



ANNEX I - Terms of Reference for the Skills
Development Fund Action Research

**“Skilled Young Palestine – Improving Resilience
and Job opportunities for Youth”**

PZA1804411 - 10035

October 2022

List of abbreviations

CVET	Continuous Vocational Education and Training
FEF	First Employment Facility
MoL	Ministry of Labour
SYP	Skilled Young Palestine
SDF	Skills Development Fund
PSUO	Private Sector Umbrella Organization
PEF	Palestinian Employment Fund

Intervention form

Intervention name	“Skilled Young Palestine – Improving Resilience and Job opportunities for Youth”
Intervention Code	PZA1804411
Location	Palestine: West Bank including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip
Partner Institutions	Strategic partners: Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Finance Implementing partners: Private Sector Umbrella Organizations, Palestinian enterprises, TVET providers and Community Based Organizations.
Duration	The implementation period of the intervention is 36 months. The duration of the Specific Agreement (SA) is 48 months.
Target groups	Direct beneficiaries: Palestinian youth between 16 and 29, with a focus on vulnerable youth, including women, from disadvantaged areas.
Impact ¹	Increased resilience of Palestinian youth in vulnerable areas in Palestine
Outcome	Improved transition of youth to employment and self-employment through improved skills and competences
Outputs	Increased labour market opportunities for youth by supporting technical skills development demanded by the labour market
	Young people have gained 21st century skills necessary for work and life

1. Project background

KEY FIGURES

- Duration: 48 months, from January 2020
- Budget: 7.5 million euros of Belgian Contribution
- Direct beneficiaries; Palestinian youth, especially vulnerable youth and young women
- Strategic partner: Ministry of Labour
- Implementing partners: private sector umbrella organizations, vocational training centres, private enterprises and community-based organizations

¹ Impact is a synonym for global objective, Outcome is a synonym for specific objective, output is a synonym for result

The intervention “Skilled Young Palestine – Improving Resilience and Job opportunities for Youth (SYP)”, aims to contribute to support Palestinian Youth in gaining economic autonomy and building their resilience. The intervention targets vulnerable areas in Palestine and aims to facilitate the transition to employment and self-employment through improving skills and competences among Palestinian youth. SYP has two main results:

Result 1 – Increased labour market opportunities for youth by supporting technical skills development in demand

Under this result, the project will build the technical competences of young people through enhancing the partnership between the TVET institutions and the private sector to conduct Continuous Vocational and Education Training – CVET for youth (vocational track). The private public partnership will ensure a skills match between what TVET institutions provide and the private companies demand, following Work Based Learning Scheme. In this component, the private sector will be the driving force for youth employment through supporting the sustainability of CVET by establishing skills development funds within the private sector umbrellas.

Result 2 – Young people have gained 21st century skills for work and life

Under this result, the project will build the 21st century competences of vulnerable youth through establishing innovation hubs within civil society organizations. These hubs will be highly motivating places where young people receive training on 21st century skills (including entrepreneurship, digital skills and life skills), while being in a creative environment equipped with modern digital and technological equipment that connects to the world and interests of youth. Within this result, two main tracks will be promoted: the employment track (oriented towards building skills for (self-)employment) and the resilience track (building resilience skills).

2. The assignment

2.1 Introduction

Skilled Young Palestine (SYP) Project, is jointly implemented by the Belgium Development Agency (Enabel) and the Ministry of Labour (MoL) with the kind support of the Belgian government to employment and self-employment through improved skills and competencies driven through linking Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with the real world of work. To address the challenges of TVET financing, Enabel is piloting Skills Development Fund (SDF) in West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. The learning and experience from the piloting phase will feed into the development of a future national Skills Development Fund.

2.2 Background and problem statement

Global research and experiences show that Skills Development could play a crucial role in tackling youth unemployment and could form an opportunity for a country to advance to development and globalization. The Palestinian TVET system faces major challenges in improving linkages with the world of work, raising standards, and expanding coverage. With the aim to improve the quality, relevance and efficiency of the skills provision system in Palestine, the Palestinian TVET strategy clearly mentions that the TVET funding policies will be linked to performance standards and efficiency criteria in the implementation of TVET systems, programs and services. The Strategy highlights the importance of skills development for both economic and social progress. The main purpose is to create employable skills and competencies relevant to the labour market. The strategy foresees an open system for skills trainings for all Palestinians, hence including ensuring equitable access to skills training for vulnerable youth, women and girls.

2.2.1 The Skills Development Fund (SDF)

The policy objective for the SDF in Palestine is to be the financial pillar of an overarching TVET body providing a sustainable financing and technical support system for skills development for the whole country. This fund shall finance actions for specific skills training initiatives proposed by a partnership of government actors, private sector partners & training providers, based on labour market relevance.

The focus for finance will be:

- Improvements in the quality, access and relevance of existing skills development systems
- The introduction of new demand driven skills (cfr. post Covid-19, new technology)
- Innovative approaches and good practices in skills development and employment creation especially where these target vulnerable youth, women and girls.

The vision is to have a joint venture between private sector & training providers that will lead to the delivery of demand driven training based on analysis of local labour markets and sector need.

The SDF will create an environment where training providers supply the skills that the industry needs. The SDF will support improvement in the quality of TVET and the quality of the skills being taught, improve opportunities from donor funding and development/implementation agencies, avoid any kind of efforts' duplication and create a cumulative benefit, stimulate a demand-led approach to TVET provision by supporting private sector leadership in delivery of projects, and widen the labour market, by improving the opportunities for young people particularly vulnerable youth, women and the unemployed and under-employed.

Enabel is piloting the SDF through the SYP project through two main windows:

- 1- Enabel has formally established national partnerships in the second year, 2021, of the intervention including: 23 Grant Agreements with the Private Sector Umbrella Organisations (PSUOs) in the lead. The leading PSOU's are responsible for articulating the needs of the labour market to develop and provide labour market relevant training. Transversal themes are spearheaded in all projects (gender and inclusion), in addition

to environment in some projects. TVET institutions supporting the PSUOs as co-applicants are responsible for providing TVET training to youth.

- 2- One Grant Agreement with the Palestinian Employment Fund (PEF), responsible for piloting a First Employment Facility, matching unemployed fresh graduates seeking a sustainable employment with a job opportunity in the IT and industrial sectors. (75 beneficiaries- unemployed higher education and TVET graduates-)

2.3 Objective of the assignment

The purpose of the study is to analyse and document **to what extent the implementation of the Skills Development Fund (SDF) contributes to creation of an environment that encourages training providers to supply the skills that society and the economy need and facilitate collaborative public private partnerships.**

The study will test the underlying assumptions, and capitalize best practices and key lessons learnt in order to produce policy advice. In parallel, a tracer study will be carried out to track the SDF's impact performance on employment and increase in income of graduates. With a comprehensive action research, the project aims to collect and analyse relevant qualitative information that would allow the project and its stakeholders to learn and improve its strategies. As the SDF is promoting bottom-up public-private partnerships adhering to the same principles, it gives the opportunity to learn whether these processes generate real changes and contribute efficiently and effectively to the Skills demand provision in Palestine.

2.4 Assumptions and research questions

The assumptions underlying the SDF relate to five core objectives:

- a) raising **the relevance** of the TVET system.
- b) upgrading **the quality** of skills provision,
- c) increasing **equitable access** to Skills Development,
- d) enhancing **effectiveness** of skills provision
- e) enhancing **internal efficiency** of the system.

2.4.1 Relevance

Deepening partnerships with employers/the private sector and linking the world of school with the world of work, is considered a crucial factor in upgrading the relevance and quality of skills development, especially in a fragile economic context. Employers tend to know best which skills sets are needed. Partnerships with the private sector also increase opportunities for qualitative hands-on trainings through apprenticeships or “work based learning” programmes. These dual training programmes are considered crucial to overcome skills mismatch and irrelevant practical training. Industrial training may also present opportunities for trainees that perform well to be retained in a more permanent position. The SDF therefore targets joint ventures between training providers and the private sector, providing Skills Development in relevant, “priority” trades (derived from local labour market provisions), and encompassing a work-based learning component. To increase the responsiveness of skills provision to dynamic labour market needs the SDF prioritizes non-formal short term skills training programmes concentrated on practical work skills, allowing flexibility in the development of training modalities and content.

Research questions:

Questions towards 23 PSUO grantees and the FEF

- Have the alliances established through the SDF become an effective “motor” for linking the private sector and training providers? Which factors facilitated or hindered this?
- To what extent did the SDF generate collaborative demand driven (i.e. relevant to the local labour market and local skills needs) training programs oriented towards immediate employment, productivity and income generating opportunities?
- Did the alliances contribute to qualitative and effective industrial training or work based learning practices?
- To what extent did the SDF generate flexible collaborative training programmes, i.e. responsive to changing local labour market needs? To what extent have changing local skills needs remained sustained by the SDF grantees?
- To what extent have the ‘trainings’ been able to respond to identified acute livelihood needs?

In addition, specific questions are to be addressed to FEF:

- To what extent have the FEF facilitated the first time employment opportunity and reduced the skills gap of young graduate (supply) and the demand of the private sector?
- To what extent have the FEF strengthen/enhanced the dialogue between the private sector and HE and TVET education institutions?

2.4.2 Quality of skills provision

By organizing alliances between training providers and the private sector the SDF also aims to improve quality in skills development. The SDF therefore prioritizes public-private partnerships brokering innovative modalities of Skills Development with regard to training modalities and/or training content, that enhance the employability of trainees and contribute to productivity and local economic development. To equip trainees with knowledge and skills to enhance or develop their ability to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping, self-management and entrepreneurship skills, competences that are valuable for employers and self-employment, the SDF also supports collaborative training projects that take on a holistic approach in Skills Development by integrating post training support, including entrepreneurship and life skills training. Lastly, to provide qualitative skills trainings, assessments and training packages (ATP’s) need to be developed or adapted, based on training needs assessments of marketable trades and occupational analysis. Involvement of the private sector in curriculum development would facilitate Skills Development programs that address the needs of the local context. The fund therefore targeted coherent collaborative training projects containing the development of new or upgrading of existing curricula based on labour market analysis, including pre- and post-training support.

Research questions:

Questions towards 23 PSUO grantees and the FEF:

- To what extent did the SDF partnerships contribute to upgrading the quality of skills trainings?
- To what extent did the alliances broker innovative collaborative skills training projects?
- Has inclusion of pre- and post-training support improved the quality of training and learning?
- To what extent did the alliances facilitate qualitative and demand driven curricula development and/or upgrading?
- To what extent did the ‘trainings’ meet the high quality standards they envisage to deliver?
- Which factors facilitated or hindered the above? Which significant change processes or best practices can be identified in the implementation of the SDF in this regard?

In addition, specific question are to be addressed to FEF:

Did the quality of the on-job training and the work readiness program reply to the private sector needs and facilitated the trainees’ integration into the workplace?

2.4.3 Access and Equity in TVET

The SDF aims to increase the absorption of vulnerable youth, women and girls in Skills Development, as they have limited access to formal TVET. Therefore, the provision of relevant, qualitative and flexible non-formal skills training programmes, adapted to their specific skills needs, is of great importance. The SDF therefore prioritizes flexible training projects promoting Skills Development for these target groups.

Research questions:

Questions towards 23 PSUO grantees and the FEF:

- Did the SDF grant agreements and ‘trainings’ broaden access to Skills Development for vulnerable youth, women, and girls?
- Which factors facilitated or hindered better access to Skills Development for the target groups?
- To what extent did the SDF mechanisms/processes (implemented through grant agreements and ‘trainings’) contribute to the delivery of training programmes adapted to the specific needs of the target groups? Which factors facilitated or hindered this?

In addition, specific question are to be addressed to FEF:

To what extend did the FEF arrangements promoted inclusive employment opportunities and raise awareness on the principles of decent work among private sector companies?

2.4.4 Effectiveness

Effectiveness relates to the level to which the SDF processes were able to address gaps between the ‘world of work’ and the ‘world of school’ in a sustainable way, and thus enhance employment and livelihood opportunities for its target groups.

Research questions:

Questions towards 23 PSUO grantees and the FEF:

- To what extent did the SDF approaches/mechanisms contribute to the employability of the target groups and their integration in the local labour market? Which mechanisms

can be identified as most significant change factors or best practices and which factors as obstacles/challenges in this regard?

- Did the involvement of the private sector lead to improved access to the local labour market? Which factors play a key role in this regard? Which factors form obstacles/challenges?
- Did concentration on work-based learning/hands-on training establish opportunities for an accelerated integration of the beneficiaries in the local labour market?
- Did the alliances facilitate the inclusion of qualitative and effective career guidance and coaching/start up kits? Did these inclusive approaches contribute to an accelerated integration of the beneficiaries in the local labour market? Which post training support approaches deliver a real added value to the employability of the beneficiaries?
- Did the ‘trainings’ make a significant difference in improving livelihood and contribute income generating opportunities for its beneficiaries?
- Are the alliances facilitated by the SDF sustainable? Which factors contribute to the sustainability of the alliances? · Did the alliances facilitate continuation of “good practices” (i.e. work based learning, inclusive skills training provision, equitable access, social targeting···)?
- Did the ‘trainings’ bridge the gap between humanitarian and development concerns?

In addition, specific questions are to be addressed to FEF:

- Did the FEF succeed to create a reference for information and data regarding the labor market and internship opportunities in general?
- To what extent was the FEF able to support private sector companies in particular those in the manufacturing and ICT sectors to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 through job placement with wage subsidies?

2.4.5 Internal efficiency

Internal efficiency refers to the efficiency of the management of the SDF procedure and implementation, i.e. efficiency of the management of the call for proposals, the selection process, grant awarding and monitoring activities of the grant implementation, by the responsible Enabel staff. With a relatively high number of grants applications it is important that the grant management processes are streamlined and administration and management costs minimized. Secondly internal efficiency of the SDF refers to the actual value of the support through grant agreements, i.e. the question whether the specific grant procedures actually lead to the best possible results/outcomes the projects intends to achieve.

Research questions:

Questions towards 23 PSUO grantees and the FEF:

- How well does the SDF management convert inputs into outputs? Are the grants management processes efficient and streamlined?
- Does the selection procedure stimulate the type of collaborative, qualitative and innovative initiatives it intends to support?
- How well do the SDFs implementing partners (grantees) convert inputs into outputs?

- Did the SDF (grant agreements and ‘trainings’) produce value for money? Is the support delivered by the Fund optimally used to achieve its intended results? Or in other words, is the outcome of the implementation of the SDF maximized relative to the inputs invested?
- To what extent does the management of the SDF truly engage its selected grantees around its core objectives and criteria? To what extent do the SDF procedures ensure the quality they envisage in project implementation, i.e. with regard to trainers and training delivery?

In addition, specific questions are to be addressed to FEF:

Did the PEF use the project outputs and the lessons learned to consolidate the FEF mechanisms and structure in preparation to roll out and ensure sustainability of the FEF?

2.5 Study scope and methodology

The study has to cover a statistically representative sample of grantees of the first window of the SDF (joint ventures between private sector umbrella organizations and training providers that were awarded grants by the SDF) and their beneficiaries (trainees and graduates) distributed in the three covered regions (West bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip), in addition, the study has to cover the second window of the SDF (the direct grant to the PEF for the implementation of the First employment Facility implemented in the WB and EJ)

The implementation of the SDF has a total budget of €2.2 million, of which €2 million supported 23 grantees (4 East Jerusalem, 12 West Bank, 7 Gaza Strip) and benefit approximately 1075 trainees (165 East Jerusalem, 397 West bank, 513 Gaza Strip). Currently 23 grant agreements have been executed in the three operating regions, and 200.000 € was awarded as a direct grant for the First Employment Facility.

A detailed methodology is to be developed by the research team and validated by Enabel. The aim is to combine qualitative research methods that allow to capture change processes and capitalization of lessons learnt. The following methods are suggested for consideration: the most significant change method; a storytelling /narrative method; an interaction matrix technique; semi-structured interviews with employers, SDF grantee representatives (private sector representatives, training provider representatives), SDF trainees/graduates; and Focus Group Discussions with trainees/graduates.

Development of the methodology will be based on the following project inputs:

- Project reports (Technical and Financial files)
- Mid-term Review
- SDF blueprint
- Monitoring information on grant applications and implementation of grant agreements (Technical Assessments, organizational assessments, Selection Committee minutes, quarterly reporting templates...).
- Secondary research frameworks developed by development partners in the respective areas.

2.6 Suggested core tasks

Tasks	What	DL
Orientation meeting with Enabel SYP-team	Upon the onset of the assignment, to get better insight in the objectives and the scope of the assignment.	1
Desk research	Desk review of documents, reports, studies and other sources of information, as described in the suggested methodology	1, 3,4
Inception report	The inception report includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review summary • Updated workplan and timing • Updated list of interviewees • Guidelines for interviews and potential FGD • Questionnaire, if considered necessary • Risks and mitigation measures for the implementation of the assignment 	1
Inception report meeting	Present the inception report to the SYP team, discuss and validate	1
Data collection and analysis and recommendations	Data collection as described in the suggested methodology and per the outlined research questions	2,3,4
Activity report	Brief report to update Enabel on progress and potential challenges	2
Draft research paper	Including the sections and tools described in the methodology	3
Draft report meeting with SYP team	To present main results, discuss Enabel feedback	3
Final research paper	After integrating comments of Enabel, and other involved parties on the draft report	4
Additional meeting with Enabel	If required during the process to finalise final feedback	4
Presentation of final research paper	To SYP Steering committee and other key stakeholders. This can be online, in-person or in a hybrid format	5

2.7 Deliverables

DL	What	Timing
DL1: Inception report	Detailing background information, the research design and methodology (including data collection methods, sampling method, sample size, data collection tools and data analysis plan), and an outline of the final study paper. This inception report will have to be presented and approved before the study can proceed.	10 days
DL2: Activity Report	The activity report will include (meetings held, persons met, institutions visited, summary of results, problems encountered and problems solved, deviation from the planning and deviations from the ToR).	20 days
DL 3: Draft research paper	To be submitted and presented for Enabel Palestine team for comments and notes in order to consolidate these comments in the final research paper	10 days
DL 4: Final research paper	Containing at least an executive summary, the methodology used, key research findings, conclusions, and lessons learnt; five policy advice notes (each Max 4 pages) covering the different assumptions/objectives, the private sector, FEF, and other Skills Development stakeholders; The final report should include collected data: Interviews, questionnaires, raw data, cleaned data, analytical reports of the sample groups, etc	10 days
DL 5: Presentation	Present final results online, in-person or in a hybrid format to SYP Steering Committee members and other key stakeholders	1 day
Total amount of days		50 days

2.7 Profile of the consultant

The consultancy team will comprise of **minimum 2 experts**, preferably one international and one national, who is able to move in West Bank and can access the Gaza Strip if needed to conduct data collection. The consultancy is expected to have the following key qualifications and experience:

The Research team is expected to work in consultation with Enabel in developing and implementing this research project.

Essential qualifications and experience of the team leader (preferably international):

- Minimum of a Masters Degree in the field of Social Sciences, International Relations, Education, Economics, Statistics, or any other relevant field.

- At least 10 years of proven experience in the field of Social Science research, including advanced experience in research design and methodology development and in applying qualitative research methods with regard to change processes/impact evaluations in a humanitarian or development context.
- Proven experience managing a research team in similar assignments.
- Proven extensive publication record of similar assignments.
- A thorough understanding of public private partnerships and/or youth employment in a humanitarian/development context. Demonstrated research experience in TVET is a definite advantage.
- Fluency in English. At least one member of the team needs to be fluent in Arabic.
- -Strong personal commitment to and training and/or work experience of humanitarian and development projects or programmes.

Essential qualifications and experience of the local researcher(s)

- Masters degree, preferably in the field of Social Sciences, International Relations, Education, Economics, or Statistics.
- Minimum 4 years' experience in the field of Social Science research, including data collection, analysis and report writing. Published research is a definite advantage.
- Proven knowledge of and experience in implementing research methodologies including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including at the local/field level.
- Proven experience working as part of a research team; experience of collaborations with International researchers/ international research projects an advantage.
- Fluency in English. native Arabic language speaker.
- Strong personal commitment to and training and/or work experience of humanitarian and development projects or programmes.

2.8 Planning and timeframe

This assignment is estimated to be executed for 50 days carried out between Q4 2022 and Q2 2023.

2.9 Roles and responsibilities

The research team is expected to adhere to the requirements and deliverables as stipulated in this ToR. On the other hand, the SYP project will deliver project documentation on agreed deadlines, facilitate and coordinate the respondents' participation in this study, facilitate and coordinate field visits, organize a meeting to validate the methodology and data collection and analysis tools before the study is initialized, organize a meeting for the presentation and validation of the draft paper, provide feedback and comments on the draft products, and organize a workshop/meeting to validate the final products. All comments made by Enabel in Palestine must be taken into consideration by the contractor. If requested, the research team shall participate in additional face-to-face or hybrid meetings at the Enabel in Palestine premises. The team will be responsible for preparing the materials requested by Enabel in

Palestine. The team cannot receive additional payment for these meetings (e.g. transport reimbursements). Typically, these meetings will not exceed an average of half a day. Complementary meetings such as telephone or videoconferences may be organized upon request by any of the two parties and shall neither be invoiced.

2.10 Duration of contract and expected places to travel

The contract starts upon award notification (estimated to be November 2022).

The consultant will be expected to be able to travel to East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and various places in the West Bank.