

### MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND IMPLEMENTATION FOLLOW-UP

## 2020 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report

Management Response, Action Plan, Results, and Means of Verification

Date of submission of final evaluation report: November 2020

Date of finalization of management response: November 2020

# Recommendation No. 1: Mainstream Sustainable Development good practices (a) Fully mainstream ITC expertise and good practices in

(a) Fully mainstream ITC expertise and good practices in the area of gender and equity into project planning and management arrangements for the entire portfolio, where applicable and,

(b) Use the learnings, processes and tools acquired through the above-mentioned exercise, to mainstream expertise and good practices in other Sustainable Development dimensions

Drafting of response assigned to: DEI, Anders Aeroe and PDTF, Stephan Blanc

#### **Management Response and Justification:**

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

The recommendation is:		
		Mainstreaming gender equity as wel
A coord od.		ently ranked very highly in the UN-S
Accepted:	X	equality. In the course of 2019 the "
		ent mainstreaming areas (gender, yo

Mainstreaming gender equity as well as other dimensions of sustainable development are central to ITC's intervention model. ITC has consistently ranked very highly in the UN-SWAP, a benchmarking system applied across all UN agencies to ensure their ongoing focus on gender equality. In the course of 2019 the "ITC Mainstreaming Guide" for project managers was developed by a working group of ITC experts in different mainstreaming areas (gender, youth, green growth and social responsibility). This guide was completed in Q4 2019 and rolled out subsequently through:

- trainings for ITC project managers,
- an updated Executive Director bulletin outlining how mainstreaming is to be integrated into ITC's project development process and requesting all ITC to adhere to the mainstreaming effort and procedures,
- the development of mainstreaming markers enabling ITC to measure progress on mainstreaming in the different areas,
- the establishment of a team of mainstreaming focal points, whose role is to provide expert guidance to project managers in the project development process.

The roll-out is ongoing with all new projects integrating the mainstreaming areas into their logframes and theories of change.

Going forward, ITC will further implement mainstreaming actions at the corporate level. 2022 will mark the beginning of the new strategic plan for ITC. In this regard, ITC has already started to review how its corporate results framework will integrate and measure different mainstreaming perspectives.

a) Gender equity is one of the mainstreaming areas which ITC is currently rolling out. Beyond the corporate outcome indicators, which provide one tool to measure gender equity in ITC projects, the ITC SheTrades team contributed to the development of gender mainstreaming guidelines that are part of the ITC mainstreaming guide. Through this, project managers receive dedicated guidance on

different aspects of gender equity and how they could be addressed and measured in ITC projects. Recently, different new projects have integrated a strong focus on gender and equity, where project managers were required to consider these aspects and their impact on project development and implementation. The recent development of ARISE + projects in Asia illustrate this increased focus.

b) Regarding other dimensions of sustainable development, ITC is focusing on youth, green growth and social responsibility as part of its mainstreaming efforts. For these, the collection of learning and development of tools is continuously ongoing. In the area of youth, ITC is increasingly integrating youth support mechanisms into its projects as well as measuring outcomes on a programme level. Similar to the gender outcome indicator, ITC is measuring how it supports youth across all its projects. In the area of green growth, ITC just approved a new, ambitious strategy for how ITC supports the greening of the global economy in its projects. This strategy identifies a theory of change for ITC interventions as well as different opportunities to further support ITC beneficiaries with related tools and approaches based on the lessons learnt from previous projects. The implementation of the strategy has just started.

In the area of social responsibility, the ILO declaration on fundamental rights and principles at work serves as ITC's guiding principles for project implementation.

Based on the lessons learnt from the current roll-out of the mainstreaming guidelines, ITC may further update and fine-tune its approach, as well as develop further tools and approaches to support sustainable development.

#### **Action Plan and Responsibilities:**

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verifi-	Responsible	Contributing*	Implementation	Remarks
	cation	office or part-	Section(s) or	deadline	
		ner	partner(s)		
1.1 Continuous roll-out of ITC Main-	Expected result:	Project manag-	SPPG, SheTrades,	12/2021	Assumption: Sufficient re-
streaming Guidelines	All ITC project managers know how to apply	ers, Project De-	T4SD, Green2Com-		sources are available to pro-
	ITC's mainstreaming guidelines and imple-	sign Taskforce	pete, Youth &		vide all the support that pro-
	ment them in their projects	(PDTF), main-	Trade programme,		ject managers require for mainstreaming
	Means of verification:	streaming focal	Poor Communities		manistreaming
	ITC's mainstreaming markers show high	points	&Trade programme		
	mainstreaming levels; project evaluations				
	prove increase action on mainstreaming				
1.2 Regular review of gender main-	Expected result:	PDTF	SPPG	12/2021	Assumption: Project Manag-
streaming marker (and other					ers follow mainstreaming

mainstreaming markers) by	Management is aware of the mainstreaming				guidelines to select and jus-
management	status in the ITC project portfolio and can				tify mainstreaming markers
	take related actions in case of lack of pro-				
	gress				
	Means of verification:				
	Review of mainstreaming markers part of				
	SMC agenda (together with regular updates				
	from PDTF)				
1.3 Develop new tools and ap-	Expected result:	SheTrades, T4SD,	PDTF, SPPG, other	12/2022	Assumption:
proaches for mainstreaming	Project managers can apply tools and ap-	Green2Compete,	ITC sections as rele-		Sufficient budget and human
gender and other sustainable	proaches as part of their projects	Youth & Trade	vant		resources available to de-
development dimensions based on project demand	Means of verification:	programme,			velop new tools and ap-
on project demand	New tools are understood and available to	Poor Communi-			proaches and train staff on
	staff	ties &Trade pro-			their use
		gramme			

## **Recommendation No. 2:** Enhance the capacity to utilize theories of change: (a) Develop the ITC Results Framework into a more detailed Theory of Change for the next ITC Strategic Plan and, (b) Increase Project Managers' capacity to utilize the 'Theory of Change' tool to be more results-focused and improve results monitoring and information collection about attributable changes in complex project environments. Drafting of response assigned to: SPPG, Iris Hauswirth and PDTF, Stephan Blanc **Management Response and Justification:** The recommendation is: The ITC Results framework was developed following the definition of ITC's 6 focus areas and 15 programme in 2015-2016. It is organised by the actors that ITC aims to influence in order to increase the international competitiveness of MSMEs. Intermediate outcomes are based on the Accepted: behavioural change model that moves from increasing development partners' awareness, increasing their knowledge and skills, supporting groups to develop action plans, and find consensus to enabling partners to take action. Partially accepted: The ITC Results framework is illustrated in the AESR 2020 (page 4) and provides the model on which all ITC technical assistance projects are developed. Rejected: Each ITC project is anchored in the ITC results framework, and connected directly through corporate results indicators. All ITC projects develop a results chain and a logical framework. These two tools are the result of a thorough and collaborative project development process within ITC, managed and supported by the Project Design Taskforce (PDTF) together with ITC Project Managers. Each project's results chain and logical framework matrix illustrate the change model that will be put in place by that project and show how and why the desired goals can be reached by the project team and stakeholders. Development aid initiatives, and particularly trade development projects, interchangeably refer to theories of change, logical frameworks and result chains to illustrate the sequence of events that are expected to lead to a particular desired outcome. ITC uses these three models, prioritising logframes and results chains that are developed for all projects. These approaches are also complementary and the result of a consultative process bringing together a large number of stakeholders involved in ITC's projects development. All ITC technical assistance projects illustrate their approach through such tools, and the ITC project documents' narrative provide additional elements illustrating how the projects will lead to the achievement of development objectives and sustainable results. There is always room for improvement, and ITC will re-visit its corporate results framework in the course of preparing the next Strategic Plan

(2022-2025). Based on the learning from the implementation of ITC's 15 programmes, and from the work undertaken on mainstreaming ITC's

focus on inclusive and sustainable dimensions, the Theory of Change, in particular the interconnections between the different pillars of the results framework, will be articulated in more detail.

ITC is also dedicated to the continuous improvement of staff skills. 'Theory of change' is a tool that has gained more prominence in recent years as an addition to development practitioners' toolkit. ITC recognizes the value that the tool can bring to stakeholder discussions, management and monitoring, and will offer training opportunities for staff to take full advantage of the tool in their specific project contexts.

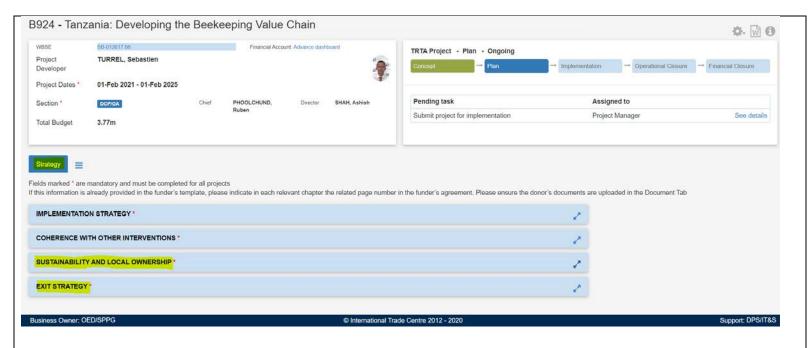
#### **Action Plan and Responsibilities:**

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verifi-	Responsible	Contributing*	Implementation	Remarks
	cation	office or part-	Section(s) or	deadline	
		ner	partner(s)		
2.1 Review of ITC's results framework and its visualisation in the format of a theory of change in the course of the preparation of ITC's Strategic Plan 2022-2025	New Strategic Plan 2022-2025 developed and endorsed, including a well-articulated and visualized theory of change.	SPPG	All ITC Divisions particularly Pro- gramme Managers, PDTF	12/2021	
2.2 Enhance Project Managers' capacity to develop project-level theories of change and use them for monitoring and management.	Identify relevant experts to customize a training module on theory of change. Train relevant staff.	PDTF - SPPG		12/2021	Availability of relevant trainers with good understanding of ITC's projects and ITC's new corporate results framework

Recommendation No. 3: Enhance simplification, harmonization and effectiveness of the M&E corporate system:  Conduct an assessment of the M&E practices across ITC project portfolio to serve results-focused project management, learning and accountability and to enhance the simplification, harmonization and effectiveness of the M&E corporate system							
Drafting of response assigned to: SPPG	i, Iris Hauswirth and PDTF, Stephan Bland	2					
Management Response and Justification	ion:						
Management Response and Justification:  The recommendation is:  Accepted:  X  ITC has built its Results-based Management practices, including M&E practices, over the last decade. The organization has functioning systems and processes throughout the project cycle. At the design stage, each project team can draw on the technical expertise of the ITC Project Design Taskforce, and each project plan has to undergo a thorough quality approval process. One aspect of the quality control is to assure the quality of the project logframe, its alignment with corporate objectives and indicators, and the specification of feasible 'means of verification'. During project implementation, projects report on a quarterly basis on their results progress. Each project also undergoes mid-term and final evaluations, at a minimum in form of a self-evaluation – the project completion report. The corporate M&E system is supported by ITC's 'project portal', a software that supports the documentation of the whole project portfolio, data extraction and analysis. The organization reports regularly to external stakeholders, and publishes its project portfolio according to IATI standards.  While ITC has been recognized for its good RBM, the organization is ambitious to stay ahead of the curve. Technology is changing and enables new ways of results data collection. Project environments are changing, with more interventions taking place in regions that are difficult to access – even before the COVID-19 restrictions. ITC also works increasingly with implementing partners in the field. It is therefore recognized and accepted that knowledge sharing about good M&E practices among ITC staff is vital, as well as the ongoing improvement of tools that support baseline data collection, progress and results assessments.							
Action Plan and Responsibilities:							
Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or part- ner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks		

3.1 Complete the ongoing IEU review of best monitoring practices in selected ITC projects, and spread the results	ITC M&E project practices report finalized and published. IEU Presentation of good practice at ITC Division learning days.	IEU	SPPG	03/2021	
3.2 Complete the ongoing IEU Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Assessment	Assessment report with a menu of action recommendations finalized.  ITC management decisions on the selected action plan.	IEU / SPPG	PDTF, M&E review panel	02/2021	Assumption: Some of the recommended actions are considered feasible and useful.
3.3 Continue the implementation of the ITC corporate data management strategy	ITC harmonized base-line data collection tool ready for use  ITC single-sign-on facility implemented across all service areas  Automated reporting on corporate indicators enabled	SPPG/ITS	all other ITC sections that own databases	12/2022	Assumption: sufficient availability of staff-time to complete the numerous data alignment projects and data categorization projects that are all required to achieve the end-products.

Recommendation No. 4:	nhancing project results sustainability:						
	(a) Identify in the project cycle, the potential for replication and scaling-up of the project, and						
	(b) Ensure the development and regular updating of exit strategies during project cycle, and their implementation.						
Drafting of response assign	ned to: SPPG, Iris Hauswirth and PDTF, Stephan Blanc						
Management Response a	nd Justification:						
The recommendation is:  Accepted:  Partially accepted:  Rejected:	Focusing on sustainable results remains a front-and-centre priority for all ITC projects, ensuring that projects contribute to ITC's results framework and deliver demonstrable results in the field alongside all project stakeholders. In this regard, ITC's Independent Evaluation Unit's AESR 2020 acknowledged ITC's expertise and recognition in the Aid for Trade (AfT) arena and noted ITC's "agile, adaptable and innovative approach as a strategic partner in fostering inclusive trade".  ITC's project development process requires all projects to elaborate on their approach to sustainability, local ownership and exit strategy. ITC consistently adapt its delivery model and implementation strategy to work with reliable partners in the countries where it operates. The "training of trainers" model and ITC's work with implementing partners – which include a large number of local institutions, particularly local Business Support Organisations (BSOs) – allows a strong multiplier's effect, and enables ITC's projects to remain "live" and to continue to deliver benefits after the projects' operational and financial closure. As such, ITC's focus is on ensuring that capacities are built at the local level and new initiatives can be assessed and put in place in the countries long after ITC's interventions are concluded.  ITC accepts this recommendation and strongly believes that good planning is at the core of project sustainability, leading to potential extension and scaling-up of project interventions. As such, the ITC project portal (the internal online tool used by all project managers, SPPG and the Project Design Taskforce to develop, document and track progress on project proposals and project implementation) formally requires all project managers to address the issues of sustainability, local ownership and exit strategy under dedicated fields and templates to be reviewed and cleared by the Project Design Taskforce and SMC, as illustrated in the extract presented below for a project currently in its design phase for						



The AESR 2020 report also noted that most of ITC projects' 2019 evaluations concluded that "changes achieved were likely to continue once the interventions were completed" and that "success was explicitly linked to accomplished work". AESR 2020 refers to a number of ITC's projects that can be considered as pilots, demonstrating ITC's agile and nimble approach that has led to repeated interest from funders and beneficiaries to rely on, and call upon ITC's expertise. The substantial increase in ITC's project pipeline over the past three years is a case in point. ITC noted and accepts the recommendation (a) to identify the potential for replication and scaling up of projects as part of the project cycle. This recommendation will be included in an updated version of the project management template and guidelines available to all ITC staff on the ITC project portal. It will also be included in guidance on topics to regularly discuss in project management / steering meetings.

With regard to recommendation (b) ITC will put increased emphasis on identifying exit strategies at project design stage and on the regular updating of exit strategies during project implementation. This includes the identification of follow-up measures, if needed, that will re-inforce opportunities for long-lasting changes. ITC also plans to require project managers to consider different aspects of project sustainability as a standard part of the risk register with regular risk monitoring.

## **Action Plan and Responsibilities:**

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verifi-	Responsible	Contributing*	Implementation	Remarks
	cation	office or part-	Section(s) or	deadline	
		ner	partner(s)		
4.1. Ensure that all project proposals integrate a detailed outline of the "Sustainability", "Local Ownership" and "Exit Strategy" as indicated in ITC's project development guidelines and project portal mandatory requirements.	All project proposals submitted for review by the Project Design Taskforce and subsequent SMC approval to include a detailed outline of the project's proposed sustainability, local ownership and exit strategy that is to be updated at the end of the inception phase. Projects not adequately covering these issues to be returned to project managers for further	PDTF, Project Managers	SPPG, Chiefs, Directors	06/2021	Assumption: ITC projects continue to operate in a context allowing flexibility and adaptability to address the complex environment in which they operate
4.2 Add a new entry field in the ITC project document templates and project portal under the "Strategy" component requesting Project Managers to identify the potential for scaling up & replication.	work.  Project Managers identify the potential for replication and scaling up of their projects, during project design as well as implementation.  Means of verification: New tab "Scaling up / Replication" available in the project portal.  Relevant information provided by project managers on potential for scaling-up	PDTF, Project Managers,	SPPG, ITS, Chiefs, Directors	06/2021	Assumption: ITS resources available
4.3 At the design and inception stage, sustainability and scaling aspects to be integrated in the project risk register, followed by regular risk monitoring and reporting during project implementation.	Project risk registers, and quarterly and / or half-yearly project risk reporting in the project portal.	PDTF, SPPG		08/2021	
4.4 IEU to provide regular briefings to all relevant ITC staff on results of impact sustainability assessments, project evaluations / AESR / Project Closure Reports in relation to Project Results and lessons to be learnt.	Regular ITC learning events.	IEU	SPPG, Division Directors	08/2021	

#### **Recommendation No. 5:** Build on good project field office performance and coordination: (a) Introduce an induction process in particular for project management staff in the field, to ensure they share a sufficient knowledge of ITC, and (b) Identify and enforce protocols and good practices to work effectively through project field offices and to ensure good coordination among field personnel and among field and HQ personnel. Drafting of response assigned to: DCP, Ashish Shah **Management Response and Justification:** The recommendation is: ITC fully supports and has already put in place modalities to further improve project field office performance and coordination. These efforts will benefit both ITC HQ staff and field personnel, leading to more efficiencies and better information sharing. ITC has developed a number of Accepted: action points leading to increased synergies between HQ and the field. This includes (a) introducing and consistently implementing induction processes and ensuring information sharing for field personnel - to ensure they have a better insight and sufficient knowledge of ITC's work, and (b) identifying and implementing good practices to ensure better coordination among field and HQ personnel. These actions points were Partially accepted: developed following the first-ever visit to ITC by more than 50 field personnel in summer 2019 and endorsed by ITC's Senior Management Committee. ITC's Innovation Lab is working with the Project Design Taskforce to support the implementation of these action points with inputs Rejected: from other sections. **Action Plan and Responsibilities: Actions: Expected Result and means of verifi-**Responsible Contributing\* **Implementation** Remarks Section(s) or office or partdeadline cation partner(s) ner 5.1 Updating current field personnel list per a) All ITC field personnel have an ITC email ITC HQ's Project ITS / HR Q1 2021 Assumptions: project in ITC's Project Portal address Managers -All ITC HQ's Project Managb) All ITC field personnel able to access the ers update the Project Portal ITC Intranet and various UN intranets and in line with instructions sent their resources, including ITC's Project Portal by PDTF and with established

	c) All ITC field personnel receive official documents sent by email to 'All ITC' d) All ITC field personnel informed on staff talks, briefings and relevant trainings e) All ITC field personnel regularly updated on ITC Missions going to their respective countries f) All ITC field personnel listed on the ITC staff list under each project in ITC's Project Portal  These expected results will ensure that the needs expressed by ITC's field personnel during their visit to ITC in July 2019 (related to being able to access ITC relevant information) are fully taken into account.				timeframe, and keep it constantly up to date  - ITC's technical infrastructure allows for an increased number of hybrid team meetings (e.g. meeting rooms equipped with video-conferencing facilities) in support of effective and efficient HQ/Field personnel interaction
	These expected results will ensure that the				·
	ing their visit to ITC in July 2019 (related to being able to access ITC relevant infor-				
	Means of verification: Intracen email for all field personnel, access to Intranet; field personnel regularly joining trainings, briefings and staff talks; field personnel included in Project Team list; field personnel notified about ITC missions going to their respective countries.				
5.2 Organizing regular induction programmes (including trainings and selected courses) for ITC field personnel.  The first induction process took place in July 2019, when 50+ ITC field personnel came to Geneva for one week at the occasion of the JAG 2019 and were trained on ITC's admin procedures, operations, technical offerings. There were group sessions during which ITC's HQ listened to the field personnel	a) ITC field personnel able to register for relevant courses from the ITC's SME Trade Academy in order to enhance their knowledge on desired topics (in line with what they requested during their visit in July 2019 and afterwards) b) ITC field personnel able to participate in all relevant trainings organized by ITC, such as	HR / ITS	PDTF / SME Trade Academy	Already started and progress on-going	Assumption: Relevant trainings, courses, briefings and staff talks are correctly and timely commu- nicated to ITC's field person- nel by HR, CE, and ITC's pro- ject managers

needs and requests. The action points ITC is implementing during 2020 and beyond directly respond to these identified needs, as well as with subsequent surveys to ensure those needs are still relevant today.  Relevant ITC field personnel also participated in the Training for Impact and Compliance organized by ITC HQ in October 2020.  Finally, ITC field personnel are now able to participate in relevant webinars, staff talks and briefings.	the next sessions of the Training for Impact and Compliance (TFIC)  These expected results will ensure that the needs expressed by ITC's field personnel during their visit to ITC in July 2019 (related to being able to improve their knowledge about ITC's operations and technical offers) are taken into account.  Means of verification: Number of field personnel participating in trainings, briefings, staff talks.  Expected Result:	Innovation Lab	PDTF / ITS / ITC HQ	First session to take	Assumption:
learned from ITC field personnel through specific Knowledge Sharing Sessions.  Proposed topic for the first session: "How ITC projects help SMEs and BSOs in the field build recovery and resilience plans in the post-COVID scenario"	ITC field personnel be able to share their rich field knowledge with HQ staff, thus inspiring sharing of information, innovation and new initiatives which are mutually beneficial  Means of verification:  Number of sessions organized and number of field personnel participating	iniovation Eus	Project Managers	place most likely in Q1 2021	ITC Field personnel find the time to attend such sessions, and are encouraged by ITC Project Managers to do so
5.4 Organising an all ITC email at regular intervals (or via monthly newsletter) to introduce field personnel	a) All ITC HQ personnel will have full information on existing and new field personnel (as requested during induction week in July 2019)  Means of verification: All ITC emails and monthly newsletters introducing ITC's field personnel	CE and HR / ITC Project Manag- ers	PDTF / ITS	Already started and in progress. To be finalized by Q1 2021	Assumption: Project Managers and HR regularly communicate to CE new hired field staff

Recommendation No. 6: Implement corporate strategy to engage in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks:								
(a) Finalize and a	adopt a corporate strategy to engage more syste	ematically in UN Sust	ainable Development	Cooperation Frameworl	ks, and			
(b) Enforce this s Frameworks.	strategy, including training requirements for ITC	Country Officers abo	out how and why to en	gage in UN Sustainable	Development Cooperation			
Drafting of response assigned to: DCP,	Ashish Shah							
Management Response and Justificati	on:							
The recommendation is:  Accepted: X  Partially accepted:   Rejected:	This recommendation is accepted as it fully alignment in the UN Sustainable Development Coopreinforce its engagement in the UN Development with national governments, institutions and UN pendent Evaluation Unit presented to ITC's Sen Delivering as One (DaO), a guiding principle of and useful lessons while advocating stronger in the management response to this report, ITC commized manner. With regard to training on Ul ment Coordination Office (DCO) and the UN Sygrammes for Country Managers to address the	peration Frameworks ent Assistance Frame I Country Teams to paior Management CounSDCFs. This reporternal policy guidanommitted to develop NSDCFs for Country I stem Staff College (U	is (UNSDCFs). In the Straworks, which have been prioritize good trade in mmittee an evaluation thighlighted that ITC's ce for more constant as a corporate strategy Managers, ITC will mak JNSSC). If deemed necessions	etegic Plan 2018-2021, I en superseded by UNSD development agendas. I report on ITC's particip engagement in DaO ge and systematic interaction to engage in UNSDCFs in the full use of e-courses p	TC made a commitment to CFs, and to work together In February 2020, the Indepotation and performance in merated positive experiences on with field stakeholders. In a more organized and harprovided by the UN Develop-			
Action Plan and Responsibilities:								
Actions:	Expected Result and means of verifi-	Responsible	Contributing*	Implementation	Remarks			
	cation	office or part-	Section(s) or	deadline				
		ner	partner(s)					
6.1 Adoption of the ITC UNSDCF Engagement Strategy	ITC UNSDCF Engagement Strategy adopted by the senior management	DCP, SMC		Q1 2021				

6.2 Roll-out of the ITC UNSDCF Engagement	ITC UNSDCF Engagement Strategy launched	DCP	OED, DEI, DMD,	Q1 2021	Assumptions:
Strategy	and implemented as per its annual work plan		DPS (particularly		- Sufficient human and finan-
			IT&S)		cial resources are allocated to
					the implementation of the
					strategy
					- COVID-19 situations in ITC
					programme countries remain
					at a predictable level
6.3 Capacity building for ITC Country Manag-	ITC Country Managers having enhanced	DCP		Q2/Q3 2021	
ers through e-courses provided by DCO and	knowledge and capacity to advance ITC's en-				
UNSSC and, if deemed necessary, ITC's own	gagement in the UNSDCF process; ITC's own				
training programmes	training programmes and materials devel-				
	oped as necessary				