5T	6T	7T	8T	9T	10T	11T	12T	14T	15T	16T	17T	18T	19T	20T	22T	23T	24T	27T


Panel B: GDP per capita, PPP (Current USD '000s)
70Th
60Th
50Th
40Th
30Th
20Th
10Th
0Th
1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021
World 6Th 6Th 6Th 6Th 6Th 7Th 7Th 7Th 7Th 8Th 8Th 8Th 9Th 9Th 10Th 10Th 11Th 12Th 12Th 12Th 13Th 14Th 14Th 15Th 15Th 15Th 16Th 16Th 17Th 18Th 17Th 19Th
China 1Th 1Th 1Th 1Th 2Th 2Th 2Th 2Th 2Th 3Th 3Th 3Th 4Th 4Th 4Th 5Th 6Th 7Th 8Th 8Th 9Th 10Th 11Th 12Th 12Th 13Th 13Th 14Th 15Th 17Th 17Th 19Th
United States 24Th 24Th 25Th 26Th 28Th 29Th 30Th 31Th 33Th 35Th 36Th 37Th 38Th 39Th 42Th 44Th 46Th 48Th 49Th 47Th 49Th 50Th 52Th 53Th 55Th 57Th 58Th 60Th 63Th 65Th 63Th 69Th


Panel C: China (Value added as % of GDP)
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
1972 1977 1982 1987 1992 1997 2002 2007 2012 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 32 29 33 26 21 18 13 10 9 7 7 7 8 7
Services 25 24 23 30 36 35 42 43 45 53 53 54 54 53
Industry (including construction) 43 47 45 43 43 47 44 47 45 40 40 39 38 39


Panel D: High-tech exports (Current, US$, Billions)
1000B
900B
800B
700B
600B
500B
400B
300B
200B
100B
0B
343B
391B
359B
474B
540B
594B
656B
654B
652B
595B
654B
731B
715B
757B
942B
2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021



Source: Author's own elaboration using the World Bank data for all years available in the database.

31. As underscored by the information presented in the top panel in Chart 4, China has rapidly grown to be the largest economy in the world in terms of GDP expressed in terms of purchasing power parity (Panel A). While it still is a middle-income country in terms of GDP per capita, the average income levels have increased nearly 20-fold in the last 30 years or so (Panel B). Further, it can be seen in Panel C that the share of services in value added as a percent of GDP went up from around 25% in 1972 to around 53% in 2021, while that of agriculture went down from 32% to 7% during the same time. From 2007 to 2021—the years for which data is available, high-tech exports from China went up from USD 343 billion to USD 942 billion (Panel D). The share of medium and high-tech exports as a percent of manufacturing exports doubled from 30% in 1992 to 60% in 2019 (Panel E).

32. The industrial growth rate in China during this period has been very remarkable. As per UNCTAD[1], the industrial value-added in China grew 11 per cent per annum on average between 1992 and 2020. During this period, value-added per worker in industry grew steadily from USD 2,245 in 1992 to USD 25,272 in constant terms in 2020. While China has come to be recognized as the world's factory over the last few decades, even more notably "digital economy contributed to nearly 60 per cent of China's GDP growth in 2016, becoming the new driver of its economic growth." As no other country has witnessed such rapid transition in recent decades, if ever, learning from China's experience can shed light on alternative development pathways for other developing countries.

33. The next question, then, pertains to whether the project selected the right pilot countries for whom the learning was highly relevant and whether the project selected the objectives**,** outcomes and outputs that were relevant to those selected countries. Based on the review of documents as well as stakeholder consultations, the evaluation found clear evidence for an affirmative answer to both those questions. The project selected Indonesia, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka as the initial project partners[2], which was adequately based not only on their closeness to the BRI, the volume

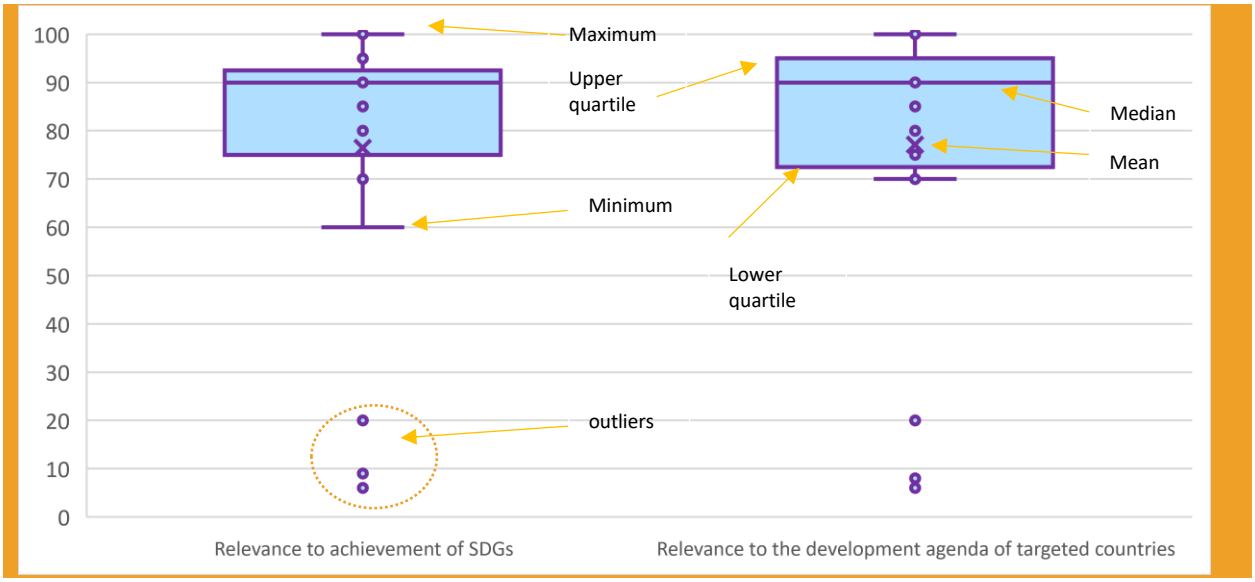
[1] UNCTAD, 2022. China's structural transformation: what can developing countries learn? (UNCTAD/GDS/2022/1). The report also noted China's "rapid progress in other digital development indicators, especially digital infrastructure, digital technologies, and e-commerce" (p. 5).

[2] The project subsequently also involved other countries such as Pakistan in some outputs.

of Chinese foreign investment received, but also on Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) conducted by each country, among other factors. As such, not only did the desk review indicate that the project was very relevant to addressing the documented developmental weaknesses and needs of the selected countries, but this fact was also confirmed in stakeholder consultations.

34. Chart 5 provides a box plot[3] depiction of the survey respondents' assessment on the relevance of the project. As shown in the box plot, the median value on project's relevance to the achievement of SDGs as well as to the development agenda of targeted countries is around 90 (on a scale of 100).

Chart 5. Survey respondents' assessment on the relevance of the project



35. Similarly, the majority of key informant interviewees agreed that the project is highly relevant to their understanding of China's experience since this knowledge provides important comparative information. Most interviewees particularly found knowledge on digital and eCommerce transformation to be of special significance as these issues are currently on the top of agenda for both policymakers and trade negotiators. They indicated that China shares several similar characteristics with the selected countries such as a big population and high internet penetration rates. In addition, stakeholders said UNCTAD played a significant influence because of its standing internationally. The selection of the project's stakeholders, such as the personnel from ministries and academics from reputable universities, was also emphasized during the consultations. However, some key informants said that China's experience is unique and there is little possibility of its replication due to different governmental systems. The interviewees and survey respondents found the project's emphasis on knowledge generation and dissemination to be highly relevant to their needs. They further found that the shock to the world economy caused by the Covid-19 pandemic had further increased the relevance of the project for their countries' developmental agenda.

➢ _____

[3] Box plot depicts a range of values from minimum to maximum. The box itself include upper and lower quartile values (also known as interquartile range or IQR). The middle line in the box is the median value and the mean is marked with an X. Any data value that is 1.5 times the IQR larger than the third quartile or 1.5 times the IQR smaller than the first quartile is considered an outlier and is indicated with dots outside the lines.

36. As noted in the project document, policy reforms instituted by China helped it not only attain the Millennium Development Goals — the SDGs' predecessors — but to go well beyond them. However, policymakers in other developing countries generally do not know much about this development experience. The project sought to inform pilot countries about the underlying lessons that can help them benefit from the experience, which became even more relevant as they began engaging with China's BRI initiative. As affirmed by stakeholders, this deeper understanding is expected to enable selective adaptation of underlying lessons in a manner that better reflects respective national development objectives and the SDG agenda. In particular, China's transformation from an agrarian economy to world's factory and now to a digitally advanced economy is an important lesson for countries that are yet to embark on this transition. These lessons should assist in raising value-added as well as employment in manufacturing sectors (target 9.2.1 and 9.2.2). It also directly promoted South-South cooperation on technologies and capacity development (targets 17.3, 17.6, 17.7 and 17.9).

37. Thus, triangulated evidence showed that the project was aligned with the needs of the governments of selected countries. It also showed that the project was designed after a thorough assessment of existing challenges related to development and structural transformation in developing countries, and based on a comprehensive understanding of the policy, institutional, and capacity gaps and needs assessment of relevant stakeholders. The project was also highly relevant to the UN's SDG agenda and properly reflected and addressed the development needs and priorities of the participating countries**.**

3.4. 3.2 Efficiency

EQ2. How efficient was the project in utilizing project resources and has the project management been adequate to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner?
➢ The evaluation finds that project delivered its activities in an efficient manner.
Assessment Rating: Highly satisfactory

38. Efficiency is concerned with output-input ratios. The project expenditure till the end of April 2022 had been US$929,046 (including indirect support costs), which amounts to a utilization rate of 99.8% of the total funds at its disposal.[4] The budget balance at the end of April 2022 was US$2,150.65. As seen in Chart 6, staff and personnel cost (78%) were the largest share of total expenditure, which was followed by travel (11%), grants (5%) and indirect cost (4%).

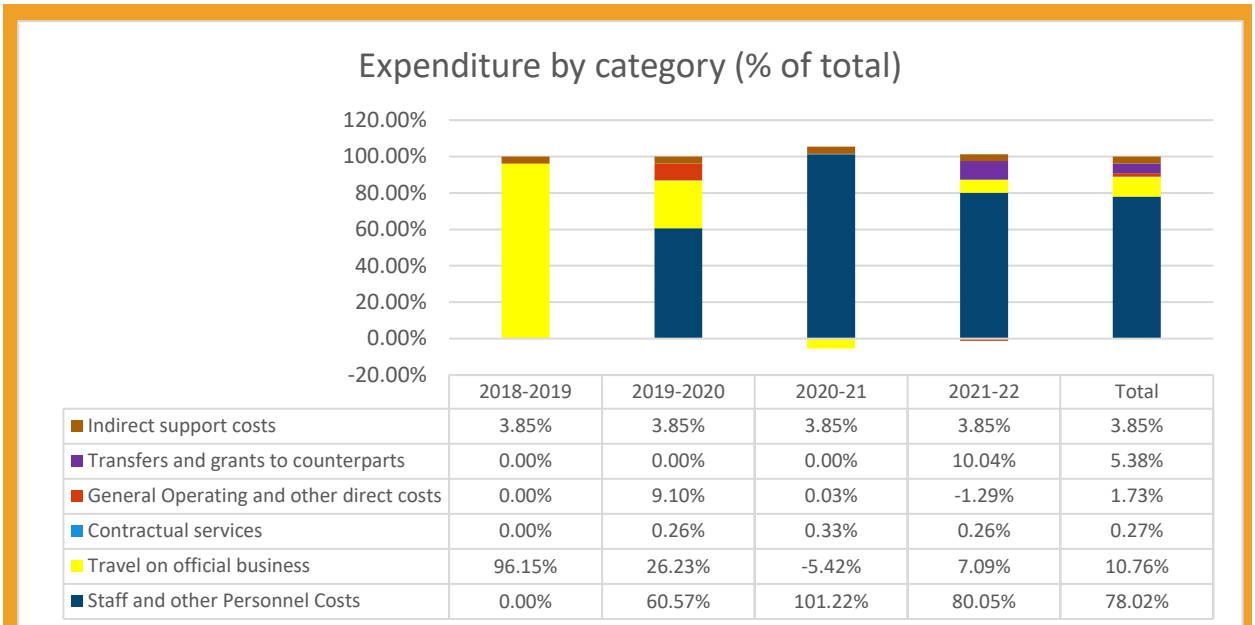
39. Desk review showed that the project plan was modified from the initial scheduled timeframe for outcomes and outputs, as evidenced from the progress report in May 2020. At that stage, a new dimension was added to the project which called for an "improved understanding of selected BRI partner countries on the economic shock from Covid-19 and appropriate policy options in responding to the shock." The added dimension involved papers on economic and financial impact

➢ _____

[4] Funds received from DESA (US$921,719) plus the interest income ($9,478) = Total funds ($931,197).

of COVID-19 in pilot countries and their responses in addition to sharing successful policy experiences in other developing countries with the pilot countries; strengthening the UNCTAD BRI Platform; and assessing and proposing the way forward to the pilot countries on their rising debt burdens during the pandemic. The expansion of the project's partnership with more than the initial three nations is believed to have resulted from the team's outreach efforts to extend the influence of program initiatives, particularly in South-South countries. Desk review further showed that other countries expressed interest in the programme, which resulted in inclusion of other countries such as South Africa and Pakistan in some of the project activities.

Chart 6. Financial expenditure over the project period



	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22	Total
Indirect support costs	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%
Transfers and grants to counterparts	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.04%	5.38%
General Operating and other direct costs	0.00%	9.10%	0.03%	-1.29%	1.73%
Contractual services	0.00%	0.26%	0.33%	0.26%	0.27%
Travel on official business	96.15%	26.23%	-5.42%	7.09%	10.76%
Staff and other Personnel Costs	0.00%	60.57%	101.22%	80.05%	78.02%

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22	Total
Total expenditure including indirect support costs (USD)	9,666	246,982	174,535	497,863	929,046

40. This addition of more countries allowed the project's output to increase. As stated in the May 2020 progress report, these adjustments in the project plan did not lead to an increase in the budget as savings from planned project activities were used to deliver the additional activities and outputs. The transfer of funds from other activities that were cancelled due to COVID-19 covered the proposed budget for additional activities. This is evidenced through the comparison between the initial proposed budget and the revised budget that accounts for the new dimension. Moreover, the March 2021 progress report requested a no-cost extension of six months (until April 2022) for completing these new outputs, along with outputs related to debt sustainability and with dissemination material. In the section 4 of the March 2021 Progress Report, detailed consequence due to the pandemic and political situation in Ethiopia and main activities of the extension were added: "The extension will allow the outputs under EA3 (related to Covid response) and outputs related to debt sustainability to be completed along with adequate

dissemination of the outputs (policy recommendations) of the project." As such, despite Covid-19 circumstances, desk review suggests that the project efficiently utilized its resources to deliver on planned outputs. In fact, the project produced more policy papers and reports than initially planned.

41. Desk review showed that national-level meetings were planned in each of the pilot countries between 2019 and 2021 in order to discuss lessons learned and examine ways to adapt policy recommendations to the contexts and objectives of the pilot countries. Afterward, country-specific reports offering ideas on how to apply policy lessons to overcome challenges to structural transformation were prepared. The recommendations were discussed with government agencies, industry associations, academic institutions, and international organizations. The second round of consultation enabled the national stakeholders to discuss the relevance of the recommendations and how they should be implemented. Most of these consultations had to be conducted virtually as the pandemic interrupted the process of setting up physical meetings.

42. As mentioned earlier, the project delivered more outputs than planned. Research teams in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Ethiopia each produced five policy strategy reports in the areas of industrial policy, macro-finance, global value chains (GVC) and trade, digital economy, and debt management. The project also enabled adaptation of these lessons to country specific contexts and objectives. In total, the project produced 27 important papers and reports (Chart 7). Additionally, the project also developed a web platform for the project. It also organized or participated in nine (9) knowledge-sharing workshops and five (5) sector-focused global conferences.

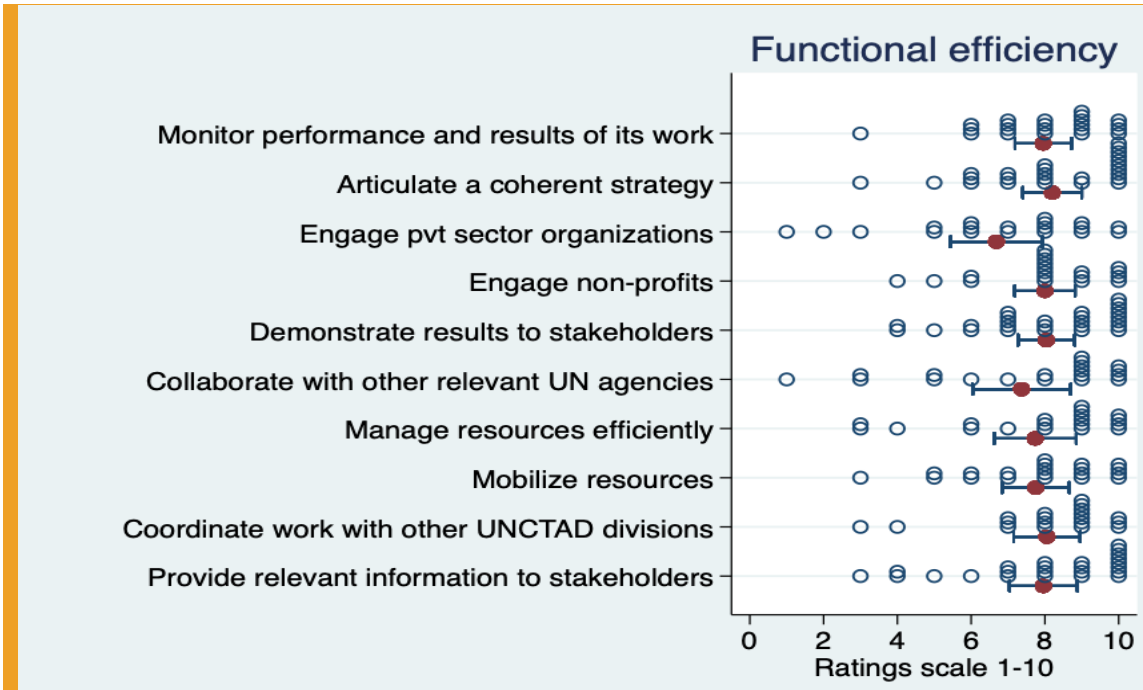
Chart 7. List of reports and papers produced by the project

	Title
1	The Macroeconomic Policy Framework for Structural Transformation: Experiences and Implications from China
2	Debt Sustainability and Debt Management: Lessons from China
3	Opening its Doors to Foreign investment: The Evolution of Trade-Related investment Measures and their Economic Impacts in China
4	The Development of China's Digital Economy: A Study on China's E-commerce Development and Policy Implications
5	China's Policy Practice for Digital Economy Development
6	China's Financial Reform and Development in Four Decades: Process and Experience
7	The Indonesian Digital Policy: Lessons from PRC's Experiences
8	Indonesian Global Value Chain Policy: Learning from China's Experiences
9	Indonesia's Macroeconomic and Finance Policy Framework for Structural Transformation
10	Indonesian Industrialization and Industrial Policy: Peer Learning from China's Experiences
11	China's Industrial Policy: Evolution and Experience
12	Strengthen the structural transformation of the Belt and Road partner countries: Global value chain
13	Debt sustainability and debt management in Sri Lanka – a reflection on the applicability of Chinese policy lessons
14	Digital Economy of Sri Lanka: National Goals and Lessons from the South
15	Sri Lanka and Global Manufacturing Value Chains: Performance, Prospects and Learnings from China
16	Sri Lanka's macro-financial developments: issues and challenges in structural transformation and lessons from China's Experience
17	Boosting Industrialization in Sri Lanka through Effective Policy Strategies: Learning from China
18	Debt sustainability and debt management in Indonesia – lessons from China
19	Boosting Ethiopia's Industrialization: What can be learned from China
20	Ethiopia and the Global Value Chains (GVCs): Learnings from China
21	Developing Ethiopia's Digital Economy: Lessons from China
22	Debt Sustainability and Management in Ethiopia Lessons from China
23	Ethiopia's Macroeconomic and Finance Policy Framework for Structural Transformation
24	Mainstreaming Gender in National Policies: The cases of Ethiopia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka

25	China's structural transformation what can developing countries learn?
26	Report of the Concluding Meeting: South-South Sharing of Policy Experiences
27	Report of the Workshop on Enhancing Structural Transformation: Learnings from China

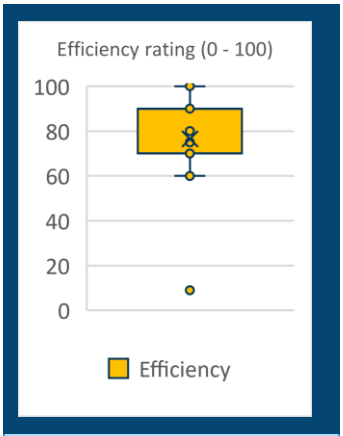
43. Survey respondents and stakeholder consultations agreed that the project was delivering its activities and outputs beyond what was planned and expected. Chart 8 shows survey respondents' assessment on the project's functional performance. The median score was 8 or higher on most tasks, which provided further evidence on the project's efficient delivery of its activities. Chart 9, similarly, tabulates their ratings for overall project efficiency, which was rated highly. Interviewees were generally even more positive and rated the project's efficiency even higher.

Chart 8. Survey respondents' assessment on functional efficiency of the project



Note: The stripplot above depicts number of ratings at each value as well as mean (red dot) with 95% confidence interval. The project received a mean score of around 8 on most of its key functions (except on collaborating with other UN agencies and private sector, where it scored lower).

Chart 9. Survey respondents' overall assessment on the efficiency criteria



(Source: Evaluation survey, N=47)

44. Stakeholder consultations also indicated some room for improvement. First, while acknowledging the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions, they suggested the need for in-person national consultations as well as site visits, which prima facie made these activities less effective. In other words, some of the efficiency (increase in resources available for research and dissemination) supposedly came at the expense of likely effectiveness (deeper connections and experiential learning). However, efficient adaptation in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic focusing on contemporary problems and demands and building good networks and outreach were also frequently described as positive unintended results described by the interviewees and survey respondents. For example, participation by high-level dignitaries and ambassadors in project meetings were also an oft-mentioned positive, unintended result.

45. Second, there were calls to include academia beyond government-affiliated entities to develop and disseminate more robust and credible policies, which was also expected to minimize resource requirements (under partnership arrangements). Similarly, paying more attention to developing a community of policy experts among the participant countries to continue exchanging the notes and sharing the developments was advocated for both increasing effectiveness and efficiency reasons.

46. Third, stakeholders suggested the need for developing stronger mechanisms for monitoring the progress and sharing successful stories and key lessons learned widely, so other (non-participating) countries could also benefit from such programs in the future. Relatedly, others called for placing a stronger emphasis on the communication strategy to share developments periodically, while yet others called for "making efficient use of the platform" to promote increased collaboration ("similar to open innovation" models).

47. Overall, the evaluation found the project to have delivered its outputs in an efficient manner.

3.5. 3.3 Effectiveness

EQ3. To what extent has the project achieved, or is likely to achieve, its intended outcomes especially in relation to relevant SDG targets?

- The evaluation finds that project had made or was in the process of making substantial progress in achieving all of its intended outcomes.

Assessment Rating: Highly satisfactory

48. The effectiveness is concerned with the relationship between outputs and outcomes and is the focus of the evaluation. As mentioned in the methodology section, to assess the effectiveness of the project, the evaluation began by clarifying the results matrix of the project to be more fully evaluable (and in line with the OECD/DAC evaluation guidelines). Building on the findings from

the desk review, and internal assessments of the project, the evaluation collected extensive data from multiple sources to triangulate and validate the achievements of the project. This section presents findings organized and summarized around the expected outcomes (Chart 10), which are elaborated in the pages that follow.

Chart 10. Expected outcomes and actual accomplishments

Expect results	Actual accomplishments
Outcome 1. Increase in self-reported knowledge of the participants.	Triangulated evidence from post-event data collection, evaluation survey and stakeholder consultations showed an increase in self-reported knowledge of participants. Stakeholders uniformly agreed that they had limited, if any, knowledge of policies pursued by China for its development and structural transformation prior to the project, which had substantially improved after the project's intervention.
Outcome 2. Improved capacity of selected partner countries (including policymakers) to engage the BRI with a deeper understanding of China's development experience in structural transformation and associated policy options.	Desk review and stakeholder consultations provided evidence for improved capacity among key stakeholders. Sri Lanka, for example, had taken steps to incorporate lessons from China's experience in digital policies. Further, the launch of the report on debt sustainability included the participation of high-level policymakers from Sri Lanka. The letter requesting UNCTAD's support to Sri Lanka on debt sustainability was sent to the Secretary General's Office from the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to UN and the WTO. Think tanks and Government Agencies in Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and Indonesia were developing policy recommendations that highlighted lessons learned for their respective governments. Some papers had already been submitted to the governments and were under consideration. A peer review of these documents by the evaluator suggested an increase in capacity to utilize the experience of China's development and structural experience more effectively.
Outcome 3. BRI partner countries design and adapt better policy strategies and institutional mechanisms to obtain better development outcomes from BRI initiatives and associated structural transformation and achievement of SDGs.	More than 15 relevant policy recommendations were identified. These recommendations were endorsed by the participants in the UNCTAD webinars. These had also been submitted to the relevant policymakers. The evaluation found evidence to indicate incipient progress on this outcome. Sri Lanka was reportedly finalizing a digital economy strategy, which was built on the work undertaken for this project. In Ethiopia and Indonesia, policymakers and think tanks involved in the project were still working with the government to advance this agenda.

Expect results	Actual accomplishments
Outcome 4. Use of advisory services by the targeted stakeholders (Target: At least 2/3 of pilot countries take steps to adopt or incorporate China- and/or BRI specific economic policies or strategies in national planning documents).	Though this was not a major component of the project, triangulated evidence suggested both use of and additional demand for advisory services. Evaluation reviewed notes verbale (e.g., Algeria) and confidential letters from Member States, who were also interested in participating in future phases of this project or projects of similar nature.
Outcome 5. The software tool is adopted and used by the targeted stakeholders.	As per the information available to the evaluation, this software tool was still being piloted and not fully ready for a rollout for wider use by stakeholders. Further tweaks were necessary before it could be shared for wider use.
Outcome 6. Improved understanding of selected BRI partner countries on the economic shock from Covid-19 and appropriate policy options in responding the shock.	The project completed meaningful case studies of several developing countries regarding their policy response during the crisis. This was expected to improve understanding of economic shock from Covid-19 as well as determine appropriate policy options in responding to the shock. Most key stakeholders reported that the work of the project had gained increased relevance in view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and importance of digital economy in view of ongoing trade negotiations at bilateral and multilateral forums. Concomitantly, they also reported an increased understanding on these issues as a result of the work undertaken and disseminated by the project.

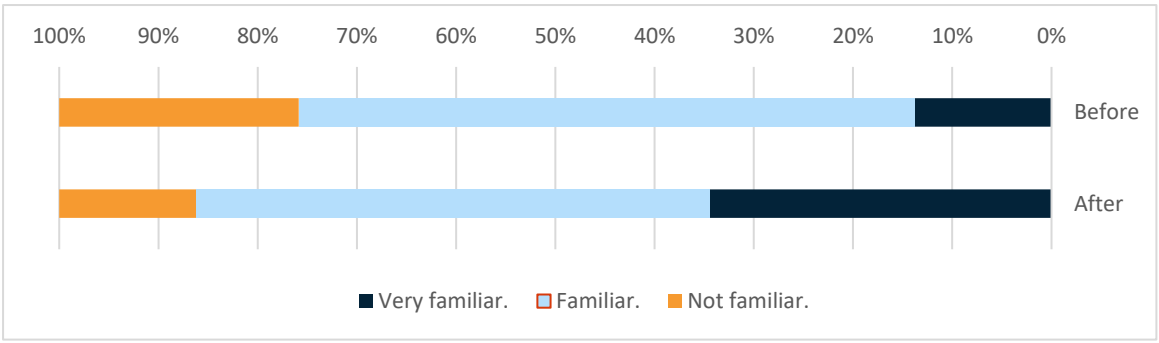
49. **Outcome 1. Increased knowledge of the participants**: As per project documents, policymakers in the pilot countries had limited knowledge of China's policies in the areas of trade, industry, macro and finance, debt management and digital economy. This was confirmed in the interviews and, to an extent, also in the survey. Interviewees indicated that their knowledge prior to the project participation was superficial at best, and this had noticeably changed afterwards. Survey respondents (top panel in Chart 11) also indicated improvement in knowledge with a drop in persons not familiar and increase in persons who were familiar or very familiar. This effect was, however, less pronounced than indicated in the project documents or interviews. It is likely that some of the survey respondents had been less engaged with the project, which covered stakeholders beyond key informants covered in interviews.

50. Post-intervention data collected by the project indicated that over 80% of participants of the national consultations for all three pilot countries were reportedly "very satisfied" with the webinars and had improved understanding on policies of China. 85% of the policymakers and participants of consultation/webinars from Ethiopia and 90% from Sri Lanka gave positive feedback and recognized the improvement of understanding policy design in Ethiopia and Sri Lanka because of peer-learning. This was also corroborated in the evaluation survey (Chart 11) in

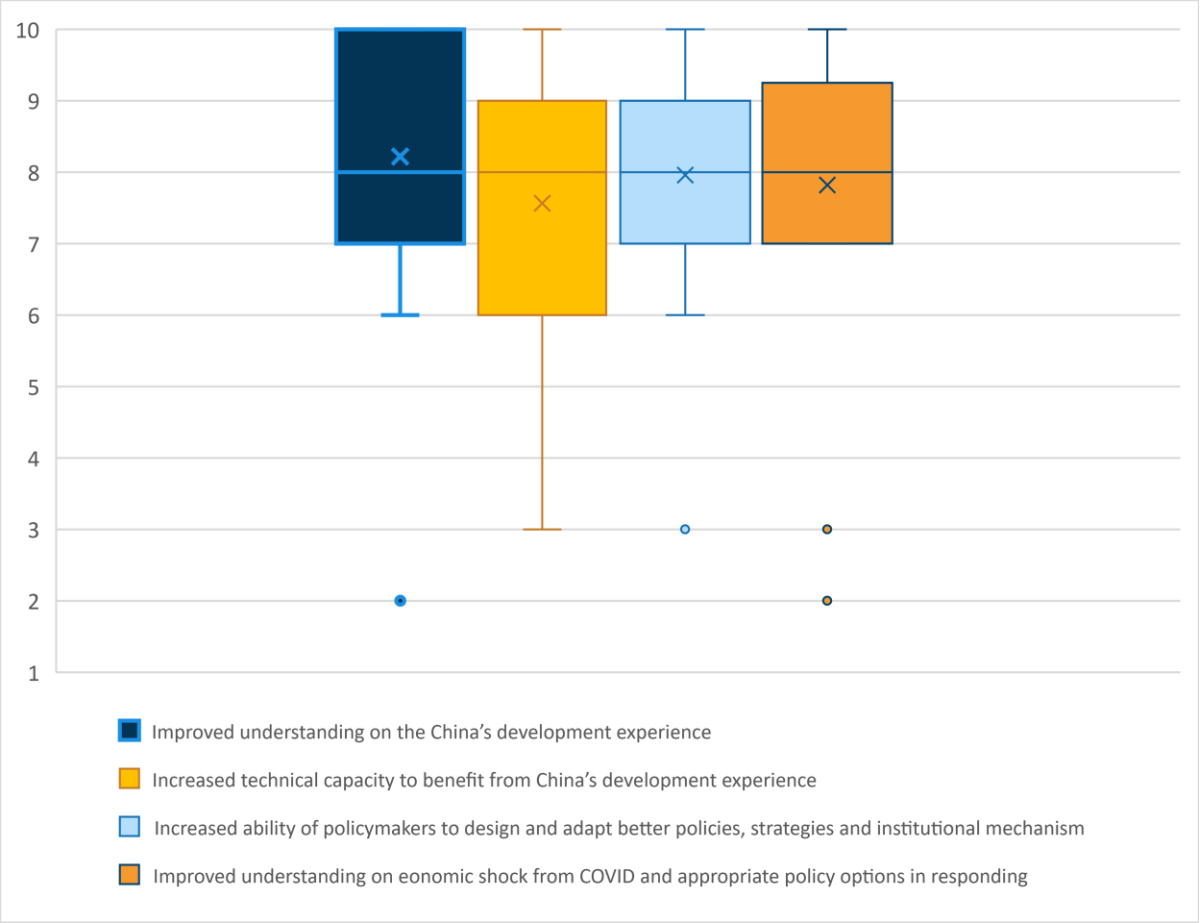
which the median score was 8 and more than 75% of the respondents awarded a score between 7 and 10 for increased understanding on China's development experience. These participants indicated that they had gained a new understanding of China's development experience, an alternative development model to the traditional norms in the development world, as well as the role of multilateral agencies in development. They reported a better comprehension of the Chinese model of development by comparing and contrasting it with other models.

Chart 11. Familiarity and assessment on the project's contribution to the targeted outcomes

Panel A: Change in knowledge on China's development and structural transformation experience



Panel B: Assessment of project's contribution to achieving intended outcomes



Source: Evaluation survey (N=47)

51. The linkages between the federal and provincial governments, participation in innovation initiatives, models for the development of innovation hubs, the relationship with entities outside of China, digital transformation, China's overall industrial and export policies and experience of peer countries and using ICT to advance digital manufacturing, governance and climate change were some of the other learnings highlighted by stakeholders. See Chart 12 for typical stakeholder comments exemplifying these learnings.

Chart 12. Typical stakeholder comments showcasing improved knowledge

> *"My understanding of the use of modern technology, particularly the ICT, to advance the triple goals of digital manufacturing, digital governance and climate change improved a lot. The same with the Chinese way of managing their debt."*

"I had the chance to learn how China implemented successive industrial policies to advance its level of development. These policies were gradual and successful in creating a country that is a crucial player in the Global Value Chains."

"I was associated with the Project as a key observer throughout and attended the inaugural and concluding events in person and a lot of Webinars in between. I myself applied the insights gained from the Project to generate fresh knowledge on Debt and Digital Start-ups of my own country. This was made possible by the Project by identifying quality partners and human resource and designing the roll out of the Project in a very efficient manner. As the Project was set in a South-South learning context, the Project team coordinated the knowledge generation through debates/ paper and knowledge sharing very actively."

(Source: Evaluation survey)

52. **Outcome 2. Improved capacity of pilot countries to engage the BRI**: Desk review provided the initial evidence on the selected partner countries to engage the BRI with a deeper understanding of China's development experience. The project briefed key policymakers, including the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the WTO, and the Vice-Minister and high-level policymakers from the Ministries of Finance, Trade and Industry, at a workshop titled "Enhancing Structural Transformation: Learnings from China" held in Jakarta in November 2019. The Conference provided a platform for these partners to share and gain more knowledge in China's experience.

53. Desk review further indicated that Sri Lanka had taken steps to incorporate lessons from China's experience in digital policies. The Agency mandated to design digital policies for Sri Lanka had prepared a paper drawing lessons from China's digital policies. This paper was uploaded on the BRI platform and launched in Sri Lanka in November 2021 in collaboration with the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) of Sri Lanka. In the cases of Indonesia and Ethiopia, papers had been submitted to the respective governments via government affiliated think tanks, which had participated in this project. Think tanks and Government Agencies in all pilot countries (Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, and Indonesia) were developing policy recommendations that had already been or were in the process of submission to their governments. A peer review of these documents by the evaluator concurred that the capacity of key stakeholders involved in the process was demonstrably improved, which was reflected in better utilization of China's development and structural experience.

54. Participants from pilot countries of the consultative meetings and webinars reported a better understanding of policy designing in Indonesia and Sri Lanka because of peer-learning. Similarly,

stakeholder consultations provided further evidence for improved capacity among key informants.[5] For example, the design of digital policies by ICTA in Sri Lanka reflected increased capacity to engage with trading partners. Similarly, the launch of the report on debt sustainability included the participation of high-level policymakers from Sri Lanka. The letter requesting UNCTAD's support to Sri Lanka on debt sustainability was sent to the Secretary-General's Office from the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the UN and the WTO. Think tanks and Government Agencies in Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and Indonesia were developing policy recommendations that highlighted lessons learned for their respective governments. A peer review of these documents by the evaluator suggested an increased capacity for utilizing China's development and structural experience in policy formulation.

55. **Outcome 3. National endorsement of project recommendations:** As noted in Chart 10, this outcome was fully achieved. More than 15 relevant policy recommendations were identified, which were endorsed by the participants in the UNCTAD webinars. The think tanks and Government Agencies which are mandated to provide policy recommendations to the Government have written papers highlighting the lessons. The papers have been submitted to the governments and relevant policymakers, however information on their endorsement by respective governments and policymakers beyond the participants in the project was not available. The most visible progress was observed in the adoption of a new digital strategy in Sri Lanka. As per the latest progress report, the government in Indonesia had also taken steps to adopt the project's recommendations, however this was not mentioned in interviews or evaluation survey. Similarly, one stakeholder explained that the Ministry of Science and Innovation in Ethiopia was consulted and showed interest in learning from the project for potential policy changes.

56. **Outcome 4. Use of advisory services:** Research, reports and website platforms were the main outputs of the project. The advisory services were only indirectly provided to think tanks, policymakers, researchers and consultants, who were engaged in the production of these research products. These stakeholders also benefitted from peer-to-peer learning and advising. Some advisory services were also reflected in policy experience papers shared by China's government affiliated think tanks like the Centre for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD) and the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC).

57. Stakeholder consultations and the survey revealed that this was not just utilized but was also in popular demand. The project was cited as one of the key examples of how the UN was poised to support BRI-SDG synergies by the UN Secretary-General at the opening ceremony of the 2019 Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. An Expert Report, which incorporated the work of this project, was launched during the seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2020. Finally, the demand for the work by the project and its team was evident from notes verbale (e.g., Algeria) and confidential emails from Member States, who were also interested in participating in future phases of this project or projects of similar nature. The project team was also invited to participate in high-level panels at multilateral forums to provide inputs on policy and trade negotiation discussions.

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[5] Though no evidence of a derivative additional capacity among other policymakers (via dissemination or training) was yet visible.

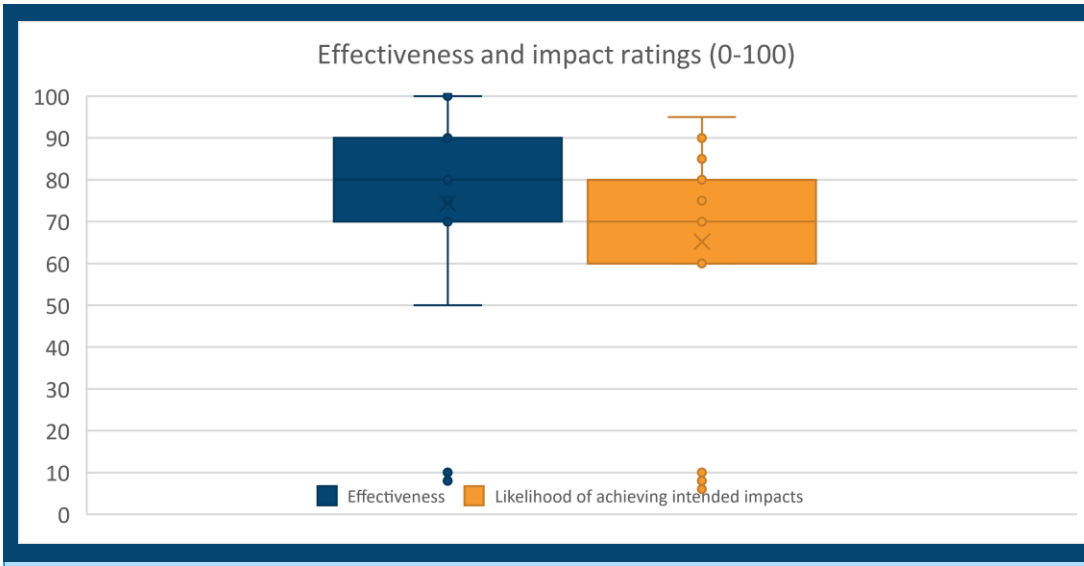
58. **Outcome 5. Adoption and use of a software tool by the targeted stakeholders**: As per the information available to the evaluation, this software tool was still being piloted and not fully ready for a rollout for wider use. Further tweaks were necessary before it could be shared for wider use.

59. **Outcome 6. Improved understanding on and response to the economic shock from the ongoing pandemic**: This outcome was added as the pandemic unfolded during the process of implementation. The most recent progress report prepared by the project showed that policy papers focused on COVID-19 responses of pilot countries and other developing countries were shared with the targeted stakeholders. This reportedly increased their understanding of economic shock as well as appropriate policy options in responding to the shock. Most key stakeholders reported that the work of the project had gained increased relevance in view of the ongoing pandemic as well as due to increased importance of digital economy and ongoing trade negotiations at bilateral and multilateral forums. These key informants also reported an increased understanding on these issues as a result of the work undertaken by the project. Thus, unsurprisingly, stakeholders found the project overall had been very effective in achieving its intended outcomes. Key informants consulted, as well as wider stakeholders surveyed, rated the project highly on this dimension.

60. Chart 13 shows that median score on effectiveness dimension was 80 with the interquartile range of 70-90. Key informants interviewed were even more positive and universally lauded the efforts of the project.

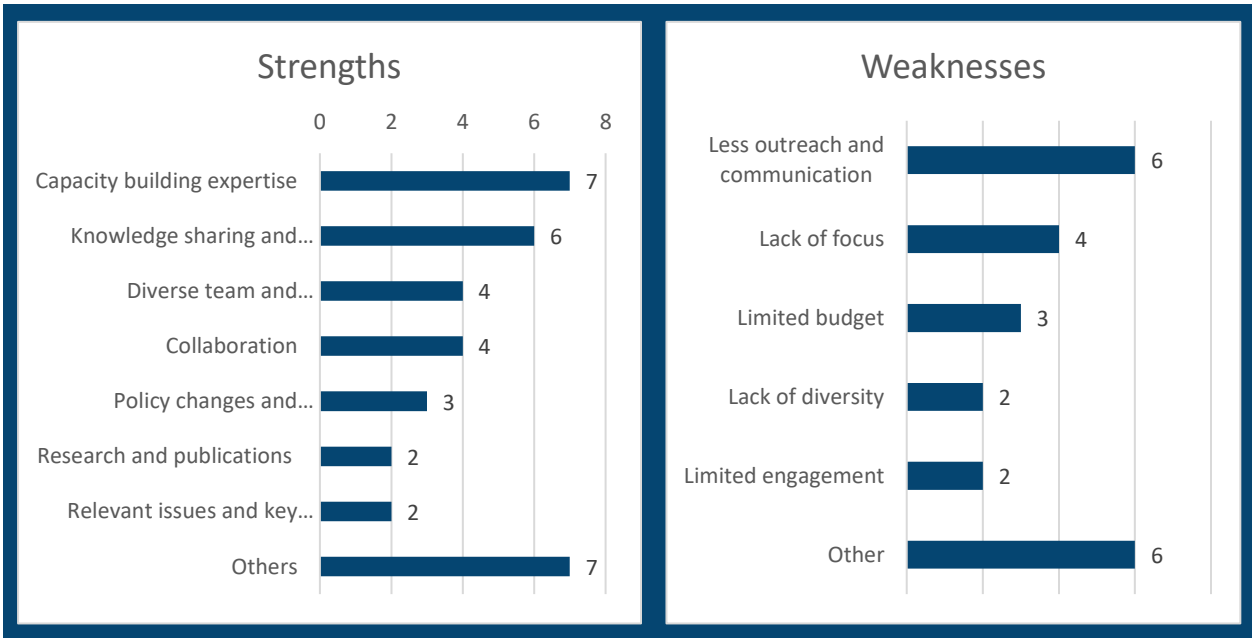
61. In terms of specific strengths and weaknesses of the project, qualitative data was coded using Nvivo and tabulated in Chart 14. Capacity development expertise, knowledge-sharing/ peer-learning, and the diverse project team as well as consultants from a diverse group of countries were the most cited strengths of the project. Fewer respondents mentioned weaknesses, but a small budget, less outreach due to the pandemic and cancelation of face-to-face consultations and lack of focus ("too many topics") emerged as key themes in this regard. Key informants also substantiated these strengths and weaknesses, but they also highlighted the pandemic as a mitigating factor for fewer than planned consultations in person and the lauded the project for rapid adaptation by using online collaboration ("work-from-home" or anywhere) tools. They also lauded the project team for organizing three high-level events at the occasion of the BAPA+40 (2019), UNCTAD XV (2021) and the Second BRI Forum (2019) with the participation of over 10 ministers or ministerial officials, which greatly improved the profile of the project.

Chart 13. Survey respondents' overall assessment on the effectiveness criteria



(Source: Evaluation survey, N=47)

Chart 14. Survey respondents' assessment on strengths and weaknesses of the project



Source: Evaluation survey (N=47)

62. Other factors that were mentioned for consideration for future included:

    a. Provision for increased advisory services (e.g., "greater involvement of Chinese experts sharing their knowledge directly rather than just papers"),

    b. Increased outreach and advocacy ("wider national consultations"),

c. Site visits for direct observation and experiential learning,

d. Increased / better use of social media to disseminate findings and publications,[6]

e. Continuity of engagement with potential stakeholders and policymakers,

f. Participation of decision-makers in the formulation of research questions,

g. Additional stakeholder platforms to facilitate experience sharing, and

h. Enabling a greater number of conversations on the project's findings among a country's stakeholders.

63. The final aspect of the effectiveness question pertains to the likelihood of the project achieving its impact objective, which was to "accelerate sustainable and transformative development in the selected Belt & Road partner countries (and beyond)." The project intervention achieved all the planned outcomes. More importantly, the interventions chosen were of the type that can sustain with little further support. Their delivery involved local stakeholders, who actively participated in the process, and thus likely have a significant degree of interest in owning the outcomes.

64. As noted earlier, the project generated extensive increase in the understanding of the policymakers in the pilot countries. Lessons from these policies for developing countries were well documented in a book prepared by the project team and uploaded on the UNCTAD BRI Platform for wider dissemination. These policy strategies and recommendations were broadly discussed in project meetings with the participation comprising ministerial and high/senior level policy makers from the project countries and other developing countries. The findings of the research were recognized by policymakers, which is also evident from the requests received from other developing countries for similar projects for them (e.g., Algeria and Pakistan). However, it is not clear to what degree this extends to stakeholders beyond those directly participating in the project and to what degree their interest is likely to sustain without further support. Thus, it is too early to tell if the project will make a significant impact.

65. Overall, triangulated evidence showed that the project gave countries a deeper understanding of China's past and current policy reform experiences, which enabled partner Governments in exchanging knowledge, skills, processes and tools. This helped them not just increase their understanding of the underlying lessons from China's reform but also in the selective adaptation of these lessons to reflect their own national development objectives more accurately.

3.6. Partnerships and synergies

EQ4. To what extent has the project advanced partnerships amongst project participants with national and regional counterparts, international development partners, the civil society and/or the private sector in support of results, and sustainability of results?

- The evaluation finds that partnerships were established particularly with local governments and leading think tanks in the three pilot countries. These partnerships led not only to the research

[6] Although a few key informants also felt that the project team had a good job in disseminating information about the project events. An example of this was cited as a new item in public media: https://www.dailymirror.lk/business__main/SL-mulls-fashioning-digital-economy-policies-after-China/245-224425.

of policy papers but also to the incorporation of recommendations in national policies (like the digital policy in Sri Lanka). However, the ongoing pandemic imposed some limitations on availability of stakeholders as well as on developing synergies among project participants (despite mitigation measures taken by the project team). Overall, the project developed partnerships and synergies as best as possible under the circumstances.

Assessment Rating: Highly satisfactory

66. As described in the Stakeholder Analysis table in the Project Document, one of the project's desired future outcomes was to "enhance government-business and South-South cooperation partnerships" with technical research institutes of pilot countries' governments and universities. It also sought partnerships at sectoral- and firm-level with Chinese industry associations and with technical research institutes. As such, the project advanced partnerships among diverse stakeholders throughout the cycle of the project, despite the disruptions of the pandemic.

67. The organization of the first national consultation in each pilot country created the spaces (both virtually and in-person) to strengthen partnerships and build synergies. In the in-person meeting in Indonesia in November 2019, 152 participants attended including policy makers, academia, NGOs and think tanks from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, China, Malaysia and South Africa. Once the pandemic started, and political turmoil due to the terrorist attack in Sri Lanka in 2019, the project team was forced to modify the project plan, and organized virtual consultation meetings for both Sri Lanka and Ethiopia, on April 2021, and on June 2021, respectively. However, the attendance at these consultations decreased significantly as only 28 and 25 participants joined the meeting. The lack of face-to-face interaction hindered the potential for the creation or strengthening of cooperation partnerships among attending stakeholders, as well as the expected engagement of local partners. As one stakeholder mentioned during the interviews, "not all organizations were at the same stage in using online collaboration, so we could not see much engagement."

68. Nonetheless, the project team established cooperation partnerships with local governments and leading think tanks in the three pilot countries (Ethiopia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka). In Ethiopia, UNCTAD signed a grant agreement with the *Policy Studies Institute* (PSI) in order to develop the policy papers for the country, under the guidance of UNCTAD. In Indonesia, it partnered with the think tank *INDEF*, whose researchers had started working on papers in the areas of trade, global value chains, digital economy, finance and debt management to identify relevant learnings from China in these areas.

69. Additionally, the *Pakistan National Institute of Public Policy* was also identified for data collection in Pakistan, as a backup pilot country for the development of the software tool. As per the project documents, Algeria sent a Note Verbale to UNCTAD requesting technical cooperation support for the country on the same theme, inspired by the project. For the project activity on the use of advisory services from designated Chinese governmental agencies to help inform the industry- and technology-specific aspects, the project created synergies with China's government affiliated think tanks like the Center for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD), the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC), etc.

70. These efforts resulted in enhanced partnerships between pilot-country governments and China and have informed legislation and policy recommendations in the pilot countries. Furthermore,

the final compilation of analysis and lessons learned from China's structural transformation proved to be a valuable resource beyond the pilot countries, with additional countries engaging UNCTAD in adapting the recommendations focusing on structural transformation and achievement of SDGs.

71. Furthermore, as highlighted in the survey, UNCTAD's BRI Platform has also become a space for sharing policy experiences of China, as mentioned previously in this report. Although the Platform is not a space for 'live' interactions and thus unlikely to generate partnerships by itself, it could become a starting point for sharing knowledge and creating potential synergies. Thus, several stakeholders suggested that while the virtual collaboration facilitates knowledge-sharing, deeper learning requires collaborative research among researchers from a variety of counties, especially when they can collaborate on the ground to experience the conditions in practice.

72. Overall, the evaluation found that the project had made highly satisfactory progress in advancing partnerships, especially given the circumstances it confronted.

3.7. Coherence

EQ5. To what extent has the work of the project been complementary to that of existing global programmes, regional/interregional initiatives, UN Country Teams, UNDAF as well as other UN and non-UN actors in supporting participating countries in achieving sustainable development, including avoiding redundancy?

- The evaluation finds that the project was complementary to other existing global programmes in pilot countries. Its work supported various UNCTAD strategic frameworks such as the Bridgetown Covenant and Nairobi Maafikiano. However, not much work was undertaken at this stage to align work with UN Country Teams, UNDAFs as well as other UN and non-UN actors in supporting participating countries in achieving sustainable development. It is not clear to what extent this was realized of its own volition on ground.

Assessment Rating: Moderately satisfactory

73. Desk reviews indicated that the project was *prima facie* complementary to other existing global projects on sustainable development in pilot countries as well as for other developing countries.[7] Its work supports various UNCTAD strategic frameworks such as the Bridgetown Covenant and Nairobi Maafikiano. Nairobi Maafikiano outlines the specific steps for UNCTAD to foster an inclusive and equitable global development. Bridgetown Covenant echoed the Nairobi Maafikiano on erasing inequality and reducing vulnerabilities for promoting well-being for all. Similarly, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) seeks to strengthen the important role of UNCTAD as the focal point within the UN system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development.

74. The project was expected to contribute to UNCTAD's 36Subprogramme 1 that focuses on enhancing "economic policies and strategies at all levels for sustained growth, inclusive and sustainable development [..] including through South- South cooperation." Specifically, it aimed

[7] For example, see projects under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund or UNCTAD's project portfolio.

to provide an improved (a) understanding of policy choices for inclusive and sustained development, (b) understanding of the interplay between successful development resource mobilization, debt sustainability and effective debt management, and (c) improved access to and use of reliable and timely statistics and indicators. Thus, unsurprisingly, several indicators in the UNCTAD strategic framework are relevant for the project's work. For example, indicator 10.15(g) pertained to assessing UNCTAD's performance by using "Research and analysis of trends and prospects for South-South integration and cooperation, including triangular cooperation, in the areas of trade, finance, investment and technology."[8]

75. The desk review also indicated that project's work potentially contributes to several SDGs, such as Goal 9 (resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation by raising manufacturing value-added as a share of real GDP and real per capita GDP, and by raising manufacturing employment as a share of total employment), Goal 17 (global partnership by mobilizing resources for South-South Cooperation (indicator 17.3.1), technology (indicator 17.6.1 and 17.7.1), and capacity-building (indicator 17.9.1)).[9] Thus, documentary evidence suggested that the project had substantial complementarities with other projects within and beyond UNCTAD as much of the development work focuses on learning from advanced countries. In that sense, learning and disseminating lessons from China is highly complementary to the other work carried out by UNCTAD.

76. Interviews and survey responses indicated that the project planned to work closely with UNIDO, ILO, regional commissions and other UN entities including in UNCTs, however, reportedly, due to COVID-19 restrictions, little progress was made in this regard as not all organizations were at the same stage in utilizing online platforms for communication. Further, it was noted that UNCTs are notified if in-person meetings take place; but, as the project largely relied on online participation, such notifications were not undertaken. It is true that the project had enough internal capacity to undertake the tasks it needed to undertake (primarily research) at that stage of its implementation, but it could have done more at the consultation and dissemination stages.

77. The potential synergies with national entities were likewise restricted to specific operations. Further, research teams worked on their tasks remotely and had limited interactions with each other. Though the project team provided them with detailed feedback (which was widely appreciated), researchers reported missing out on deeper learning of each other's work. Finally, several respondents also raised the issue of reduced appetite for international cooperation on trade and development. They also brought up the importance of convergence and divergence of interests while developing a strategic approach on building global and regional value chains. In some cases (e.g., US and China), there is noticeable divergence of interests, which is reflected in increased trade disputes. In other case, it is the opposite. Regardless, multilateral institutions need to pay greater attention to changing landscape to remain relevant. Thus, despite strong potential and project team's best efforts, the project faced some strong headwinds in its task environment, which worked against the project in achieving a high degree of coherence. Overall, the project demonstrated a moderately satisfactory level of coherence.

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[8] UNCTAD Strategic Framework 2018-19, which was in operation when the project was designed.

[9] Final letter of agreement and project document, 2018.

3.8. Sustainability

EQ6. Is there evidence that beneficiary countries are committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project and/or have there been catalytic effects from the project? What measures have been built in to promote the sustainability of the outcomes? What additional measures could be taken to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes over time?

- The evaluation finds that through the BRI platform, as an open forum to share the project's outcome, beneficiary countries and other relevant stakeholders are able to continue peer learning and capacity-building as well as promote relevant material to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes. There is some evidence that recommendations developed in the frame of the project have been picked up by pilot countries (e.g., design of digital policies in Sri Lanka). That said, it is too soon to determine any long-term or sustainable effects of the project. A continued follow up to build on the project's results is required to sustain its delivered and second-order catalytic effects.

Assessment Rating: Unable to Assess

78. As per the project document, "upon the completion of the project, a one-year sustainability monitoring period (SMP)" was to be established. UNCTAD and the national focal points, as described in the document, are to monitor the implementation of actions by pilot countries. The partners identified in pilot countries are governmental research wings and most of them are fully funded by their government. The policy recommendations from the project have been or are being submitted by them to the concerned Ministries and, in some cases, these have already been picked up in the pilot country's policymaking. For example, as mentioned earlier, ICTA has taken up the policy lessons in designing a digital policy in Sri Lanka.

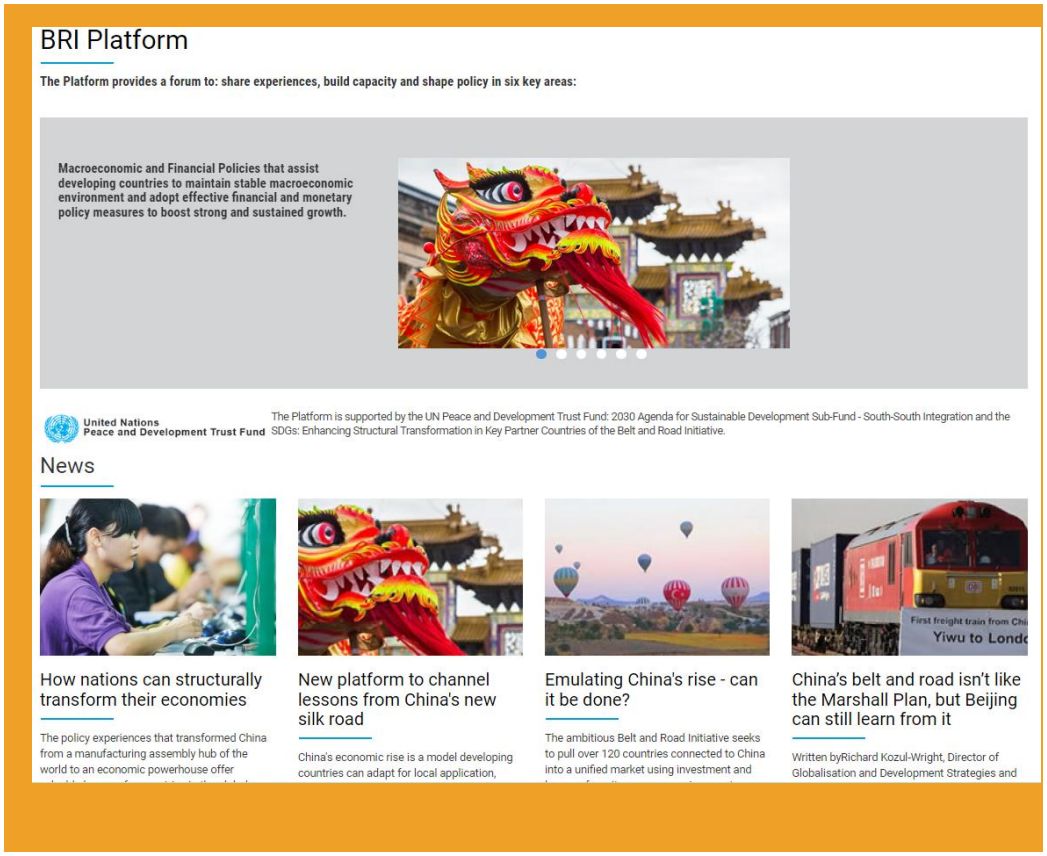
79. In addition to the SMP, the project is expected to engage in outreach efforts. Thus far, stakeholders of the project have expressed that limited engagement and dissemination of the project outputs had been made. However, it was also acknowledged that the pandemic and the lack of face-to- face interactions had hindered the outreach activities at least to some extent. Interviewees also voiced their interest to continue collaborating and creating spaces for deeper interactions on the ground with a view to sustaining project's results. In line with this, 77.5% of those surveyed considered that the results of the project are sustainable over time, though the project had reached its conclusion.

80. According to the final project report most of the project research outputs had been disseminated in various project events, such as conferences and webinars, including "5 global conferences, 3 of them in-person in 2019 and 2 hybrid ones in 2022 and 9 webinars organized from 2020-2022, including 3 high-level webinars prior to UNCTAD XV." These events had the presence of "over 100 speakers including ministers or ministerial officials, ambassadors, senior level policy makers and renowned researchers." These spaces have led to further dissemination of the project's research findings and policy recommendations in broader policy makers and academia. As mentioned by one stakeholder, "China will remain an important player" and as such, the project's outputs will continue to be relevant, and an example to other countries in the Southern hemisphere.

81. In line with this, the 'UNCTAD Belt and Road Initiative platform', launched on April 28th 2019, and subsequently rebranded as the South-South Cooperation platform, is a website that provides a forum to "share experiences, build capacity and shape policy" and is focused on six key areas relevant to the project such as trade, foreign direct investment, finance and digital economy. As such, the online platform will continue to disseminate the project publications, event and meetings' documents, promoting peer learning and capacity-building policy formulation. The most recent research papers were uploaded on the platform in June 2022. These papers will continue to provide guidance to governments, policymakers, researchers and other relevant stakeholders. The book "China's Structural Transformation: What Can Developing Countries Learn?" is also available on the BRI Platform. The book compiles a series of studies on the Chinese economic miracle. Along with the papers, the book and any related ongoing knowledge will be shared in the future on the BRI Platform, generating wider dissemination and uptake of the project's findings, resulting in more sustainable project outcomes.

82. While the project selected key stakeholders in donor country (e.g., DRC, CAITEC) and beneficiary countries (e.g., PSI, INDEF, ICTA) with an eye on ownership and institutional capacity for supporting the continuation of the project's outcomes, it is too early at this point in time to identify any long-term and sustainable effects of the project. Similarly, the project established a virtual policy sharing platform which will be functional beyond the life circle of the project, however it is not yet clear to what extent and by whom this platform is currently being used. Lastly, the project team also prepared a book which documents the key policies of China and the lessons that can be drawn by other developing countries. It remains to be seen to what degree this book is actually used. Stakeholder consultations and survey respondents did not shed much light on these aspects as well. Certainly, a continued follow up to build on the project's results will determine its sustainability and any catalytic effects that subsequently derive from the project. This is by no means an adverse inference for the project, it is simply too early for the evaluation to provide triangulated information in this regard at this stage.

Chart 15. UNCTAD BRI Platform



3.9. Human Rights, Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion

EQ7. To what extent a human rights-based approach, gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention, and can results be identified in this regard?

- The project design made efforts to incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment in an indirect manner. While it was lauded for some of its gender-related work, the project was largely focused on a higher level of intervention and did not directly address gender-specific measures for the most part. Limited number of research and dissemination meetings were dedicated to the direct connection between gender and economic policy in relation to the project objectives. The evaluation did not observe a significant level of effort in terms of incorporating a human rights-based approach and disability inclusion in the project design or implementation.

Assessment Ratings: Gender: Moderately satisfactory;

Human rights & disability inclusion: Unable to assess

83. According to diverse stakeholders, consulted in KIIs and the online survey, the project scope and design did somewhat consider HRGE explicitly from its inception. The project document specifically points out in the description of the problem that the implications of the structural transformation that derive from the Chinese experience also imply a gender perspective. The project analysis identifies that although the pilot countries have made some progress in terms of gender equity, as discussed in respective SDG Voluntary National Reviews, there are still many challenges regarding access for women to economic services and inputs (e.g., agricultural inputs). Thus, the analysis recognized the significance of differential impact of transformation for the economic empowerment of women. It also alluded to the significance of the government's role in the economic empowerment of marginalized groups.

84. That said, the project's original logical framework did not fully integrate a gender and human rights approach. The causal link to gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) is mentioned tangentially in the sense that by fostering linkages to BRI projects and establishing policy frameworks in the areas pertaining the project, pilot countries would be able to contribute to women's economic empowerment. The specific measures of gender included in the project could better integrate a gender perspective.

85. The logical framework included two gender-specific measures: (1) "where possible and relevant, both scoping papers will consider labor and gender perspectives in their analyses and policy recommendations"; and (2) "gender considerations" in the selection of participants for the first national-level consultations in each pilot country. To "the extent possible", the project aimed to include "at least 25-30 per cent of women among total participants at the national-level consultations and the international-level workshop." Available data showed that this target was achieved. For instance, women made up 60% of all attendees in an in-person meeting in Indonesia in 2019 and 40% of a second online consultative meeting participants in 2020. The consultation in Sri Lanka was attended by 40% women, while the consultation in Ethiopia was attended by 30% women. Thus, for the events for which information is available, the objective of including at least 25-30% of women among total participants was more than achieved. However, for other meetings, gender information was incomplete or not requested in the registration system and consequently, monitoring of disaggregated gender data was incomplete.[10]

86. In terms of the integration of a gender focus in the analyses and policy recommendations of the project papers, some authors incorporated it indirectly, but not intentionally. As one interviewed author mentioned "in looking at trade policy and export sector's global value chains, the research indirectly touched on it. As the scope of the research was outlined, it was not mentioned as an explicit area to look at and if it had, it would have been a little challenging because I am not a gender expert." Other project participants mentioned that in the study of specific trade sectors where there is a high representation of women, such as apparel, textiles or the electronics industry, the gender issue was tangentially incorporated.

87. The project's final report indicated that it achieved a gender mainstreaming impact through dedicated research on gender. The progress report indicated that one of the project's main achievements pertained to the completion and publication of a dedicated report titled "Mainstreaming Gender in National Policies: The cases of Ethiopia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka" on

[10] See, for example, Project information reported in 'Annex b Outputs disaggregated Data'.

March 2022. The report focused on the connections between gender, employment and structural transformation. It was launched in a hybrid meeting and has been uploaded in the BRI platform.

88. As mentioned in previous paragraphs, the project organized a hybrid event on mainstreaming gender in economic policy making on the occasion of March 8th, which is International Women's Day. The event not only served to disseminate the above-mentioned paper, but it also included a panel discussion on 'Enhancing the Role of Women in Structural Transformation' with the participation of discussants from India and Jamaica as well as the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, among other participants.

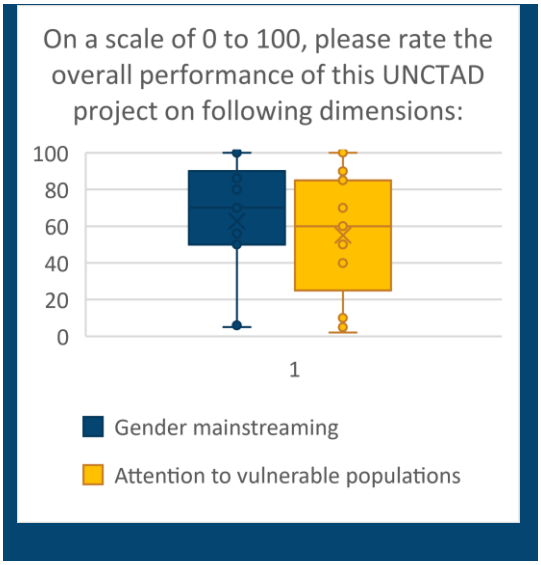
Chart 16. Gender-focused hybrid meeting invitation

89. Moreover, the project provided the BRI platform for creating awareness and recognizing the relevance of the incorporation of mainstreaming gender equity issues in structural transformation, industrial diversification and other key areas related to the project. As the purpose of the platform is to become a forum to share and continue peer learning, there is a continuous space for disseminating project's outputs in terms of gender lenses.

90. Regarding human rights mainstreaming and/or disability inclusion[11] in the project, very limited evidence was available. Several project participants also mentioned that there was no in-depth analysis on these issues, only an indirect link, nor were they expected to incorporate these approaches. Nevertheless, they did point out the importance of focusing on them in the future in order to learn about the links between inclusiveness and sustainable development growth.

[11] As per UNEG Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator (January 2022), Disability Inclusion is "the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights into the work of the Organization, the development of disability-specific programmes and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)".

Chart 17. Survey respondents' ratings on human rights and gender equality dimensions



91. As such, interviewees highlighted the importance of devoting resources specifically to the wider mainstreaming of gender in future projects. As shown in Chart 17, performance of the project on the gender dimension was scored, on average 62 out of 100, while that on attention to vulnerable populations scored even lower at around 58.

92. References of inclusion and respect of human rights can be found in certain papers published under the project. The paper, "Digital Economy of Sri Lanka: National Goals and Lessons from the South" includes a mention on the adherence to human rights safeguards in the investigation process in the context of the Budapest Cybercrime Convention. Also, the paper "The Indonesian Digital Policy: Lessons from PRC's Experiences" contains a section on 'General Data Protection and Privacy Rules' which acknowledges the importance of laws related to the rights of individuals such as human rights law. Any specific mention to disability, however, was not found in any project document or publication, nor mentioned by any stakeholder. It should also be noted here that this was not expected either when the project was launched or during most of its implementation. This criterion has been added as per subsequent guidance from UNCTAD's Evaluation Unit.

93. In sum, despite the stated intentions, the incorporation of gender considerations was limited, and gender considerations in the design process, even when considered to be an indirect implication related to the project's outputs, was less intentional and the project reports on gender were brief and provided limited information. Thus, there was room for further improvement in terms of gender mainstreaming. There was even more significant room for improvement in terms of integrating a human-rights approach and disability inclusion in the project design and implementation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of triangulated findings discussed in previous chapters, the evaluation concludes that:

94. **Relevance**: The project was highly relevant to the needs of not just the pilot countries of Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and Indonesia, but also to UNCTAD's mandates and the UN's SDG agenda. The project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of the participating countries. It was in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which calls for strengthening the important role of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations system for integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. Further, both Nairobi Maafikiano and Bridgetown Covenant acknowledge the importance of building productive capacity and South-South

cooperation. The project was centered on UNCTAD's 44Subprogramme 1 that focuses on enhancing "economic policies and strategies at all levels for sustained growth, inclusive and sustainable development", including by promoting South-South cooperation. By providing a deep dive into the policies used by China, which is the second largest and fastest growing large developing economy in the world, the project helped bridge existing knowledge gaps on alternative development models, and thus was highly relevant to other developing countries as well as their partner development organizations. There is a lot of pent-up demand for more South-South learning and cooperation. Stakeholder consultations indicated that participants were interested in learning evermore on how China grew so fast and how it managed to build large technology behemoths such as Ali Baba and Tencent in such a short period of time.

95. **Efficiency**: The project had a total budget of USD $921,719 for the period 2018-22. Most of the expenses were for staffing and travel costs. The project implementation modality had to suddenly shift to remote delivery for most of its work, which turned out to be a blessing from an efficiency perspective as it helped the project deliver more outputs than originally intended. A small, diverse and skilled team implemented the project in an efficient manner.

96. **Effectiveness**: The project made substantial progress in achieving six outcomes envisaged under its evaluation results framework. This progress is most visible in increasing knowledge of the targeted audience. Policymakers in the pilot countries had limited knowledge of China's policies in the areas of trade, industry, macro and finance, debt management and digital economy prior to the launch of the project, which had improved substantially at the end of project intervention. The participants indicated that they had gained a new understanding of China's development experience. The evaluation also noted an increased capacity for utilizing China's development and structural experience in policy formulation. More than 15 relevant policy recommendations were identified, which were endorsed by the participants in the UNCTAD webinars. The papers have been submitted to the governments and relevant policymakers. The most visible progress was observed in the adoption of a new digital strategy in Sri Lanka. These stakeholders also benefitted from peer-to-peer learning and advising. Some advisory services were also reflected in policy experience papers shared by China's government agency affiliated think tanks like the Centre for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD) and the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC). The evaluation noted that the project's services were not just utilized but were also in popular demand by other countries, who wanted similar studies conducted for their countries.

97. **Likelihood of impact**: The project intervention achieved all the planned outcomes. More importantly, the interventions chosen were of the type that can sustain with little further support. Their delivery involved local stakeholders, who actively participated in the process, and thus likely have a significant degree of interest in owning the outcomes. The project generated extensive increases in the understanding of the policymakers in the pilot countries on policies pursued by China for its development and structural transformation. Lessons from these policies for developing countries were well documented in a book prepared by the project team and uploaded on the UNCTAD BRI Platform for wider dissemination. These policy strategies and recommendations were broadly discussed in the project meetings with the participation comprising ministerial and high/senior level policy makers from the project countries and other developing countries. The findings of the research were recognized by policymakers, which is also evident from the requests received from other developing countries for similar projects for them (e.g., Algeria and Pakistan). However, it is not clear to what degree this extends to stakeholders beyond those directly participating in the project and to what degree their interest is likely to

sustain without further support. Thus, it is too early to tell if the project will make a significant impact, which is defined as the change in socio-economic condition of targeted beneficiaries.

98. **Partnerships and synergies:** The project established significant partnerships, particularly with local governments and leading think tanks in the three pilot countries. These partnerships led not only to the research of policy papers but also to the incorporation of recommendations in national policies. However, the ongoing pandemic imposed some limitations on the availability of stakeholders as well as on developing deeper synergies among project participants (despite the mitigation measures undertaken by the project team). Overall, the project developed partnerships and synergies as best as possible under the circumstances.

99. **Coherence:** The project was complementary to other existing global programmes on sustainable development in pilot countries as well as for other developing countries. Its work supported various UNCTAD strategic frameworks such as the Bridgetown Covenant and Nairobi Maafikiano. However, not much work was undertaken at this stage to align work with UN Country Teams, UNDAFs as well as other UN and non-UN actors in supporting participating countries in achieving sustainable development. It is not clear to what extent this was realized of its own volition on ground.

100. **Sustainability:** The BRI platform is an open forum that will continue to share the project's outcomes with beneficiary countries and other relevant stakeholders towards continuing peer learning and capacity-building. This should help with the sustainability of the outcomes. There is some evidence that recommendations developed in the frame of the project are being picked up by pilot countries (e.g., design of digital policies in Sri Lanka). That said, it is too soon to determine any long-term or sustainable effects of the project. A continued follow-up to build on the project's results is required to sustain its delivered and second-order catalytic effects.

101. **Human rights, gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion:** The project made efforts to incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment in an indirect manner. There was no visible evidence to suggest that a significant level of effort was made to incorporate human rights-based approach and disability inclusion in the project design or its implementation.

102. The conclusions of this evaluation are best summarized with the help of the SWOT analysis below.

Chart 18. SWOT Analysis for the project

Strengths	Weaknesses
✓ Project team and leadership. ✓ Involvement of national researchers and institutions in project implementation. ✓ Capacity development work and focus on sustainability. ✓ Adaptability to national context.	× Inadequate attention to vulnerable populations. × Unclear communication strategy. × Limited engagement with other UN agencies.
Opportunities	**Threats/ Challenges**

✓ Interest in South-South cooperation and peer learning, especially from China and other fast growing emerging markets. ✓ Highly relevant to UNCTAD's mandates and pilot countries' needs. ✓ Cross-pollination of ideas and exploiting synergies among stakeholders across countries at varying levels of development.	× Limited joint programming with other UN agencies. × Uncertain future funding. × Need to build on the momentum to sustain attention and support.

5. LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

103. The evaluation noted the following lessons learned and good practices that have relevance to UNCTAD projects of similar nature:

a. Institutionalization of collaboration emerged as both a good practice and lesson learned. Where the project co-opted institutions rather than individuals, it continued to make progress despite change in political circumstances. Elsewhere, the project needed to make quick adjustments to stay on track.
b. There is a lot of pent-up demand for more South-South learning and cooperation. Stakeholder consultations indicated that participants were interested in learning evermore on how China grew so fast and how it managed to build large technology behemoths such as Ali Baba and Tencent in such a short period of time. They want to dive deeper into a "decades-long jigsaw puzzle of policies" of which as one person put, "we have still revealed only one corner of a third of the parts." The lesson here is that countries want to learn from their peers, and not just from highly developed countries. They also want to learn from failures as much as from successes.
c. The importance of risk assessment and adaptability was reiterated in evaluation findings. It is to the credit of the project that it adapted so quickly to the challenges emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic and terror attacks in Sri Lanka. The project also showed adaptability in terms of considerably expanding the scope of work from two key policy areas to five.
d. The importance of a clear results chain and sequence of activities was duly recognized as a lesson by the project team. As noted in the final report of the project, the project design should have planned for advisory services from China in Year 1 as opposed to Years 2 & 3. The project team, however, could make quick adjustments to successfully adapt. Having the right team with diverse experience and skill sets apparently facilitated this task.
e. The limitations of remote learning were highlighted throughout the evaluation. While stakeholders acknowledged the challenges emanating from the pandemic that necessitated online collaboration, they also highlighted missing out on deeper learning and engagement. An effective combination of remote and physical collaboration is, thus, of essence.
f. The use of local institutions and researchers in all facets of the work is a best practice that is worthy of emulation across all UNCTAD projects. It has likely provided the foundations for local ownership and sustainability.

g. Finally, the evaluation observed the need for follow up to technical assistance provided. It is very rare that development projects achieve their impact by one-off interventions. UNCTAD should look to not just continue this project, but also expand its scope to cover other countries and thematic areas.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation recommends UNCTAD and its stakeholders to consider the following recommendations to build on the results achieved by this project.

104. UNCTAD should seek additional resources for a second phase or a related new project to sustain and build on the momentum gained so far. It could:

a. Identify and expand the current intervention to other countries and thematic areas. The project's work in pilot countries has generated interest among other countries as well as in other relevant thematic areas, which can be tapped into for building and sustaining the momentum generated by the project.
b. Build on the lessons learned from other fast emerging and recently developed countries. Many stakeholders expressed an interest in peer learning from other countries as well as sharing with each other. This interest in south-south cooperation is worth sustaining in the aftermath of this project's success. This is already reflected in the new project initiated in 2021 titled" Integrated Policy Strategies and Regional Policy Coordination for Resilient, Green and Transformative Development: Supporting Selected Asian BRI Partner Countries to Achieve 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda", which aims to assist 4 developing countries through: 1) effective integrated policy strategies and improved capacity at national level, including South-South peer-learning; and 2) economic cooperation and policy coordination at regional level. This is a right step and GDS/ ECIDC should continue to build on this momentum.

Action: Economic Cooperation and Integration among developing countries (ECIDC) Branch of Division on Globalization and Development Strategies

Timeframe: 12-24 months

105. The project team should further explore ways to actively engage partners and stakeholders by:

a. Transforming the BRI platform from a static knowledge dissemination platform to an active and engaged community. A static one-way communication platform competes with millions of webpages of similar nature and can quickly get outdated, whereas an active community can continue engaging in peer-to-peer learning with limited support from UNCTAD.
b. Conducting additional online and in-person events, in conjunction with other UNCTAD events, with a focus on active participation of stakeholders to further disseminate the findings from this project.
c. Developing a clear communication strategy for ECIDC's S-S cooperation work to stand out from the crowded field in which multiple development organizations and projects are competing to spread the word about their findings.

d. Strengthening engagement with other UN agencies, including Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in beneficiary countries.

Action: The project team (as well as ECIDC).

Timeframe: 6-12 months

106. ECIDC needs to increase attention to collecting data on key outcomes and impacts to document and learn about the changes occurring at different levels. National partner institutions from participating countries could be involved to help with this goal. By demonstrating impact of its work, the project would be in a better position to sustain its momentum.

Action: Economic Cooperation and Integration among developing countries (ECIDC) Branch of Division on Globalization and Development Strategies

Timeframe: Ongoing

107. ECIDC needs to further incorporate gender and human rights issues in key priority areas by:

a. Strengthening research and analysis efforts on human rights, gender and disability inclusion (including conducting in-depth assessment of gender inequalities and disparities) should be considered in research reports and recommendations on operational or policy concerns within key priority areas.
b. Systematically collecting gender and disability disaggregated data (including for virtual and in-person meetings; tracking gender of authors in research-focus projects; tracking disaggregated data on beneficiaries, and so on).

Action: Economic Cooperation and Integration among developing countries (ECIDC) Branch of Division on Globalization and Development Strategies. DESA should also encourage disability inclusion in project documents and guidelines provided to the project teams at the launch of the project.

Timeframe: 12-24 months

7. ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE

External Evaluation of Project "South-South Integration and the SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative"

Introduction and Purpose

1 This document outlines the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the independent final project evaluation for the project titled "South-South Integration and the SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative" funded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund. This sub-fund is part of the United Nations' Peace and Development Trust Fund, supported by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

2 The evaluation will provide accountability to UNCTAD management, the Management Team of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund / Capacity Development Programme Management Office (CDPMO) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's member States.

3 The evaluation will provide assessments that are credible and useful, and also include practical and constructive recommendations. In particular, the evaluation will systematically and objectively assess project design, project management, implementation, the extent of gender and human rights mainstreaming and overall project performance. On the basis of these assessments, the evaluation will formulate recommendations to project stakeholders, in particular to UNCTAD and/or the CDPMO of DESA with a view towards optimizing results of future projects, including on operational and administrative aspects.

Context of the evaluation

4 Meeting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is inextricably linked with the process of structural transformation. This project takes an innovative South-South approach to capacity-building by distilling lessons from a country with first-hand experience in the transformation process, and which is engaged in an ambitious foreign economic policy centered on cross-regional infrastructure connectivity and productive investment known as the Belt & Road initiative (BRI).

5 China's One Belt and One Road initiative (BRI) is a development strategy and framework that focuses on connectivity and cooperation, involving more than 60 countries, which represent three continents, a third of the world's total economy and more than half of the global population. To unlock the transformative effects of BRI engagement, partner countries can find guidance and encouragement from a deeper understanding of China's past and current policy reform experiences – experiences which allowed China to not only attain the SDG's predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals, but to go well beyond them.

6 However, despite the great development potential from BRI, limitations in government capacity in many partner countries – particularly in the policy areas of investment, trade, finance/debt, and technology – could constrain or even block the potential transformative impacts of the BRI (and of foreign direct investment more generally). As partner countries engage with BRI-related projects, understanding China's economic reform strategy will allow for selective adaptation of underlying lessons by

decision-makers in devising effective policy responses that better reflect respective national development objectives – including achievement of the SDGs.

Subject of the evaluation

7 The project's overall objective is to strengthen national capacity-building for sustainable and transformative development in selected Belt & Road partner countries.

8 Its specific objectives are to:

a. Expected Accomplishment 1: Enhanced ability of partner countries to engage the BRI with a deeper understanding of China's development experience in structural transformation and associated policy options;
b. Expected Accomplishment 2: Improved capacity of BRI partner countries to design policy strategies and institutional mechanisms to increase the development outcomes of BRI initiatives on the process of structural transformation;
c. Expected Accomplishment 3[12]: Improved understanding of selected BRI partner countries on the economic shock from Covid-19 and appropriate policy options in responding to the shocks.

9 The project has direct relevance to several SDG indicators, particularly for Goal 9: "To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation". For instance, project completion will contribute to target 9.2 by raising manufacturing value-added as a share of real GDP and real per capita GDP (indicator 9.2.1), as well as raising manufacturing employment as a share of total employment (indicator 9.2.2). More broadly, the project will also contribute to Goal 17 (global partnership) in terms of target 17.3, 17.6, 17.7, and 17.9 by mobilizing resources for South-South Cooperation (indicator 17.3.1), technology (indicator 17.6.1 and 17.7.1), and capacity-building (indicator 17.9.1).

10 The project selected three partner countries for collaboration: Indonesia, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka. Each country is already closely involved with BRI and has received significant volumes of Chinese overseas investment. Other criteria were included to incorporate degrees of diversity among pilot countries, such as: regional coverage (East Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia); population, economic, and geographic size; stage of development and government institutional capacity and stability. The perspectives of Chinese policymakers were also considered in the selection of project pilot countries.

11 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) conducted by each country informed the project design and implementation. VNRs are regular and inclusive reviews of progress against the SDGs at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven. The voluntary national reviews (VNRs) aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These national reviews serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum (HLPF), meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC.

12 Examining the VNR of each country, challenges identified by Ethiopia in relation to Goal 9 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation) pertain to serious limitations in government institutional capacities to execute and implement national plan targets that are central to achieving the SDGs. The VNR, which is integrated into the government's Second

[12] Expected Accomplishment 3 was added in May 2020.

Five-Year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) identified major challenges with regards to processing and manufacturing such as the weakness of sectoral backward and forward linkages, the lack of skills, knowledge and access to current technologies, as well as the lack of technology transfer efforts by government agencies.

13 As seen in its VNR, Indonesia's National Medium Term Development Plan 2015-2019 seeks to improve infrastructure development by enhancing national connectivity, developing urban mass transportation, and improving effective financing. However, serious constraints have been identified in the form of availability of competent human resources, and technology capacity. To capitalize on Indonesia's rich biodiversity, the government has sought to foster industrial development by supporting several agro-industrial bases in sectors such as palm oil, sugar processing, wood and paper and fisheries. In addition, to strengthen the industrial structure and increase value-added of (semi) raw minerals, the government has also supported the prohibition of raw minerals export in order to promote the development of the smelter industry.

14 In Sri Lanka's 'Vision 2025' document, the government sets out an ambitious plan that includes providing incentives to encourage educational institutions to partner with the private sector to invest in emerging industries such as robotics and cybernetics. In addition, the government seeks to establish regional technology centres as well as a new national development bank to support small- and medium enterprises with access to new technologies and access to long-term project-based financing. Challenges to improved growth in the manufacturing sector include: lack of innovation, technology and management skills; poor diversification of products and quality of the domestic market; access to international markets; poor transport infrastructure, and lack of investment and coordination in science, technology, and research and development.

15 To this end, through the project activities, the aim is to put in place solid foundations for improved government institutional capacities in these pilot countries to design and implement policy strategies and institutional mechanisms to increase the development outcomes from BRI projects, and from FDI project overall, in driving the process of structural transformation and achievement of the SDGs.

16 Project activities include: Producing policy papers, conducting national level consultations, conducting six national level surveys on the state of industrial diversification and upgrading in each country, producing six reports (two per pilot country) on the two key policy areas of structural transformation, creating of a software tool that would allow policymakers in selected BRI countries to assess debt sustainability scenarios under different policy options.

17 The key stakeholders of the project include government officials from relevant ministries, private sector entities including industry associations, technical research institutes and universities, Government of China planning-and development experience-related ministries and institutes, IGO and traditional donor country technical research institutes, relevant civil society organizations.

18 This project has been implemented by UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Centre for International Knowledge on Development (China), and the Development Research Centre of the State Council (China), Policy Studies Institute (Ethiopia) Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA), Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (INDEF) Indonesia. These are premier policy research institutions of the Governments, providing policy support in the areas of macro finance, trade, industry, digital economy and debt sustainability.,

19 The project started on 1 November 2018 with an approved budget of USD$$921,718.72 (inclusive of 4% support cost to UNCTAD) and was scheduled for

completion in October 2021. In September 2021, it was granted a six-month extension and will now conclude 30 April 2022.

Evaluation scope, objectives and questions

20 This final evaluation of the project has the following specific objectives:
   a. Assess the degree to which the desired project results have been realized, including the extent of gender and human rights mainstreaming; and
   b. Identify good practices and lessons learned from the project that could feed into and enhance the implementation of related interventions.
   c. The evaluation will cover the duration of the project from November 2018 to 30 April 2022.
   d. The evaluation is expected to address the following questions under the following criteria (to be further developed in the inception report, as appropriate):

21 Relevance
   e. To what extent the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of participating countries, taking into account UNCTAD's mandates?
   f. What adjustments are needed to make the project more relevant to the participating countries in supporting their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, including responding to emerging challenges?

22 Effectiveness
   g. Have the activities achieved, or are likely to achieve, planned objectives as enunciated in the project document and outcomes (intended or unintended), in particular against relevant SDG targets?
   h. To what extent have the project participants utilized the knowledge and skills gained through the project's activities in contributing to the efforts of their organizations/governments to plan and implement the 2030 Agenda?

23 Efficiency
   i. How efficient was the project in utilizing project resources and has the project management been adequate to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner?
   j. To what extent has the work of the project been complementary to that of existing global programmes, regional/interregional initiatives, UN Country Teams, UNDAF as well as other UN and non-UN actors in supporting participating countries in achieving sustainable development, including avoiding redundancy?

24 Sustainability
   k. Is there evidence that beneficiary countries are committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project and/or have there been catalytic effects from the project?
   l. What measures have been built in to promote the sustainability of the outcomes? What additional measures could be taken to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes over time?
   m. Gender and human rights
   n. To what extent a human rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention, and can results be identified in this regard?

25 Partnerships and synergies
   o. To what extent has the project advanced partnerships amongst project participants with national and regional counterparts, international development partners, the

civil society and/or the private sector in support of results, and sustainability of results?

p. How effective has the project been in enabling effective and efficient sharing of resources through building partnerships with other UN and non-UN organizations and practitioners supporting sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

Methodology

26 The evaluation will adopt a theory-driven, utilization-focused approach. It will be guided by the project-results framework and ensure a gender and human rights responsive evaluation. The evaluator is required to use a mixed-method approach, including qualitative as well as quantitative data gathering and analysis as the basis for a triangulation exercise of all available data to draw conclusions and findings.

27 In view of the current global pandemic situation, innovative methods for data collection are required. Hence, methods for data gathering for this evaluation include, but is not limited to, the following:

a) Desk review of project documents and relevant materials;
b) Collect and analyze relevant web and social media metrics related to the outputs of the project;
c) Observe a sample of virtual meetings, webinars and other activities to be implemented by the project, as appropriate;
d) Telephone/skype interviews with relevant UNCTAD staff;
e) Online surveys of beneficiaries of the project, and other stakeholders, as may be required; conduct follow-up interviews as may be necessary;
f) Virtual focus group discussions;
g) Telephone/skype interviews with a balanced sample of project participants, project partners and other relevant stakeholders.

28 Contribution analysis could be undertaken in particular to assess project results.

29 As part of the desk review, which will lead to an Inception Report, the evaluator will use the project document as well as additional documents such as mission reports; progress reports, financial reports, publications, studies – both produced under the project as well as received from national and regional counterparts. A list of project beneficiaries as well as other partners and counterparts involved in the project will be provided to the evaluator.

30 The evaluator will further elaborate on the evaluation methodology in the Inception Report, determining thereby the exact focus and approach for the exercise, including developing tailor-made questions that target different stakeholders (based on a stakeholder analysis), and developing the sampling strategy and identifying the sources and methods for data collection. The methodology should follow the UNCTAD Inception Report Guidelines.

31 The evaluator is required to submit a separate final list of those interviewed in the Annex of the evaluation report. The evaluator is to ensure a wide representation of stakeholders, bearing in mind the need to include those in a disadvantaged or minority position as appropriate.

Deliverables and Expected Outputs

32 The evaluation, on the basis of its findings and assessments made on the above criteria, should draw conclusions, make recommendations and identify lessons learned from the implementation of the project.

More specifically, the evaluation should:

A. Highlight what has been successful and can be replicated elsewhere;
B. Highlight, as appropriate, any specific achievements that provide additional value for money and/or relevant multiplier effects;
C. Indicate shortcomings and constraints in the implementation of the project while, at the same time, identifying the remaining challenges, gaps and needs for future courses of action;
D. Make pragmatic recommendations to suggest how UNCTAD's work in this area can be further strengthened in order to address beneficiaries' needs and create synergies through collaboration with other UNCTAD divisions, international organizations and development partners, and other international forums;
E. Draw lessons of wider application for the replication of the experience gained in this project in other projects/countries;

Three deliverables are expected out of this evaluation (following EMU templates):

A. An inception report[13];
B. A draft evaluation report; and
C. The final evaluation report[14]

33 The inception report should summarize the desk review and specify the evaluation methodology, determining thereby the exact focus and scope of the exercise, including the evaluation matrix, the sampling strategy, stakeholder mapping analysis and the data collection instruments.

34 The final report of the evaluation must be composed of the following key elements:

a) Executive summary;
b) Introduction of the evaluation, a brief description of the projects, the scope of the evaluation and a clear description of the methodology used;
c) Findings and assessments according to the criteria listed in Section IV of this ToR, with a comparison table of planned and implemented project activities and outputs; and
d) Conclusions and recommendations drawn from the assessments.

35 Appendix 1 presents the full requirements for the evaluation report.

36 All the evaluation assessments must be supported by facts and findings, direct or indirect evidence, and well-substantiated logic. It follows that proposed recommendations must be supported by the findings and be relevant, specific, practical, actionable, and time-bound recommendations.

Description of Duties

37 An independent evaluation consultant will be recruited to undertake this assignment. The UNCTAD Evaluation Unit manages the evaluation and facilitates the work of the evaluator.

38 The evaluator reports to the Chief of Evaluation Unit. S/he will undertake the evaluation exercise under the guidance of the Evaluation Unit and in coordination with the project manager. The evaluator is responsible for the evaluation design, data collection,

➢ _____

[13] The quality of the inception report should meet those standards set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports: http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=608

[14] The quality of the evaluation report should meet those standards set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/607

analysis and reporting as provided in this TOR. The evaluator will submit a copy-edited final report to UNCTAD.

39 The evaluator shall act independently, in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and in her/his private capacities and not as a representative of any government or 55roject55tion that may present a conflict of interest. S/he will have no previous experience of working with the project or of working in any capacity linked with it.

40 The evaluator should observe the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, as well as UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy, in the conduct of this assignment. The evaluator needs to integrate human rights and gender equality in evaluations to the extent possible.[15] The evaluator needs to ensure a complete, fair, engaging, unreserved, and unbiased assessment. In case of difficulties, uncertainties or concerns in the conduct of the evaluation, the evaluator needs to report immediately to the Chief of Evaluation Unit to seek guidance or clarification.

41 The Project Officer/Team will support the evaluation, by providing desk review documents (following Evaluation Unit desk review documents guidelines), contact details of project stakeholders as well as any additional documents that the evaluator requests. It is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure senior management engagement throughout the evaluation and timely feedback in the quality assurance and factual clarification process coordinated by the Evaluation Unit. The project team will review and provide comments on the inception, draft and final reports with a view on quality assurance and factual accuracies.

42 The UNCTAD Evaluation Unit acts as clearing entity during the main steps of this evaluation. It endorses the TOR and approves the selection of the proposed evaluator. The UNCTAD Evaluation Unit reviews the evaluation methodology, clears the draft report, performs quality assurance of the final report and participates in disseminating the final report to stakeholders within and outside of UNCTAD. The Evaluation Unit engages the project manager throughout the evaluation process in supporting the evaluation and validating the reports.

Timetable

43 The total duration of the evaluation is equivalent to 30 days of work and will take place over the period 12 July to 20 October 2022.

Monitoring and Progress Control

44 The evaluator must keep the Evaluation Unit informed of the progress made in the evaluation on a regular basis. The contract concludes, and payment issued, upon satisfactory receipt of the final report.

45 The evaluator will submit the first draft of inception report by 15 July 2022. The Report should include draft data collection instruments for review.

46 The first draft of the report should be presented to the Evaluation Unit by 30 August 2022 for quality assurance purposes (approximately 1 week). The revised draft report will then be shared with the project manager for factual clarification and comments (approximately 2 weeks).

➢ _____

[15] "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2014): http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616. The UNEG Handbook on "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations: Towards UNEG Guidance" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2011): http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980.

47 The deadline for submission of the final report will be 30 September 2022.

Appendix 1. Requirements for the evaluation report

	Report Section	Contents
1.	Title and opening pages	• Title of the report • Date of the report • Names and organizations of evaluator(s) • Name of the organizations commissioning the evaluation • Acknowledgements
2.	Table of contents	• Listing of all the contents of the report including annexes, boxes, figures and tables with page references
3.	Acronyms and abbreviations	• Listing of all acronyms and abbreviations used in the report
4.	Executive Summary	• The Executive Summary needs to be a stand-alone section of maximum length of approximately 10-15% of the main report, excluding annexes. • Needs to include a short overview of the project, the purpose, scope and objective of the evaluation and the intended users • Provide key aspects of the methodology, its limitations and ways in which these were mitigated • Summarize key findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations
5.	Introduction	• Background to the project and the evaluations • Purpose of the evaluation including timing of the evaluation and expected users and use of evaluation results
6.	Context of the evaluation	• Introduction of the topic of the evaluation and relevant developments concerned • Details on the topic in countries/regions covered by the project • Details on policies, plans and programmes of government and other organizations on the topic concerned and support provided by other development partners
7.	Subject of the evaluation	• The project, its objective and how it tries to achieve this • Coverage in terms of countries/regions and time frame concerned • Partners for implementation, including government, other UN agencies at country/regional level • Project resources • Past evaluations/assessments/studies if relevant, including gender analysis and vulnerability assessments • An analysis of the theory of change of the project.
8.	Evaluation scope, objectives and questions	• Scope of the evaluation and rationale concerned • Objectives of the evaluation, including evaluation criteria • Evaluation questions, organized by evaluation criteria

9.	Methodology of the evaluation	• Detailed description of the selected methodological approaches, the corresponding rationale for selection. • It should describe in particular: – Overall methodological approach(es) used for the different evaluation questions – Sample and sampling frame – Data collection methods – Stakeholder engagement – Ethical concerns and how these were handled • Major limitations, such as access to information and data, etc.; should be identified and openly discussed as to their implications for evaluation, as well as steps taken to mitigate those limitations.
10.	Findings	• Findings are analyzed and presented according to the evaluation questions. Each evaluation question should have a separate subsection. • Main findings must be well substantiated by evidences originating from relevant sources, triangulated, and supported by logical analysis and reasonable judgments.
11.	Conclusions	• Statements at the level of evaluation questions and beyond, that are grounded in the analysis of the findings. This can include statements at the level of the evaluation criteria, across criteria as well as related to cross-cutting issues. • Conclusions provide added value to the findings. Conclusions are not a synthesis of the main findings, but rather conclusive statements based on and substantiated by the key findings. Conclusions will consolidate the assessment of various aspects to judge the value and worth of the project. • Conclusive statements for each of the evaluation questions will be provided, for example in relation to the effectiveness of the project, its relevance et cetera.
12.	Lessons learned/good practices	• Lessons that were learned in the implementation of the project and that are useful beyond the context in which they were learned, with sufficient substantiation to be of use to people who do not know the project.
13.	Recommendations (maximum of 8 recommendations)	• Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis, and be relevant and realistic. Depending on whether this is a mid-term evaluation or a final evaluation, recommendations can be related to: – Project implementation /operational issues – Strategic issues: this can include recommendations for redesigning the project (mid-term evaluation); recommendations for a next phase (final evaluation); – Thematic issues • Each recommendation should be clearly addressed to the appropriate party (ies). Responsibilities and the time frame for their implementation should be stated, to the extent possible.

14.	Annexes	• ToR • Project results framework and additional details on the project as needed • List of persons interviewed and additional details on methodology and needed • References of documents reviewed

8. ANNEX II. EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND MATRIX

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Measure/ Indicators	Data collection methods	Data sources
Relevance	To what extent the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of participating countries, taking into account UNCTAD's mandates and UN's 2030 SDG agenda?	Evidence that project design contributed to the needs in the key policy areas of investment, trade, finance/debt, and technology by indirectly learning from China's development experience and by directly drawing from China's existing institutional capabilities	Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews	Project documents, stakeholder feedback in KII
Efficiency	How efficient was the project in utilizing project resources and has the project management been adequate to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner?	Efficiency achieved in terms of adequacy of stakeholders involved and the creation of synergies	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and online survey	Project documents, stakeholder feedback in KII, and online survey questionnaire
Effectiveness	To what extent has the project achieved, or is likely to achieve, its intended outcomes in particular against relevant SDG targets?	Evidence of the project contribution to the definition of objectives based on the60rojectt document and outcomes	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and online survey	Project documents, stakeholder feedback in KII, and online survey questionnaire

Partnerships and synergies	To what extent has the project advanced partnerships amongst project participants with national and regional counterparts, international development partners, the civil society and/or the private sector in support of results, and sustainability of results?	Stakeholder perceptions of partnership strategies and relative efficiency	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and online survey	Project documents, stakeholder feedback in KII, and online survey questionnaire
Coherence	To what extent has the work of the project been complementary to that of existing global programmes, regional/interregional initiatives, UN Country Teams, UNDAF as well as other UN and non-UN actors in supporting participating countries in achieving sustainable development, including avoiding redundancy?	Complementarity between various interventions of UNCTAD and the UN system at large.	Triangulation of data deriving from document review, interviews, and online survey	Project documents, stakeholder feedback in KII, and online survey questionnaire
Sustainability	What measures (course of actions) did the project implement to sustain the results obtained and with what effect? What, if any, have been the catalytic effects of the project's interventions?	Evidence of project's results to be used by beneficiary countries, stakeholders	Content analysis of KII transcripts and online questionnaire	Stakeholder feedback in KII and online questionnaire

Human rights, Gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion	To what extent a human rights-based approach, gender mainstreaming, attention to vulnerable populations and disability inclusion were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention, and can results be identified in this regard?	Evidence of gender, human rights, disability inclusion and attention to vulnerable populations being integrated in the design and implementation of the project	Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews	Project documents, stakeholder feedback in KII

9. ANNEX III. EVALUATION RESULTS MATRIX

This section outlines evaluations results matrix used for this evaluation. It includes objectives, outcomes, performance indicators, data collection methods and data sources and collection method that undergird the project's logical framework. (Note: Evaluation matrix, which provides information organized by evaluation questions is included in Annex II). This results framework was derived and adapted from the project documents for the purpose of evaluation.

Chart 19. Evaluation results matrix/logical framework

Outputs	Outcome	Indicator/s	Data source	Data collection method
Objective: To accelerate sustainable and transformative development in the selected Belt & Road partner countries (and beyond).				
National and international consultations and workshops to disseminate findings of the project.	Increase in self-reported knowledge of the participants.	The extent of self-reported increase in knowledge emerging from the project's research.	Desk review Key informant interviews Evaluation survey	Content analysis Qualitative analysis Survey analysis
At least two scoping policy papers that analyze China's institutional mechanisms in two key policy areas of structural transformation: industrial diversification and upgrading, and financial mobilization.	Improved capacity of selected partner countries (including policymakers) to engage the BRI with a deeper understanding of China's development experience in structural transformation and associated policy options.	Participants demonstrate improved understanding of key lessons from China's development experience in structural transformation and its relevance to enhanced partner country engagement with the BRI.	Desk review Key informant interviews (KIIs) Evaluation survey	Content analysis Qualitative analysis Survey analysis

The first national-level consultation in each pilot country to share lessons from China's institutional mechanism in the two policy areas of structural transformation 6 background surveys in the two key policy areas of structural transformation: industrial diversification and upgrading, and financial mobilization. (Two surveys per pilot country). Reports Policy papers	BRI partner countries design and adapt better policy strategies and institutional mechanisms to obtain better development outcomes from BRI initiatives and associated structural transformation and achievement of SDGs.	Whether or not recommendations were endorsed by the targeted participants. Perceptible improvements in policy strategies and institutional mechanisms	Desk review Key informant interviews Evaluation survey	Content analysis Qualitative analysis Survey analysis
Advisory services from designated Chinese governmental agencies to help inform industry- and technology-specific aspects of major reports.	Use of advisory services by the targeted stakeholders (Target: At least 2/3 of pilot countries take steps to adopt or incorporate China- and/or BRI specific economic policies or strategies in national planning documents).	The extent to which stakeholders use/ adopt recommendations from the advisory services	Desk review Key informant interviews Evaluation survey	Content analysis Qualitative analysis Survey analysis
A software tool to enable policymakers in BRI countries to estimate their SDG funding gaps, to take into consideration their BRI financial commitments, and to assess debt	The software tool is adopted and used by the targeted stakeholders.	The extent of use (e.g., number of institutions and individuals) of the software tool.	Desk review Key informant interviews	Content analysis Qualitative analysis

sustainability scenarios under different policy options			Evaluation survey	Survey analysis
Policy papers, dissemination workshops and technical cooperation	Improved understanding of selected BRI partner countries on the economic shock from Covid-19 and appropriate policy options in responding the shock	The extent of self-reported improvements in the knowledge of participants	Key informant interviews Evaluation survey	Qualitative analysis Survey analysis

10. ANNEX IV. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Core Project documents		
1	United Nations Interoffice Memorandum CDO/18/0324. Subject: Project funded under the 2030 Agenda PDF Sub-Fund "South-South Integration and the Belt and Road Initiative" (project ID # PDF-SDG-2018-08)	Project Document
2	UNCTAD Interim Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period from 01 October 2021 to 31 March 2022	Statement of Income and Expenditures
3	UNCTAD Interim Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period from 1 April to 30 September 2019	Statement of Income and Expenditures
4	UNCTAD Interim Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period from 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2020	Statement of Income and Expenditures
5	UNCTAD Interim Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period from 01 April 2020 to 30 September 2020	Statement of Income and Expenditures
6	UNCTAD Interim Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period from 01 April 2021 to 30 September 2021	Statement of Income and Expenditures
7	UNCTAD Interim Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period from 01 November 2018 to 31 March 2019	Statement of Income and Expenditures
8	UNCTAD Interim Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period from 1 April to 30 September 2019	Statement of Income and Expenditures
9	Revised Project Document of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund (May 2020)	Statement of Income and Expenditures
10	Revised Work Plan (April 2021)	Work Plan
11	Revised Budget Workplan (May 2020)	Budget Workplan
12	Outputs Disaggregated Data (March 2021)	Detail of Disaggregated Data
Implementation document		
13	The Macroeconomic Policy Framework for Structural Transformation: Experiences and Implications from China	Project Research Paper
14	Debt Sustainability and Debt Management: Lessons from China	Project Research Paper
15	Opening its Doors to Foreign investment: The Evolution of Trade-Related investment Measures and their Economic Impacts in China	Project Research Paper
16	The Development of China's Digital Economy: A Study on China's E-commerce Development and Policy Implications	Project Research Paper

17	China's Policy Practice for Digital Economy Development	Project Research Paper
18	China's Financial Reform and Development in Four Decades: Process and Experience	Project Research Paper
19	The Indonesian Digital Policy: Lessons from PRC's Experiences	Project Research Paper
20	Indonesian Global Value Chain Policy: Learning from China's Experiences	Project Research Paper
21	Indonesia's Macroeconomic and Finance Policy Framework for Structural Transformation	Project Research Paper
22	Indonesian Industrialization and Industrial Policy: Peer Learning from China's Experiences	Project Research Paper
23	China's Industrial Policy: Evolution and Experience	Project Research Paper
24	Strengthen the structural transformation of the Belt and Road partner countries: Global value chain	Project Research Paper
25	Debt sustainability and debt management in Sri Lanka – a reflection on the applicability of Chinese policy lessons	Project Research Paper
26	Digital Economy of Sri Lanka: National Goals and Lessons from the South	Project Research Paper
27	Sri Lanka and Global Manufacturing Value Chains: Performance, Prospects and Learnings from China	Project Research Paper
28	Sri Lanka's macro-financial developments: issues and challenges in structural transformation and lessons from China's Experience	Project Research Paper
29	Boosting Industrialisation in Sri Lanka through Effective Policy Strategies: Learning from China	Project Research Paper
30	Debt sustainability and debt management in Indonesia – lessons from China	Project Research Paper
31	Boosting Ethiopia's Industrialization: What can be learned from China	Project Research Paper
32	Ethiopia and the Global Value Chains (GVCs): Learnings from China	Project Research Paper
33	Developing Ethiopia's Digital Economy: Lessons from China	Project Research Paper
34	Debt Sustainability and Management in Ethiopia Lessons from China	Project Research Paper
35	Ethiopia's Macroeconomic and Finance Policy Framework for Structural Transformation	Project Research Paper
36	Mainstreaming Gender in National Policies: The cases of Ethiopia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka	Project funded publication

37	China's structural transformation what can developing countries learn?	Project funded publication
38	Report of the Concluding Meeting: South-South Sharing of Policy Experiences	Project meeting report
39	Report of the Workshop on Enhancing Structural Transformation: Learnings from China	Project meeting report
40	Scaling up Finance for the Sustainable Development Goals Paper	Project Research Paper
41	Structural Transformation and Export Diversification in Southern Africa	Project Research Paper
42	South-South Digital Cooperation for Industrialization: A Regional Integration Agenda	Project Research Paper
43	Solidarity and The South: New Directions in Long-Term Development Finance	Project Research Paper
44	Forging a Path Beyond Borders: The Global South	Project Research Paper
45	Defining and Quantifying South-South Cooperation	Project Research Paper
Monitoring documents		
46	Project Progress Report April 2019	Project progress report
47	Project Progress Report October 2019	Project progress report
48	Project Progress Report May 2020	Project progress report
49	Project Progress Report October 2020	Project progress report
50	Project Progress Report March 2021	Project progress report
51	Project Progress Report September 2021	Project progress report
52	Project Progress Report April 2022	Project progress report
Strategic documents		
53	Bridgetown Covenant	Strategic document
54	Evaluation Framework of the 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund	Strategic document
55	Guidelines for 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund	Strategic document
56	Nairobi Maafikiano	Strategic document
57	UNCTAD Proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019	
	Workshops and webinars: Reports and concept notes	

58	Round Table Regional Productive Integration Vis A Vis Industry 4.0: A South-South Agenda	
59	South-South Cooperation for Economic Integration: UNCTAD's Platform 21st March 2018 (1-3pm), PB Torre-MARQ, Buenos Aires Side Event of Unit of Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing Countries ECIDC-UNCTAD	
60	South–South sharing of policy experiences 14 and 15 March 2022 Room XXVI, Palais des Nations, Geneva Concept note and tentative programme	
61	South-South Sharing of Policy Experiences 14-15 March 2022Room XXVI, Palais des Nations, and online Report of the Meeting	
62	South–South sharing of policy experiences: Mainstreaming gender in national polices 8 March 2022	
63	Webinar co-organized by Policy Studies Institute (PSI) Ethiopia and UNCTAD South-South Integration – Sharing of Policy Experiences: Digital Transformation of Ethiopia: Lessons from other Countries 4 February 2022 Concept Note and Programme	
64	Webinar co-organized by Policy Studies Institute (PSI) Ethiopia and UNCTAD South-South Integration – Sharing of Policy Experiences: Revisiting Trade and Industrial Policies in the times of Covid-19 7 February 2022 Concept Note and Programme	

11. ANNEX V. INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Details	
Name, organization and position	
Gender	
Stakeholder type	
Location of interviewee	
Date and time	
Interviewer(s)	
Mode of interview	

The following interview protocol for virtual interviews is comprehensive. The interviewer will customize and adapt questions for each interview based on interviewee's role, time constraints, response, and level of knowledge/ familiarity with topics revealed during interviews. (Note that all interviews should start with informed consent).

Introductions

Thank interviewees for taking the time out of your busy schedule to provide critical input into this process. While I will be collecting data from multiple sources to triangulate our findings, your feedback will help us in important ways in arriving at our findings.

This is a summative evaluation with a forward-looking focus. The overarching purpose is to generate information on the results achieved and lessons learned from the project "South-South Integration and the SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative" to inform planning and implementation of future UNCTAD capacity development projects and strengthen accountability for results towards UNCTAD's member States".

Be assured that this is a completely confidential conversation. Only I, as evaluator, will have access to the interview notes, and I will never mention you by name (or title) in the report.

	Staff	Government Partners	Beneficiaries	
What do you expect to gain from this evaluation? What would make it most useful for you and your office/ organization? (Scoping question)	*	*		
In what role/ capacity are you associated with the UNCTAD Project? For how long?	*	*	*	*

	Staff	Government	Partners	Beneficiaries
How relevant is the project for your country's development and structural transformation needs?	*	*	*	*
Is there any evidence on use of the UNCTAD project's inputs on development and structural transformation being adopted by the governments in Your country?	*	*	*	
What do you consider to be the main results UNCTAD has obtained through its work? What were the overall impact of the project on development and structural transformation situation in Your country?	*	*	*	*
What were the unexpected and unintended effects (positive and/or negative), if any, generated by the project? What good practices and lessons emerged from it?	*	*	*	*
In your opinion, what makes the UNCTAD project's assistance unique? What are their strengths? What do you see as the main added value provided by them? What could be improved? How?	*	*	*	*
What are the project's areas of comparative advantage and value-added in terms of contributing to policy processes and capacity-building?	*	*	*	
What innovative aspects of the project implementation have proved successful and should be replicated or scaled up? To what extent has the project been innovative in adapting its approach to the context and development challenges/needs of Your country?	*	*	*	*
To what extent did the project meet the needs of its targeted beneficiaries?	*	*		
To what extent has the project applied selectivity in the choice of its activities and intervention modalities and focused on core areas (i.e., adequate prioritization)?	*	*		
How did you ensure that the project was implemented in an efficient and cost-effective way and that inputs are converted to outputs in a timely and cost-effective manner?	*		*	
To what extent did the project coordinate and cooperate with other UNCTAD projects and programmes, UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams (for in country capacity building work) and other organizations in the design and delivery of the relevant outputs? How can the coordination and cooperation be further enhanced?	*	*	*	
To which extent were synergies and multiplying effects exploited within UNCTAD and with other implementing partners? What could be done differently (e.g., coordination, cooperation, linkages, partnerships, repurposing of resources) to enhance and cost-effectiveness of the project?	*	*	*	

	Staff	Government	Partners	Beneficiaries
Did the project receive sufficient financial and human resources to adequately meet its objectives and mid and long-term objectives and priorities?	*			
Are there synergies between the project and other programmes and projects as well as other UN Organizations? How can these be improved further?	*		*	
How would you characterize your cooperation with partner organizations? Which lessons learned could be drawn from this cooperation?	*		*	
In your opinion, has the project effectively contributed to improved development and structural transformation situation in Your country? How and to what extent? Do you see any long-term impact of the project?	*	*	*	*
To what extent can the benefits generated through the project be sustained? Has the project built in any sustainability mechanisms into project design?	*	*		*
To what extent have human rights, gender and disability inclusion been mainstreamed into the design and implementation of the work of the project? To what extent has the project's intervention considered gender in the implementation of its activities beyond the programme itself (e.g., impact on beneficiaries)?	*	*	*	
How satisfied are you with HRG related efforts? What could be done differently?	*	*	*	*
What are the internal and external factors that have facilitated and /or impeded achievement of the project's results? What steps have you undertaken to analyze, manage and mitigate risks?	*	*	*	
What new opportunities and threats are emerging that UNCTAD should be aware of in shaping its future interventions? Have you seen any best practices or lessons that should replicated elsewhere?	*	*	*	*

12. ANNEX VI. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The draft online stakeholder survey can be assessed by clicking here.

13. ANNEX VII. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Redacted for confidentiality purposes.

14. ANNEX VIII. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN AT A GLANCE

Identified risk	Likelihood of occurrence	Explanation and consequences	Risk management measures
Tight timeline and challenges of stakeholder availability	Low-Medium	The evaluation is to be completed by October 2022. While the timescale is manageable, it allows limited space for delays. Summer holidays are also fast approaching, which might affect the availability of some stakeholders for participation in interviews and surveys.	Ongoing support from the UNCTAD Evaluation Unit will be useful in order to clearly communicate the strategic importance and urgency of the evaluation. The evaluation will also clearly communicate to stakeholders the evaluation timeline, expectations, and the independence of the evaluation, and its importance to the Organization.
Remote nature of data collection	Low-Medium	Owing to the current travel restrictions related to COVID-19, this assignment will be carried out remotely. This can sometimes make it more difficult to establish rapport with key stakeholders, which is often a crucial aspect of not only fostering the credibility of the evaluation, but also for obtaining requisite additional information such as access-restricted documents. For country-level interviews, there are also issues with use of Internet-based connections, which can affect stakeholder availability and clarity of interviews. It may also affect the response rate on surveys.	Remote data collection processes have an inherent risk, but pandemic has made people around the world more comfortable in the use of remote work modalities. The evaluation will also make substantial efforts to put interviewees at ease, including by assuring the confidentiality of information, before launching into data collection.

15. ANNEX IX. ADDITIONAL DATA

Chart 20. Strengths and weaknesses (per stakeholder consultations)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

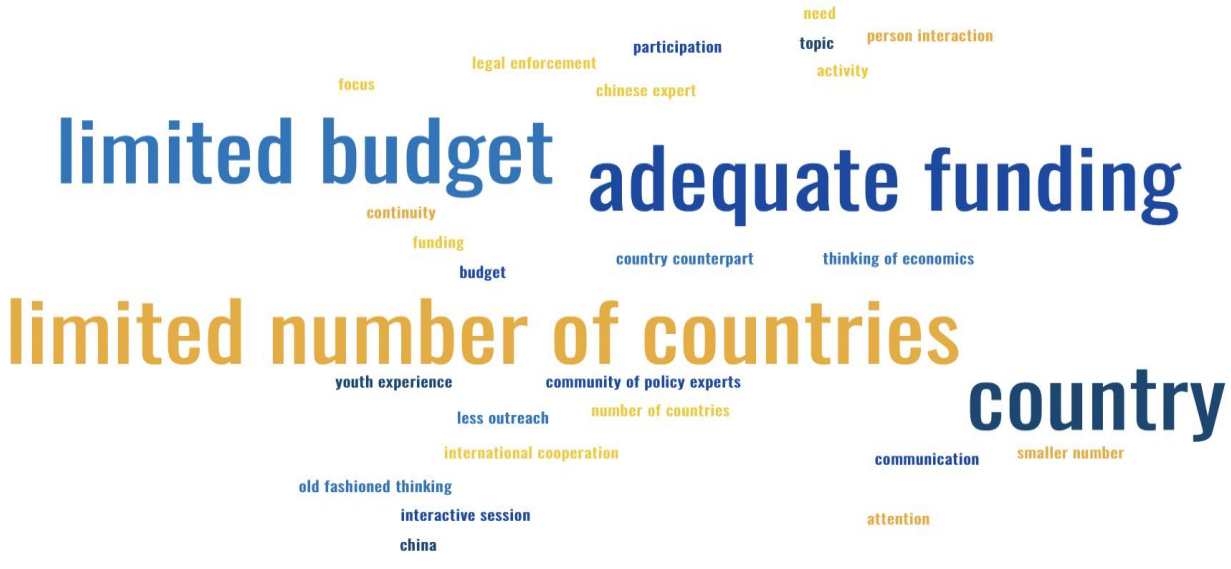


Chart 21. Final revised project budget

Object Class	Approved Budget (US$)				
	Year 1 Org A	Year 2 Org A	Year 3 Org A	Total	% over Programme Cost
Staff and other personnel Costs	73,452.00	244,128.00	166,728.00	484,308.00	54.65%
Travel on official business	31,680.00	-	152,280.00	183,960.00	20.76%
Contractual Services	-	30,000.00	30,000.00	60,000.00	6.77%
General Operating and Other Direct Costs	37,200.00	-	120,800.00	158,000.00	17.83%
Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture (including depreciation)	-	-	-	-	0.00%
Supplies, Commodities and Materials	-	-	-	-	0.00%
Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	-	-	-	-	0.00%
Total programme cost	142,332.00	274,128.00	469,808.00	886,268.00	100.00%
Indirect Support Costs (4% of the total programme cost)	5,693.28	10,965.12	18,792.32	35,450.72	4.00%
Total project budget	148,025.28	285,093.12	488,600.32	921,718.72	104.00%
Programme Support Costs (3% to DESA/UN Central Account)	4,269.96	8,223.84	14,094.24	26,588.04	3%
UN PDF Grand Total Fund Allocation	152,295.24	293,316.96	502,694.56	948,306.76	

Chart 22. Actual financial expenditure by reporting period (USD)

	Nov 2018-Mar19	Apr-Sep 2019	Oct19-Mar20	Apr-Sep 2020	Oct20-Mar21	Apr-Sep 2021	Oct21-Mar 2022	Apr-22	Total
Staff and other Personnel Costs		49880	99709	44325	132345	200813	147432	50294	724798
Travel on official business	9294	19033	45741	-5632	-3830	730	31818	2770	99925
Contractual services		169	482	195	375		1288	8	2517
General Operating and other direct costs		3043	19425		44		19	-6458	16074
Transfers and grants to counterparts						50000		0	50000
Indirect support costs	372	2885	6614	1556	5157	10062	7222	1865	35733
Total expenditure									929046