

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND INTERNAL OVERSIGHT

INDEPENDENT TERMINAL EVALUATION

Support the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) to be sustained, effective and internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration

UNIDO Project ID: 140261



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Acronyms and abbreviations

AB	Accreditation Body
APAC	Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation
ARAC	Arab Accreditation Cooperation
ARAC-MLA	Arab Accreditation Cooperation - Multilateral Recognition Arrangement
AFFI	Arab Federation of Food Industries
AFRAC	African Accreditation Cooperation
AIDMO	Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization
AMC	Arrangement Management Committee
ARAC	Arab Accreditation Body
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
EA	European Cooperation for Accreditation
ET	Evaluation Team
EC	Executive Committee
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EIAC	Emirates International Accreditation Centre
EGAC	Egyptian Accreditation Council
GA	General Assembly
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
ILAC- MRA	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation - Multilateral Recognition Arrangement
HQA	Head Quarter Agreement
LAS	League of Arab States
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MLA	Multilateral Recognition Arrangement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NABs	National Accreditation Bodies
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PAFTA	Pan Arabic Free Trade Agreement
PT	Proficiency Testing
QI	Quality Infrastructure
SADCAS	Southern African Development Accreditation Service
SAFE	Arab Food Safety Initiative For Trade Facilitation (UNIDO Project)
SEMAC	Service Marocain d'Accreditation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TOR	Terms of Reference
TUNAC	Tunisian Accreditation Council
UAC	Union of Arab Chambers
UN	United Nations
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WG	Working group(s)
WTO	World Trade Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

Glossary of evaluation terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Baseline	The situation, prior to an intervention, against which progress can be assessed.
Coherence	Coherence assesses the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions and policies
Effect	Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
Impact	Positive and negative, intended and non-intended, directly and indirectly, long term effects produced by a development intervention.
Indicator	Quantitative or qualitative factors that provide a means to measure the changes caused by an intervention.
Lessons learned	Generalizations based on evaluation experiences that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations.
Logframe (logical framework approach)	Management tool used to facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of an intervention. It involves identifying strategic elements (activities, outputs, outcome, and impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and assumptions that may affect success or failure. Based on RBM (results based management) principles.
Outcome	The likely or achieved (short-term and/or medium-term) effects of an intervention's outputs.
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services which result from an intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donor's policies.
Risks	Factors, normally outside the scope of an intervention, which may affect the achievement of an intervention's objectives.
Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from an intervention, after the development assistance has been completed.
Target groups	The specific individuals or organizations for whose benefit an intervention is undertaken.
Theory of Change	A set of hypothesis on how and why an initiative works

Project Fact Sheet

Project title	Support the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) to be sustained, effective and internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration
UNIDO ID	140261
Country	Regional
Project donor(s)	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
Project implementation start date	May 2018
Expected duration	32 months (Original 24 months)
Expected implementation end date	31 August 2021 (original date 30 June 2020)
Programme Site	Arab region (AIDMO members)
Implementing agency	UNIDO
Government coordinating agency	AIDMO/LAS
Counterparts	Regional: Arab Accreditation Cooperation Body (ARAC), Individual countries: National Accreditation Bodies
Thematic Area Code	Department of Trade, Investment and Innovation Department of Agri-business Development
Project Inputs:	
- UNIDO input (grant):	\$ 3,085,500 (incl. 10% UNIDO support costs)
- Counterpart inputs:	In-kind

Executive Summary

This report represents the main findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations from an Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) implemented Project “Support the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) to be sustained, effective and internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration”. The project is hereafter referred to as the ARAC Project. To help overcome some technical barriers to trade and support the League of Arab States (LAS) region with enhanced access to intra-regional and international markets, UNIDO is supporting ARAC to sustain the necessary Arabic Quality Infrastructure (QI) as the regional cooperation body as well as supporting four ARAC country members become signatories of ARAC Multilateral Recognition Agreements (MLA).

The purpose of the evaluation is to independently assess the project performance against the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Criteria (DAC) to help UNIDO improve performance and results of ongoing and future programmes and projects. The TE covers the whole duration of the project from its starting date

in 1/6/2018 to 31/12/2020, but makes reference and recommendations related to the No Cost Extension (NCE) until August 31 2021.

Main Findings

Project design adopted the correct approach to both strengthening a regional quality system while at the same time providing support to individual countries enabling them to make use of enhanced QI through the signing of the MLA agreements. The intervention logic and rationale of the project were sound, outlining how compliance issues constitute a major element of competitiveness of local enterprises and products but support was limited to strengthening accreditation bodies without reaching the clients of accreditation bodies (conformity assessment bodies) in different sectors and this complicated the assessment of Impact. The Logical Framework (LF) clearly articulated measurements at the output level. At the outcome and impact level indicators included the potential for long term impact but the extent to which outputs could lead to outcome and especially impact is less clear, especially without an attempt at measurement. There were also a lack of specific measurements and outputs regarding gender and the environment.

Relevance and coherence are particular strengths of the project with clear linkages to wider development priorities of the donor, implementing partners and stakeholders. The project is specifically applicable to a wide range of sustainable development goals, (SDGs) and was relevant to UNIDO's Department of Trade, Investment and Innovation (DTII) with a synergistic link between other projects implemented to support ARAC by UNIDO as well as clear linkages to UNIDO's wider mandate and work with accreditation in other regions including Latin America, South Asia and South Africa. The project is relevant to Sidas international work, particularly regional cooperation in Africa under the theme of Economic integration, employment and migration and modernizing customs administrations. The project has strong coherence with the harmonization and coordination efforts of the LAS.

It is assessed the project is ***very effectively contributing to positive behaviour change and increased technical knowledge, capacity and confidence through systems development that has the potential to operate as a regional best practice.*** Effectiveness (as with all other DAC criteria excepting impact) has been significantly enhanced by the long standing collaborative partnership approach of UNIDO, The Swedish Agency for Development and Cooperation (Sida), the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), ARAC and the LAS. The programme demonstrated good practices of regional cooperation and transparency with a strong focus on good governance and anti-corruption policies. ARAC peer evaluators reportedly continued to enhance their capacity and involvement in regional and global workshops and peer evaluation activities, accreditation bodies were further involved in regional workshops reportedly consolidating the cooperation between ARAC and other Regional Cooperation Bodies, and the project assisted the development of new ARAC communication and gender policies and strategies as well as multiple relevant bylaws committee terms of reference, good governance and anti-corruption guidelines and structures, membership fee procedures, and particularly comprehensive selection criteria for the MLAS to be supported under Output 2 of the project. It is found, however, that marketing and communication needs to be more proactive.

The effectiveness of some peer related and online training activities enabled mitigation of the detrimental impact of COVID 19. Despite this COVID 19 still detrimentally affected timeliness of some critical activities such as the re-evaluation of ARAC by the ILAC and IAF but the project clearly outlined these constraints and ultimately will aim to fully mitigate them through the NCE.

Shortcomings in efficiency mainly relate to timeliness regarding commencement and finalization of the project. One critical issue was the evaluation process to determine the host (ultimately TUNAC) took longer than anticipated by the ARAC Executive Committee after it was clarified by the ILAC and IAF that ARAC must be by a legal entity. Despite constraints regarding timeliness, overall efficiency was certainly enhanced by UNIDO central and field based management and generally competent technical assistance which was very highly regarded by stakeholders.

Very strong ownership is a particular strength of the project and strengthens the high likelihood of long term sustainability. At the time of the evaluation there is a critical need for the (now confirmed) NCE to enable a full transition to financial security (ultimately through pending legal registration), clarification of the hosting arrangements with TUNAC, the identification of sufficient technical secretariat costs, further capacity building activities, enhanced budget focus on the secretariat, communications and marketing, the international participation of ARAC representatives, and the ILAC / IAF evaluator intervention costs. There are some challenges related to sustainability. Preferred trading relationships remain potential challenges to membership of ARAC as some countries will prefer to join the accreditation cooperation bodies of their major trading partners. This relates to the political leadership regionally and goes beyond just ARAC. There was, for example, a frequently reported view that political support was needed from AIDMO and LAS, especially as some felt economic integration is still not a priority between ARAB countries who continue to focus on Europe. It was a positive finding of the evaluation that the League of Arab States (LAS) clearly articulated its strong commitment to encourage membership and financial support for ARAC from member countries.

While impact regarding improved regional coordination for accreditation is a finding, the measurement of longer term impact regarding the impacts of regional trade integration are not yet fully determined. Despite being clearly articulated in the Logical framework as the overall *long term* objective, multiple longer term impacts are largely assumed and are not yet measured. It is likely that impacts could be quite significant, however, these can only be discovered through a full *ex post* evaluation which is necessary and highly pertinent following not just this “final” phase but ten years of partnership. There is some evidence of impact already predominately in the areas of behaviour change (discussed in effectiveness) so a rating has been possible. Behaviour change is an important driving force for technical capacity but can only form one part of a much wider range of potential drivers and barriers for regional trade integration. Impact could well be analyzed in the areas of an increases in production, a diversification in products, enhanced market access and potentially income and employment generation if the private sector beneficiaries products meet international standards. Effectiveness regarding the environment; gender attitudes, safety and health and consumer protection are also very hard to specifically determine, though they can likely be assumed from the significant amount of literature related to the impact of QI development.

Project Overall Rating

The TE rates the project as **satisfactory overall**. Strengths of the project lie in relevance and coherence, effectiveness, the likelihood of sustainability and the performance of partners. Some weaknesses lie in specificity regarding environmental strategies and results based management regarding progress to a wider regional impact. Efficiency was not optimal though COVID 19 is specifically recognized as a hindering factor.

#	<u>Evaluation criteria</u>	<u>Rating (1 lowest, 6 highest)</u>
A	Progress to Impact¹	5
B	Project design	4.5
1	• Overall design	5
2	• Log frame	4
C	Project performance	5
1	• Relevance	6
2	• Effectiveness	5
3	• Efficiency	4
4	• Sustainability of benefits ²	5
5	• Coherence	5
D	Cross-cutting performance criteria	4.7
1	• Gender mainstreaming	5
2	• M&E: M&E design M&E implementation	4
3	• Results-based Management	5
E	Performance of partners	5
1	• UNIDO	5
2	• National counterparts	5
3	• Donor	5
F	Overall assessment	4.8

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations for UNIDO, ARAC and the donor.

Sustainability and Impact

- Apply for at least an additional six months non-cost extension to Sida. While the NCE was granted before the end of this evaluation this remains an independently verified strong recommendation from the ET. **Responsible entities UNIDO and Sida.**
- Relocate the CTA to Tunisia to support the development and capacity building of

¹ Full impact is provisionally assessed as likely but currently remains largely unproven

² Sustainability is provisionally assessed as based on the 8 month NCE agreed by the donor and assumes ARAC registration and payment of membership fees.

the ARAC secretariat. **Responsible entities ARAC, UNIDO and TUNAC.**

- Allocate a realistic budget to recruit a regional full time Secretary **Responsible entities ARAC**

Recommendations for UNIDO and ARAC for the project extension

- UNIDO needs to continue to “lobby” the necessary political support for ARAC with regional bodies such as the LAS. **Responsible entities UNIDO**
- Strengthen communication and advocacy for greater outreach and marketing of ARAC. **Responsible entities UNIDO and ARAC**
- Consider undertaking a small number of case studies with clients of the NABs that have benefitted from the ARAC-MLA. This could help prove impact. **Responsible entities UNIDO and ARAC.**
- ARAC should play a larger and more organized role to further support cooperation in some conformity assessment activities. **Responsible entities UNIDO and ARAC**
- Consider an advocacy action to promote the use of the ATA Carnet between Arab countries as part of cooperation between laboratories or between laboratories and other stakeholders. **Responsible entities UNIDO and ARAC**

Long term recommendations for UNIDO and Sida

Project Design

- Clearly articulate specific impact indicators in the design of future projects. **Responsible entities UNIDO future Programme Managers.**
- Ensure SMART indicators for gender and the environment. **Responsible entities UNIDO future Programme Managers.**
- Ensure that potential need for micro-level support is considered during project design, especially in the areas of supporting National accreditation bodies early during implementation **Responsible entities UNIDO.**

Impact

- Rather than undertaking a simple independent evaluation exercise to verify work completed during the extension period, undertake a fully comprehensive ex post Impact evaluation. **Responsible entities UNIDO and Sida**

Evaluation

- Ensure sufficient planning for and timeliness of evaluations. **Responsible entities UNIDO IED Vienna and Programme Managers.**
- Plan for remote evaluations as if they were being undertaken as a normal evaluation mission with travel. **Responsible entities UNIDO IED Vienna and Programme Managers.**

Lessons learned

- Projects focused on accreditation may likely be a driver towards trade integration, health and safety, protection of the environment, issues of justice, fair-trade and the safe and efficient and provision of essential services. However, if they are unmeasurable they remain unproven.

Good Practices

- It is clear the development of a regional cooperation body for accreditation, where there was none before, requires sustained long term support and both the donor, UNIDO and regional and national stakeholders were very clearly committed to this.

1. Introduction

The Support the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) to be sustained, effective and internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration Project, UNIDO Project ID 140261 – (hereafter referred to as the ARAC project) builds on the long standing cooperation between Sida and UNIDO in the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA) in the area of strengthening Quality Infrastructure (QI) components to remove technical barriers to trade for Arab countries and to link them with intra-regional and global markets.

The TE was undertaken between November and December 2020 by Mr. Andrew Young an international evaluation consultant and Mr. Moez Jaou a Regional Expert in accreditation.

1.1 Evaluation objective and scope

The purpose of the evaluation is to independently assess the project to help UNIDO improve performance and results of ongoing and future programmes and projects. The independent terminal evaluation (TE) covers the whole duration of the project from its starting date in 1/6/2018 to the estimated completion date in 31/12/2020. The TE also considers the fact the project has a NCE until August 2021.

The evaluation has two specific objectives:

- (i) Assess the project performance and results in terms of OECD/DAC criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and coherence as well as progress towards impact in line with UNIDO's integrated results and performance framework (IRPF) ; and
- (ii) Identify a series of findings, lessons and prepare recommendations for enhancing the quality of design for any potential new phases, future projects undertaken in accreditation and potential future cooperation between Sida and UNIDO.

As per the terms of reference the key evaluation questions included the following:

- (a) What are the key drivers and barriers to achieve the long term objectives? To what extent has the project helped put in place the conditions likely to address the drivers, overcome barriers and contribute to the long term objectives?
- (b) How well has the project performed? Has the project done the right things? Has the project done things right, with good value for money?
- (c) What have been the project's key results (outputs, outcome and impact)? To what extent have the expected results been achieved or are likely to be achieved? To what extent the achieved results will sustain after the completion of the project?
- (d) What lessons can be drawn from the successful and unsuccessful practices in designing, implementing and managing the project?

The evaluation will also assess the likelihood of sustainability of the project results after the project completion. The assessment will identify key risks (e.g. in terms of financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental risks) and explain how these risks may affect the continuation of results after the project ends.

1.2 Overview of the Project Context

Despite preferential market access and significant cultural homogeneity, The League of Arab States (LAS) Region³ has greater potential to enhance intra-regional trade by overcoming some technical barriers to trade. Intra-regional trade is affected by non-tariff measures (NTMs) that can restrict imports or exports of goods through mechanisms other than the simple imposition of tariffs especially in manufactured products. Exporting companies seeking access to foreign markets, and companies importing products, need to comply with a wide range of requirements including technical regulations, product standards and customs procedures. Consequently, while it is only one element to enhanced trade, compliance issues constitute a major element of competitiveness for local enterprises and products.

To help overcome some technical barriers to trade and to facilitate further links between the LAS region with the intra-regional and global markets; the creation, development and eventual sustainability of ARAC has been at the core of an ongoing partnership between UNIDO, AIDMO, Sida and the LAS for nearly a decade; specifically by strengthening regional QI components linked to the Regional Standardization Strategy.

In the LAS Region, ARAC is now an internationally recognized association of national accreditation bodies (ABs). The accreditation bodies are officially recognized by their national governments to assess organizations that carry out conformity assessment services against international standards. ARAC has now become one of the main pillars of the Pan Arab quality infrastructure (QI) system in supporting intra-regional trade and the Arab Customs Union requirements.

The ARAC Phase II project support must also be placed in the context of other key interventions by UNIDO and Sida. These include the Phase I support for ARAC under the AIMDO regional programme to “Support the implementation of the regional Arab Standardization Strategy with focus on the regional coordination on accreditation.” This was implemented between UNIDO and AIDMO with funding support from Sida between May 2011 until June 2014 following two no cost extensions. Some key outputs of this first phase were essentially the establishment and operationalization of ARAC with a full quality management system and four committees. By the end of Phase I, ARAC had 14 member countries.

With a delay between the ending of Phase 1 in 2014 and the commencement of ARAC Phase II starting in 2018, the SAFE initiative advanced US\$860,000 to facilitate bridging between the two phases of the ARAC project. That allowed implementation of some activities of ARAC Phase II with funding from the SAFE Initiative. One major outcome during this ‘bridging phase’ was ARAC being officially recognized as a regional accreditation cooperation body by ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and IAF (International Accreditation Forum) in October 2017.

³ The LAS is a regional organization of Arab countries in and around North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Southwest Asia. The Arab region spans over 13 million km² and counts an estimated 350 million inhabitants.

1.3 Project Summary

The two-year ARAC project is implemented by UNIDO with ARAC, Individual countries and National Accreditation Bodies (NABs), with funding from Sida. The project was planned to end on the 31st December 2020 but received a no-cost extension until 31st August 2021.

ARAC is an association of NABs in the Arab region that are officially recognized by their national Governments to assess and verify, against international standards for organisations that carry out conformity assessment services. Its primary aim is to establish, develop and expand a Multilateral Recognition Arrangement MLA among accreditation bodies in the region.

The overall Development Objective (or impact as outlined in the logical framework) of the project is ***Regional coordination on implementing cooperation in accreditation strengthened in order to facilitate regional trade & integration, enhance health & safety, protect the environment, and provide consumer protection.***

It falls under the results based management code under thematic area code 4 – Department of Agri-business Development (DAD), DD13 (Quality and compliance infrastructure) Trade Capacity Building (TCB), CD 18.

The project outlines the following outputs, outcome and impact/objective) in the Logical framework

OUTPUTS	OUTCOME	OBJECTIVE
Output 1.1 ARAC, as a regional cooperation body, is legally incorporated, technically / financially sustainable and internationally recognized (ILAC MRA & IAF MLA Signatory).	Regional cooperation on accreditation is sustained, effective and internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration.	Regional coordination on implementing cooperation in accreditation strengthened in order to facilitate regional trade & integration, enhance health & safety, protect the environment, and provide consumer protection
Output 1.2 Up to 4 ARAC members supported towards future ARAC MLA signatories		

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

The TE followed guidance provided by the UNIDO Evaluation Manual and was supported throughout by the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division and the UNIDO project management team in Vienna, and Morocco where the Chief Technical Advisor was based.

The evaluation assesses against the evaluation criteria outlined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These include relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. In addition to the standard evaluation criteria, the Evaluation assessed the criterion of “coherence”, which is also used as a new evaluation criteria of the OECD. From the UNIDO Evaluation manual Project design, project

performance and results based management are also considered as are crosscutting issues of gender mainstreaming and the environment.

Due to travel restrictions in place at the time of the evaluation in November and December 2020⁴ it was not possible to travel to any of the project sites or hold preliminary in person briefings and debriefings in UNIDO Vienna. Consequently all meetings were undertaken remotely as video conferences.

As ARAC potentially covers 17 countries directly⁵ and the UNIDO ARAC project objective was for ARAC to become internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration, it was necessary to come up with a selection criteria which extended beyond just the four MLA signatories specifically supported in phase II of the project.

The Evaluation Team (ET) grouped all countries supported by the three Sida-UNIDO projects into three groups based on their level of QI components and political and economic interest in joining ARAC. A brief situation analysis of each of the country's current QI was also prepared to inform selection criteria.

Using the above grouping criteria, the following seven ARAC main beneficiary countries (including all 4 supported by the second phase) were selected for conducting interviews:

- From Group 1:
Sudan and Palestine (Phase 2 Project support),
Mauritania (benefited from phase 1 but was not selected for phase 2);
- From Group 2:
Tunisia and Jordan (Phase 2 project support);
Iraq (benefitted from previous technical support)
- From Group 3:
UAE (Chair of ARAC).

Interviews were also held with Egypt and Saudi Arabia because of their strategies for regional recognition and national accreditation.

The evaluators used the TOC approach. The TOC provided a roadmap to assess the extent to which project outcomes contribute to the conditions necessary to achieve the broad adoption of behaviors necessary for transformation. An outline TOC was prepared by the Evaluation Team.

The independent TE based its findings on an extensive review of written documents as well as qualitative and quantitative data gathered from UNIDO Vienna, UNIDO field staff and ARAC.

Contribution analysis was used to draw conclusions about the contribution the project has made to inclusive and sustainable local economic development. Contribution analysis was assisted by the development of the TOC, multiple secondary sources such as evaluations and reports provided by

⁴ ODG/EIO/01 dated 06 April 2020: Covid 19, measures by the office of Evaluation and Internal Audits (EIO) for its activities)

⁵ As of October 2020

the project and enabled the development of concise questions to be asked of primary respondents for triangulation.

Document review

To better inform the mission, a desktop review was undertaken on related project documents and other background publications. Of particular relevance were the 2017 project document “Support the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) to be sustained, effective and internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration” and the associated UNIDO Project Annual Progress reports for 2019 and 2020. A wide range of official documents for ARAC were reviewed both from their website and those provided to the TE by the project. These included the many terms of reference of the committees, byelaws, strategies and the quality manual.

With a longstanding implementation over several phases and projects, the Independent Terminal Evaluations for the Phase 1 project assistance as well as the bridging period provided by the SAFE project were of particular import. Annex C includes the full list of documents reviewed.

A wide range of secondary source material was analyzed such as the UNIDO publication on setting up accreditation bodies, the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt Bundesallee report on how to measure the impacts of quality infrastructure and the success stories of the South African Development Community (SADC) Regional Laboratory Association (SRLA). A full list of publications reviewed is included as Annex D.

Key Informant Interviews

The TE interviewed 16 stakeholders between November 20 and December 13, 2020. A list of attendees is included as Annex D. Interviews were coordinated by the PM in Vienna and the ARAC CTA. Stakeholder Meetings were held independently of project staff although on occasion the CTA introduced the purpose of the evaluation.

Key informant interviews (KII) were held remotely with UNIDO project management in Vienna and Morocco, Sida, key members of the ARAC committees including the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, Communications and Marketing Committee and the MLA committee. In many cases the same person was both a committee member of ARAC while being the head of their country's national accreditation body. In this case the interviews were combined with approximately equal time being focused on ARAC and the country's national accreditation. The structure of ARAC is included as Annex E.

Both the previous and current chair of ARAC were also interviewed. All the key UNIDO consultants who had contributed to the project's various components were also remotely interviewed individually to further verify findings from stakeholder meetings.

Rating Criteria Used in the Terminal Evaluation

A rating criteria of six for highly satisfactory to one for highly unsatisfactory is used during the TE (see Table 1 below). Ratings are applied to overall project design and the project logical framework, project performance including relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and likelihood of impact, crosscutting performance criteria including gender, M&E and results based management and performance of partners.

Table 1: Evaluation Rating Calculation

Score	Definition*	Category
6	Highly satisfactory Level of achievement clearly exceeds targets and expectations and there is no shortcoming.	SATISFACTORY
5	Satisfactory Level of achievement meets expectations (indicatively, over 80-95 per cent) and there is no or minor shortcoming.	
4	Moderately satisfactory Level of achievement more or less meets expectations (indicatively, 60 to 80 per cent) and there are some shortcomings.	
3	Moderately unsatisfactory Level of achievement is somewhat lower than expected (indicatively, less than 60 per cent) and there are significant shortcomings.	UNSATISFACTORY
2	Unsatisfactory Level of achievement is substantially lower than expected and there are major shortcomings.	
1	Highly unsatisfactory Level of achievement is negligible and there are severe shortcomings.	

Limitations of the Evaluation

A primary limitation to the evaluation was the inability to travel because of restrictions in place due to COVID 19. A key methodology in evaluation is observation and this includes multiple (often long and detailed) face to face meetings with key stakeholders. An inability to travel precluded the usual detailed briefing and debriefing in Vienna and detailed conversations with the Programme Manager, the CTA and the Evaluation Division. While these can be and were done remotely this is not a replacement for working side by side with key personnel for several days (or even weeks) which provides the opportunity for multiple rounds of questions, clarification, verification and reverification.

While UNIDO was proactive in arranging remote meetings once the evaluation commenced there was insufficient planning prior to the evaluation. It was evident that certain stakeholders would need to be interviewed, however these meetings had not been planned in advance. One key coordinating agency AIDMO was not available for interview despite numerous attempts by UNIDO Project Management and the ET to arrange appointments. This detrimentally impacted the timeliness of the evaluation. Additionally, had the evaluation been commissioned earlier the TE would have been in a position to independently verify the need for a NCE which was of particular importance to the donor. This is of relevance to all UNIDO projects (and their evaluations) that may need a NCE as it affects the timing of the terminal evaluation. Should it be timed before an NCE to justify the NCE and provide recommendations for the extension

period? Or should it be done after all activities are completed?

An inadequate number of ultimate beneficiaries (the private sector) were interviewed during the evaluation with only two being selected. Both had particularly insightful comments about the specific impact of the project.

With many key activities ongoing at the time of the evaluation and the clarification of an extension it was too early to truly determine impact and outcome. The assessment of impact is further confounded as the project did not specifically measure against its single impact indicator, the objective is generic (though potentially likely) and full transformational impact will certainly well exceed the life of the project even with an extension.

2. Projects Contribution to Development Results - Effectiveness and Progress to Impact

Effectiveness assesses the extent to which the development intervention's **objectives are achieved** or are expected to be achieved by project completion and impact refers to the **long-term effects** produced by that intervention. Impact may be positive or negative, intended or unintended.

It is not possible to quantitatively measure the broader long term development impact that refers to strengthened regional coordination facilitating regional trade & integration, enhancing health & safety, protecting the environment, and providing consumer protection. These are generic economic assumptions related to the impact of developing QI and the project did not measure or report against this though it is noted the project did attempt some measurement through reporting the number of ARAC members, numbers of ABS maintaining accreditation and the number of peer evaluators qualified and operational. While these are measurements that relate to the enhanced effectiveness of cooperation in accreditation they cannot be considered SMART measurements towards a key driving force for regional trade integration as they do not consider other potential barriers to trade.

Notwithstanding the above however it is evident, global trade agreements between countries and regions increasingly refer to accreditation and conformity assessment as the preferred tool to demonstrate that specified requirements related to product, process, service, system, person or body have been fulfilled as agreed by the parties.

2.1 Projects achieved results and overall effectiveness

The project effectiveness is rated as **satisfactory overall, despite delays caused by COVID 19**. Stakeholder feedback to the TE was entirely positive regarding effectiveness (and generally timeliness) of the project interventions with UNIDO's work being highly regarded for its practical application, even comparing favorably with regional development projects implemented by other agencies. Overall, there is little doubt that the results of the project were more attributable to the project intervention rather than to external factors. It was reported that ARAC peer evaluation "really fits our culture and values". This was further elucidated as being due to reduced cost but greater effectiveness of getting an ARAC evaluation due predominately

to more homogenous language and culture.

By enhancing the ARAC MLA system the project assisted the development of internal technical expertise and its capitalization through the implementation and recognition of international standards applicable to ABs peer-evaluation activities.

Although prior to this phase of the project, the ARAC MLA became internationally recognized in 2017 by the two global associations of Accreditation Bodies: the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) in the fields of Testing, Calibration, Medical testing, Inspection and MS Certification. As such, ARAC should help facilitate the free circulation of goods, not only within the MENA market, but also globally. Based on the international recognition of the ARAC MLA, the reports or certificates accredited by an ARAC MLA signatory are also recognized by the signatories to the ILAC and IAF agreements. As a result, the ARAC MLA acts as an international passport to trade.

The development of good governance and anti-corruption policies have been an important result of the ARAC project. An “Assessment of good governance and integrity awareness of the Arab Accreditation Cooperation” was presented to and approved by ARAC in May 2020 and has resulted in the commitment of ARAC to collect information about its own structure of good governance. Through this good governance approach, ARAC is committed to present an annual report to its Members, General Assembly and other Bodies and Committees and to propose relevant solutions. Further supporting documents include guidelines on bribery and ethical dilemmas, an annual declaration of members’ interests, guidelines on recognizing and managing conflicts of interest and guidelines on understanding proper and improper gifts and hospitalities.

Quantifiable results of the project at the output/outcome level appear very positive when measured against original baseline targets. The project has exceeded its baseline target of 17 members reporting ARAC now has 20 members. It has also exceeded the number of MOUs planned to be signed from 7 to 8 and increased the number of qualified peer evaluators from 12 to 15. The number of conformity assessment bodies supported in maintaining their accreditation through the PT Programme was also reported to have significantly exceeded baselines targets increasing from 80 to 175.

Multiple national Abs reported they are now confident with ARACs technical capacity, though they similarly concurred with a need for more NABS to get TA support in IT infrastructure development and for greater information sharing. Not all NABs have IT accreditation system, though ARAC reported UNIDO has “done all it can do in this project with the need of the member countries over a two year period”. There is, however, a need for dissemination of lessons learned between CA bodies working in the same sector regionally. ARAC could help this. There is currently no DB of accredited bodies in ARAC, facilitating cooperation or exchange of standards. It was reportedly currently easier to go to Europe than even neighboring Arab countries for testing and calibration due to information supplied by the EA.

It was reported metrology laboratories as well as testing laboratories will likely need to undertake evaluations or technical expertise, calibrate equipment and standards materials or perform inter-laboratory comparisons. There are, however, multiple Arabic experts and assessors working in laboratories in the different Arab countries. Additionally, the fields and scopes of accredited laboratories under the ARAC MLA are not easily accessible by the economic actors from Arab countries looking for calibration services.

A summary of specific project outputs is outlined below

Output 1.1

ARAC, as a regional cooperation body, is legally incorporated, technically / financially sustainable and international recognized (ILAC MRA & IAF MLA Signatory).

The project was not able to achieve a significant number of planned activities by the time of its planned end date in December 2020. Incomplete activities under output 1.1 included supporting the effective operations of the Executive Secretariat of ARAC (activity 2); enhancing the peer evaluation and MLA system, especially maintaining ILAC/IAF MLA/MRA signatory status (activity 4); supporting effective operations of ARAC committees in implementing agreed action plans (activity 7); a need for UNIDO to continue to cover the costs of working group attendance with ILAC/IAF (activity 9); the establishment of stakeholder committees as part of the ARAC governance system (activity 11) and; enhancing communication and advocacy for greater outreach and 'marketing' of ARAC (activity 12).

Under Output 1.2 there was a need to reschedule and implement the capacity building programme for members for future signatory under the ARAC-MLA (activity 2) and the activity to enhance engagement of end users and the private sector to enhance national consultation and further promote ARAC (activity 5). While not specified under the project KPIs there was also ongoing gender and inclusiveness activities which were reported as likely continuing into the first quarter of 2021 and likely beyond.

It is assessed there are two main reasons for the delay in such a substantial number of activities. The first is certainly COVID 19 which postponed some key capacity building activities, especially when travel or face to face training was required. The second is that ARAC did not finalize hosting and registration requirements by the planned end date. Without the latter, UNIDO financial assistance for operations and even running the secretariat function was inevitable to sustain ARAC.

Output 1.2

Up to 4 ARAC members supported towards future ARAC MLA signatories.

ARAC issued a call for interest to select candidates for support towards a future signatory under the ARAC-MLA system. Seven countries submitted their application: Mauritania, Tunisia, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Libya and Sudan. An independent review of the "Support ARAC peer-evaluation process for 4 members towards a future signatory under the MLA system of ARAC" undertaken by the Turkish Accreditation body (TURKAK) was reviewed by the ET and found to be particularly comprehensive.

Candidates evaluation was carried out by ARAC peer evaluators who didn't belong to Arab region (from EA peer evaluators team) which allowed the assessed organizations to be classified based on their compliance with normative recognition criteria. This is evaluated as good practice.

Among the seven countries that submitted an application, five countries were initially selected by the ARAC Steering Committee: Tunisia (TUNAC), Jordan (JAS-AU), Palestine (PALAC),

Iraq (IQAS), and Sudan (SDAC). Two candidates were not selected: Mauritania for structural problems linked in particular to independence and requiring widespread legal review, and Libya regarding its level of technical compliance. For both countries, it was considered that the support would require more time than available under the ARAC Project. Despite having applied and been successful, Iraq (IQAS) withdrew (informally) from the project after some time, following a change in the leadership of the Accreditation Body.

A technical support action plan was developed for the selected Abs. Two peer evaluators/experts were recruited to provide technical support for the implementation of the Action Plan who were APAC and EA Peer Evaluators. The same evaluators developed an action plan to support each selected structure, by performing an additional assessment on site or remotely (due to Covid 19). An expert (with a peer evaluator profile) was then selected to support each of the 4 accreditation bodies.

Capacity building needs assessment process

Two important capacity building needs assessment processes were implemented as part of the project:

- (i) The Selection process of Accreditation Bodies to benefit from the support activities of component 2. This diagnosis and needs assessment enabled the evaluation of conformity for ABs Management Systems, Information Systems, personnel qualifications, and accreditation of the various sectors.
- (ii) The mapping regarding ABs capacity building needs done under the capacity building Working group. This was inspired by an equivalent process implemented by the Asia-Pacific capacity building committee; it has resulted in particular in the need for training and technical guidelines. The mapping also concerned only the AB's needs, and was not extended to assess the conformity assessment channels themselves; the mapping was based on the needs expressed by the AB itself.

In addition, ARAC conducted ABs partnership Regional Workshops which were designed to serve a number of objectives, including;

- Supporting the implementation of the signed MOUs between ARAC members
- Enhance technical cooperation and inter-relationship between ARAC members including sharing and exchange of information
- Facilitating collaboration and mutual assistance among members by means of training activities/workshops and experts meetings
- Stimulating sharing of experience among ARAC AB members in terms of activities and competences related to the development and implementation of accreditation system for new schemes.

These workshops facilitated agreement on a technical support action plan defined for each AB. The following main priorities were identified:

- Management System according to ISO/IEC 17011: 2017,
- Capacity Building,
- Practicing Assessments

2.2 Progress towards impact

One factor that complicates the analysis of impact is that the immediate impact related specifically to the project i.e. 'Regional coordination on implementing cooperation in accreditation strengthened' is conflated with longer term 'indirect' impacts on regional trade & integration, enhanced health & safety, environmental impact and consumer protection. While the former is evident from conversations with stakeholders, the latter is not measured.

If examined against the primary stated objective of the project, that of regional coordination in accreditation, it is evaluated that the project has effectively enhanced regional coordination. This was evident from conversations with all stakeholders, supported by proactive approaches to good governance and gender, and evidenced by the growing cooperation between NABs and a growing confidence and experience of peer evaluators. ***Progress to Impact regarding regional cooperation for accreditation is consequently evaluated as satisfactory.***

There are many additional potentially positive impacts of the ARAC project. These range from potential poverty reduction from the drivers of economic growth and employment generation, technological development and innovation and consequent export growth. Governments can also benefit from increased market competitiveness, resource efficiency and improved food safety and public health. The private sector benefits from product management systems that follow international best practice, enhanced competitiveness and potentially improved market access. Accreditation can also have positive environmental impacts through better resource management encouraged by environmental certification schemes.

It is an important evaluation finding that the LAS reported little doubt ARAC would increase trade and as such it continues to chair meetings on behalf of ARAC to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

There were a limited number of interviews with clients of Nabs, but they revealed potentially very important specific impacts of the project. One Nab indicated an increased access to the Algerian market as the ARAC recognition gave the laboratory more prestige. They reported less and less difficulty in registering new products and estimated about a 30 percent product growth since accreditation. They were also now exporting to Saudi Arabia. This would indicate an important potential impact of accreditation was actually facilitating intra-regional trade.

It is not assessed there were any unintended negative consequences of the project. An important positive consequence of the project which exceeds the projects scope was the report of enhanced communication between countries beyond just the area of accreditation. This was specifically mentioned by several senior regional stakeholders. Both the former and current Chairs of ARAC specifically articulated how the project "was going beyond accreditation in terms of regional best practice" and this has potentially positive indirect impacts perhaps even at the highest level through some contribution to peace and conflict resolution.

One senior regional stakeholder indicated there was not a clear environmental strategy, consequently it is difficult to assess the extent to which the project contributes to changes in

the status of environment⁶. The LF itself does not consider the environment or means of verification, although as with consumer protection and health and safety these are assumed to be broader consequences of improved accreditation. The Project TOC does refer to the impact of “Enhanced compliance with environmental standards and regulations across the region”. It is not a positive evaluation finding that the Executive Committee and MLAS do not reportedly currently consider environmental considerations.

Social inclusiveness is briefly alluded to in the narrative of the project document mainly in terms of poverty reduction, social welfare and the greater inclusivity of women and their linkages to the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, there remains a disconnect between the relevant narrative and the lack of any KPIs for measurement.

While there were no specific measurements in the project to determine environmental impact, the TE concurs with the project TOC that environment related testing and calibration services are likely to be enhanced and it was reported that more laboratories in the region are now working within the ISO 14000 series of standards. It was reported that to date there have been no requests to ARAC from laboratories related to the environment. As with the environment, the extent to which the project contributes to changes in the economic performance of individuals, groups and entities cannot be determined without greater analysis of the beneficiaries of conformity assessment bodies themselves.

It is noted that both the final evaluation of ARAC Phase 1 and the bridging SAFE project could not determine impact. The ARAC Phase 1 terminal evaluation does make a recommendation that for any future follow-up phase, it would be important to monitor impact indicators that have a direct causal link to a well-functioning QI, as for instance the number of rejections of imported products at the border⁷.

2.2.1. Behavior Change

The fact that ARAC is composed of membership of NABs who serve on various committees is a very important form of TOT and potentially a big driver for change. This has resulted in increased communication between NABs. There were, for example, reports of growing exchange of technical knowledge between Sudan, Egypt and Tunisia and even some joint training courses.”

It is evaluated that there is a growing momentum and evident desire to further the work done to date. For example, there was a reported need for enhancing exchange of best practice and lessons learned between ABs especially for the health sector but relevant also to all accreditation in the Arab Region. A need to link accreditation to other regional activities was also outlined. It was frequently reported that enhanced communication went beyond QI with some senior stakeholders believing ARAC was enhancing broader regional communication with one even stating “I Feel for the first time there has been a successful pan Arabic project” These are assessed as positive behavior changes reflecting both the identification of needs and the ambition to both sustain and expand the work done by UNIDO.

⁶ Gender is considered under section 3.8 of this report.

⁷ Pp23 Independent Final Evaluation: Support the implementation of the regional Arab Standardization Strategy with focus on the regional coordination on accreditation, (ODG UNIDO 2014)

There was a consistently reported need to expand the scope of the communication committee to make ARAC more attractive to potential members and further support was needed for communications activities. This is assessed as very important for sustainability as ARAC needs more accreditation bodies.

Behaviour change has also reportedly been evident particularly at the level of individual ABs. Previous Constraints were reported as a lack of confidence and capacity among some staff of national ABs and ARAC was credited with being much more proactive to better inform ABs and to change this mindset. However some ABs were reported as still slow to respond to ARAC requests “feeling they might not be compatible with international standards and the associated concern about getting peer evaluated.

Online training was reported as effective often enabling more people from multiple countries to attend. It was also a cost effective option. Online training was not reported as entirely suitable for peer evaluation training due to the lack of behavioural observation.

2.2.2. Mainstreaming, Replication and Scaling-up

The evaluation finds very positive results for mainstreaming replication and scaling up.

There is little doubt over the positive impact of mainstreaming of the ARAC project. The UNIDO assistance stems from a long standing partnership with stakeholder governments and clearly responds to regional and national needs identified by the stakeholders themselves. What UNIDO has done is to simply support the development and operationalizing of mechanisms for the development of QI requested by those key partners. Multiple policies and regulations have been developed in partnership with ARAC and the hosting of ARAC will require parliamentary legislation which is almost certain to be passed.

Regarding scaling up, the near certainty that more countries will sign MLAs with ARAC (some are actually pending) are a clear indicator that the Project/ARAC will see scaling up and replication. This will also ultimately be of particular relevance to long term sustainability for ARAC. In terms of scaling up it is a positive finding that ARAC is globally recognized and that an increasing number of ARAC members also sit on international accreditation bodies. It seems improbable that ARAC will not continue to scale up its activities especially once a consistent income is provided by its members.

Lessons learned on impact for international replication by donors and development partners would, however, only be evidenced by a full *ex post* impact evaluation undertaken 1-2 years after the project end.

3. Projects Quality and Performance

This section analyses the methodology in which the ARAC project contributed to the expected development results examining particularly the original project design and intervention logic the project TOC, efficiency of implementation of the project, the performance of principal stakeholders and project partners, the projects relevance and its likelihood of sustainability.

3.1 Project design, intervention logic and the Theory of Change

The clear need for ARAC to receive a second phase of support for sustainability and the identification of beneficiaries was clearly identified by the project document. The ARAC project was designed with two components, the first for ARAC institutional development with a second component to strengthen select Arabic ABs as UNIDO recognized strengthening a regional quality system would be more effective with parallel support to individual countries enabling them to make use of enhanced QI.

It is assessed, and was clearly evident from conversations with stakeholders, that UNIDO had the in-house technical capacity and previous experience to support implementation. It is an important finding that critical risks related to financial and sociopolitical risks were clearly outlined in the project document and monitored during implementation with progress reports and M&E clearly articulating progress and constraints. However, the basic risk of timeliness (regarding the legal registration of ARAC) was not identified from the outset and this ended up being the risk that required the no-cost- extension. It is noted that with only two years planned for the project there was relatively little time to provide support to more than four ABs - in particular the support for the signing of the MLA agreement. The support was also limited to strengthening accreditation bodies without reaching the clients of accreditation bodies (conformity assessment bodies) in different sectors.

The intervention logic and rationale of the project were sound outlining how compliance issues constitute a major element of competitiveness of local enterprises and products while acknowledging efficient and sustainable support in the area of quality and technology support, standards, conformity assessment, and in particular accreditation, are best viable and self-sustaining if coordinated at a regional level. The biggest issue facing project design from the TE perspective is found to be the impact indicator which was also reported as a concern for the donor. Examining the project in terms of economic integration, the achievement of this objective via accreditation also requires the development of conformity assessment sectors which is a sine qua non condition for an accreditation body to operate develop its skills and to sign recognition agreements. One senior stakeholder indicated regional trade integration is complex and hard to evaluate. As UNIDO deals predominately with ARAC it is ARAC that deals with Nabs distancing UNIDO from conformity assessment bodies. The ARAC project operates as a top down approach and is not working directly with private sector development which is where impact truly lies.

The ARAC project used experience and lessons learned from previous phases both from the ARAC Phase 1 and the bridging period provided by the SAFE Project during development. The Project Document itself also details lessons learned and the recommendations of the Phase I Terminal Evaluation and the corrective or developmental action that was to be taken during the Phase II Project.

The LF has clearly articulated outputs with measurements that are logical and the outcome and impact indicators do include the potential for long term impact. It is evident to the ET, however, that the impact appear over ambitious regarding regional trade integration and while there is likelihood that outputs and outcomes might lead to the “the facilitation of regional trade integration” there was limited attempt to monitor against the percentage increase of products circulated among Arab countries, certified through ARAC certification/accreditation chain.

Full long term Impact can only be determined through an ex post evaluation as it is currently unclear how and when outcomes will lead to impact. It is not entirely clear to the ET why the “% of increase in revenue generated after ARAC recognition” was changed for RBM to focus on the sustainable development of ARAC (although this is a pragmatic approach) as this did appear to be a useful impact indicator, even if it would have required some case studies to be undertaken. Means of verification were outlined in the LF and added to during implementation for M&E. A key assumption not articulated in the LF was the hosting and legal registration of ARAC. However, this was certainly a lesson learned during implementation and clearly reported on.

The Project document risks and the LF assumptions that remained relevant during implementation and it is a positive finding that these continued to be reported on in progress reports. The Project document also includes a TOC which supports and expands upon the LF that adopts a more traditional RBM approach.

The TE finds no problems with the structure of project management and both UNIDO and ARAC have positively contributed to project implementation. Meetings with stakeholders universally revealed their high level of satisfaction with regards to UNIDO's technical assistance and capacity building activities. It is determined overall that field coordination, supported by UNIDO Vienna, was very largely effective and efficient, especially with significant challenges to timeliness resulting from COVID 19. One of the main reasons for continued effectiveness was that ARAC can essentially operate in a remote mode, the last General Assembly met online, ARAC officials can be elected remotely, UNIDO and ARAC were already implemented eLearning and Webinars and many capacity building activities were conducted on line such as gender training.

It was reported Donors also wish to see more micro level results. This was previously discussed in Section 2 and is further discussed in Section 4.

The ARAC Project Theory of Change

As per the terms of reference, the ET reconstructed the project theory of change in order to identify causal and transformational pathways from the project outputs to outcomes and longer-term impacts, and drivers as well as barriers to achieve them.

The TOC developed by the ET makes the overarching assumptions that there are two pathways to change: The first one regards the institutional development of ARAC while the second regards the development of Arab National Accreditation Bodies directly supporting the private sector.

Prerequisites and assumptions (drivers and barriers to change):

For transformation to occur there were specific preconditions and assumptions for project outputs to achieve anticipated outcomes of behaviour change and direct benefits and for those outcomes to achieve the development impact.

1. There is equivalence and coherence in national accreditation evaluation and conformity
2. Standards, and conformity assessment procedures are non-discriminatory
3. Standards do not become obstacles to trade
4. Consumers have confidence in local measurements and testing services in all sectors

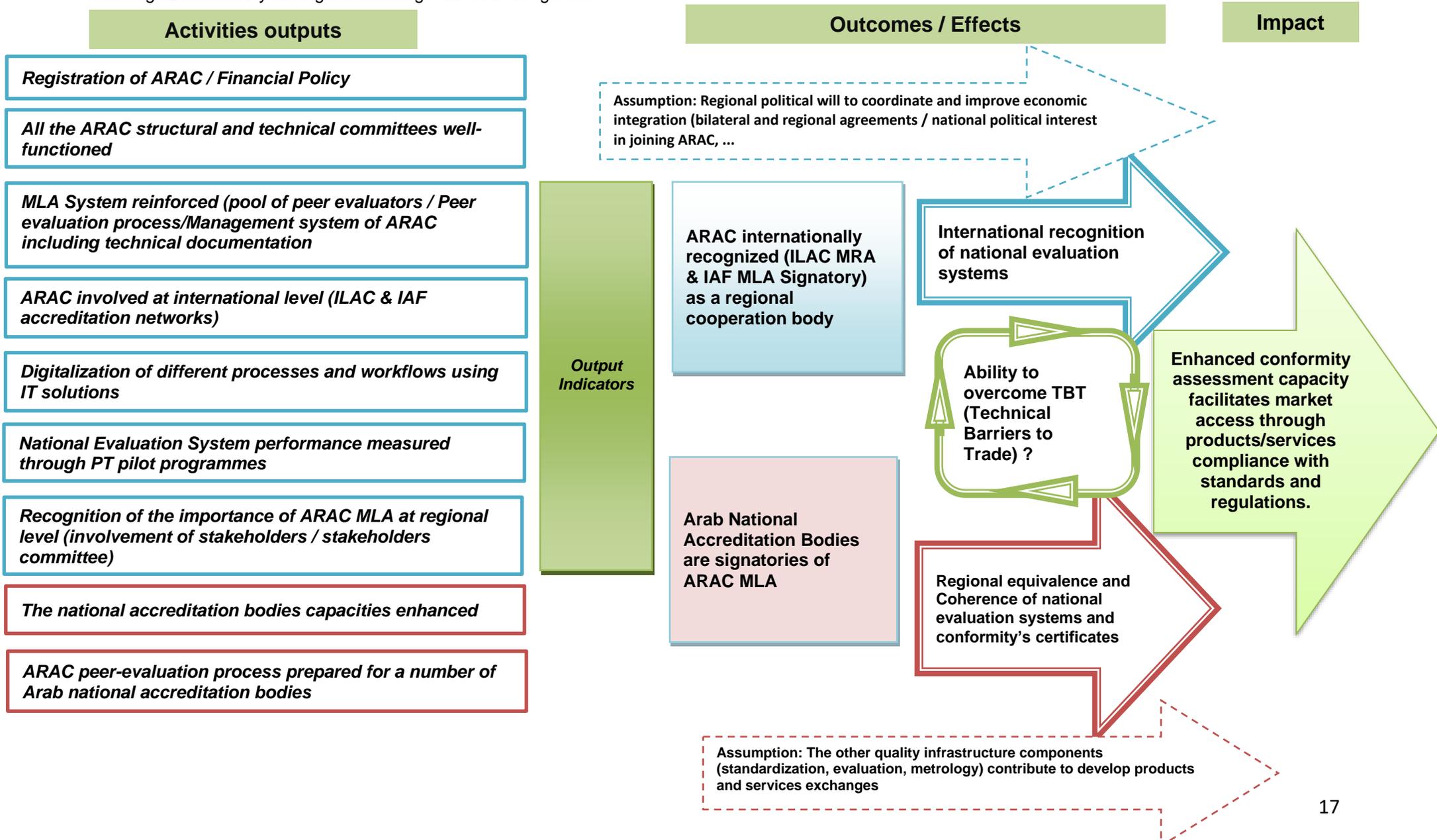
5. Compliance with and enforcement of environmental standards and regulations within member countries
6. The peer evaluation process is effective, efficient and recognized.
7. Contributing countries will provide the financial resources to sustain ARAC
8. Good Governance is both a key prerequisite and assumption
9. Exporting companies are aware of and comply with ARAC standards
10. ARAC is internationally recognized

The TOC for the project designed by UNIDO is evaluated as a positive step towards a strategic management approach and there is considerable complementarity between the original TOC and the reconstructed TOC. Where the two differ is in the final impact where the ET suggests that impact of conformity is more product and market oriented as a key driver (and barrier) as Regional Economic Integration requires political agreement (issues of national sovereignty) that were not anticipated to be covered by the project. The TOC reconstructed by the ET also focused more on assumptions and prerequisites than the project TOC

The full reconstructed TOC is outlined in section 3.2 below.

3.2 Theory of Change

Support the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) to be sustained, effective and internationally recognized as a key driving force for regional trade integration



3.3 Efficiency, Coordination and Project Management

It is noted that the ARAC project currently supports most of the costs for organizing technical meetings and conferences. Operational costs of ARAC are currently still fully covered through UNIDO (including the salaries of management and support staff). Member States have agreed to a funding mechanism through annual fees that will allow ARAC to continue organizing activities and coordinating technical support, but this is not yet being implemented.

Efficiency is rated as ***moderately satisfactory*** as there were shortcomings related to timeliness both in commencing and finalizing the project. Although a bridging period was provided by SAFE this was not the full 4 year project commencing in 2014 as originally planned by UNIDO. Despite constraints regarding timeliness it is not found that more could have been achieved with less input or that more could have been achieved with the same input, especially with the unanticipated negative impact of COVID 19. Inputs from the donor, UNIDO and counterparts were generally provided on time, although the legal registration of ARAC which became critically important for financial sustainability was not ultimately timely.

Efficiency was definitely enhanced by UNIDO's continued field support, especially from the CTA based in Rabat, and strong oversight and management support provided by the PM in Vienna. Technical Consultants employed by the project for advisory inputs were well regarded by ARAC and multiple consultants employed in Vienna indicated a strong team based approach and support from the PM. It is assessed that UNIDO's implementation experience of previous and closely related projects was a significant factor contributing to the development of ARAC.

Multiple conversations with Stakeholders including the LAS reinforced the view of UNIDO's implementation capacity, flexibility compared to some other UN agencies, and the evident value for money when comparing the modest budget to the significant potential impact of ARAC. Anecdotal evidence from multiple stakeholders also indicated the international accreditation community felt ARAC was developing and gaining recognition very quickly, one stating "ARAC is a very cost effective investment for the international community". Although no cost benefit analysis has been undertaken it is found by the ET that the results are being achieved at an acceptable cost and the provision of an extension (at no cost) adds further value for money, enabling further follow up and longer ongoing support to a nascent organisation.

There were some issues regarding timeliness with the intention that the full Phase II would have run concurrently with the SAFE project (between 2014 and 2018) as ARAC Phase II and the SAFE Initiative shared their governance structure as well as some office space and staff. However it is reported that changing senior staff in Sida resulted in a reduced budget and timeline for ARAC 2 and full implementation for a Phase II was delayed. However it is again noted that despite an apparent 4 year delay between the anticipated and actual start date of ARAC Phase II, USD 860,000 bridging money provided by the donor under that SAFE project allowed continued contribution to ARACs running costs⁸.

UNIDO's request for a no cost extension to Sida for PHASE II has been granted until August

⁸ According to PP 19 of the SAFE Terminal evaluation The practice to use funds granted for one project for activities of another project is not in line with Sida's regulations so it was not possible to "reimburse" the advance granted.

2021 to solidify ARACs financial sustainability following anticipated formal registration (early 2021) and to support the delayed re-evaluation of ARAC by the IAF and ILAC (planned for September 2020 but delayed because of COVID).

It is a positive finding that the impact of COVID 19 in delaying activities was measured against each output and reported in the April 2020 UNIDO progress report and was certainly one of the reasons for the NCE being granted. The evaluation would determine the extension also needs to include a handover period for the Executive Secretariat function that cannot be implemented until the hosting arrangements are finalized. The period of this extension (while evaluated as necessary) has negative implications for efficiency as the main objective of the ARAC project which was full financial and technical sustainability was not possible by the planned end date.

As of 31 December 2020, total expenditures amounted to USD 1,493,219.19 The breakdown is included below.

Table 2: Disbursements as of 31 December 2020⁹

Items of expenditure	2018	2019	2020	Total expend.	% /total
Staff & Intern Consultants	76,086.30	433,858.21	248,533.36	758,477.87	51%
Tech Services		22,504.00		22,504.00	2%
Local travel	41,645.59	70,140.55	20,460.32	132,246.46	9%
Staff Travel	9,547.22	11,743.08	5,504.68	26,794.98	2%
Nat.Consult./Staff		8,950.10	27,323.38	36,273.48	2%
Contractual Services		150,820.44	21,291.81	172,112.25	12%
Train/Fellowship/Study		3,898.13		3,898.13	0%
International Meetings	103,063.64	172,482.45	41,263.68	316,809.77	21%
Premises			608.40	608.40	0%
Equipment	0.00	-2,141.45	0.00	-2,141.45	0%
Other Direct Costs	4,324.18	22,850.15	-1,539.03	25,635.30	2%
Grand Total	234,666.93	895,105.66	363,446.60	1,493,219.19	100%

3.4 Performance of Partners

National counterparts

The main counterpart agencies were ARAC and the National Accreditation Bodies of Individual countries. A strong relationship between UNIDO and ARAC were evident and performance was enhanced through the continued logical, phased support. From the National Accreditation bodies and ARAC committee members there were positive findings related to ARCS performance with little doubt about their increased technical competence.

⁹ Source: UNIDO Project Management database as of 03 June 2020

Ownership is assessed as particularly high and ARAC clearly owns the project outputs and outcomes and supports the project in terms of government and regional coordination, project activities and the development of appropriate policies and byelaws. ARAC management, Nabs and the LAS all report confidence in the upscaling capacities of ARAC and an intention to increase the number of MLAs. What is less relevant is the level of national/regional commitment regarding funding as this still has to be proven through membership fees. However fee structures are provisionally established and the sustainable counterpart funding and full handover from UNIDO are two key activities to be undertaken in the extension phase regarding UNIDO exit.

The Donor

Sida has been a positive driving force behind the ARAC project. The contribution of the Donor is best placed in the context of a continued commitment to the development and support of QI in the ARAC region. Putting the Phase 2 project in context, Sida has continued to support the partnership with UNIDO since December 2010 when the first phase was signed. It is noted that AIMDO also previously knew Sida who had a long history in training regional experts in fields related to QI in cooperation with the Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (SWEDAC) even before 2010.

There was a delay between the end of Phase 1 and the beginning of PHASE 2 which was partially attributed to the changeover of Sida desk Management and changes in their strategy. It was reported that having 3 separate Sida representatives since 2018 had been a minor constraint. However, Sida's continued willingness to support no cost extensions and bridging support under the SAFE project (2014-2018) meant that ARAC and UNIDO continued to receive donor support.

It was reported the donor has been actively involved in project development and especially sustainability strategies. Throughout, the donor has maintained a strong focus on impact and how that impact is measurable.

UNIDO

It is assessed there was adequate technical expertise applied to project Design and the project was designed inclusively, involving project partners. It is found previous evaluations were used to inform project design as was the experience of implementation of previous phases. An exit strategy was clearly outlined in the project concept with a focus of financial sustainability for an existing organisation. Generally, the Project was operationally well managed, but had weak result-based monitoring and evaluation due principally to an unmeasurable impact and some inconsistencies in the quality of M&E reporting. This weakness does not appear to be reflected in overall progress reports, however, which are assessed as quite comprehensive measuring and reporting against key KPIs and risks and reporting on reasons for any delays in progress.

3.5 Relevance

The assessment of relevance looks at the extent to which the objectives of the projects were consistent with the requirements of key beneficiaries, international priorities, donor policies and

UNIDO. While there were shortcomings related to the specific measurement of impact, (especially related to trade and the environment) there is little doubt as to the Projects relevance which is assessed as **highly relevant**.

There are several highly positive indicators of relevance, these include the following ;

- The specific applicability to a wide range of SDGs and in some cases even their targets,
- The continued decade long-term commitment from the donor of which this project supported the 'final phase',
- The entirely consistent reports from stakeholders that UNIDO support was both timely and relevant,
- The continued focus of the LAS on a unified Arab System for standards, Technical regulation, Quality Infrastructure and Food Safety¹⁰ and that the fact that the Ministerial Economic and Social Council recognizes ARAC as one of the main pillars of the Pan Arab quality infrastructure in supporting intra-regional trade and the Arab Customs Union requirements.
- The (small scale) 'case study' evidence found by the ET that accreditation was actually facilitating intra-regional trade from two laboratories interviewed.

The project is relevant to Sidas international work, particularly regional cooperation in Africa under the theme of Economic integration, employment and migration and modernizing customs administrations. Sida also works closely with the World Customs Organisation (WCO), supporting the countries of the region in implementing the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement, which aims to simplify trade. Sida also highlights the importance of promoting gender equality and good governance/transparency as core objectives of its international cooperation activities.

The approach is relevant to UNIDO Department of Trade, Investment and Innovation (DTII) which is responsible for assisting countries to strengthen competitiveness in global markets and developing capacities in the area of product quality. The DTII provides technical cooperation and capacity-building services to enhance the contribution of the private sector to ISID.

Relevance of the activities was enhanced by UNIDOs previous experience, having participated and implemented multiple relevant previous projects especially the ARAC Phase 1 project and the ARAC bridging support provided by SAFE. Further building existing organizational structures and operational frameworks also enhanced relevance. The original project objectives in terms of the continued development of ARAC and moves towards financial and technical independence remained both pertinent and valid during the life of the project.

For national ABs, relevance is enhanced by the fact that since October 2017, the ARAC MLA is recognized at an international level by the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). Based on this international recognition, reports or certificates provided by organizations accredited by ARAC MLA signatories, the National Accreditation Bodies operating in the Arab region, are automatically recognized by the signatories of the ILAC and IAF multilateral agreements.

It is suggested the project has potential relevance to a wide number of interrelated SDGs. For SDG 1 "no poverty" there is broad evidence that ensuring conformity of products for market

¹⁰ Re-verified with the LAS by the TE.

requirements, and becoming better integrated into the multilateral trading system can be a sustainable contribution to poverty reduction. Especially with a diversification and export growth with less reliance on low value products. Under ISID, trade is broadly recognized as a potential engine of growth especially if it is inclusive.

Regarding SDG 3 “good health and wellbeing” the project is likely to contribute to an expansion in products that meet international standards. Well-functioning, accessible QI is of particular relevance to medical products, laboratories and services and poor people are often the most vulnerable to substandard medical products.

For SDG 8 “decent work and economic growth” the project has strong potential contributions to the actual targets set by the SDGs. These include to “Diversify, innovate and upgrade for economic productivity”, and to “promote policies to support job creation and growing enterprises”. These targets cover, innovation, diversification and technological upgrading which can all be outcomes of improved QI. The project is also significantly linked to SDG 9 “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure” which focusses on the upgrading of industries and industrial technologies.

The project is also of relevance to SDG 17 “partnerships for the goals” and this is most evident with the longstanding partnership and coherence between Sida, UNIDO, the ILAC and IAF and their developmental learning in specific implementation. One specific indicator of this is the joint UNIDO/ILAC/IAF publication which specifically outlines broad policy advice to governments on establishing accreditation as well as to the stakeholders that establish accreditation bodies¹¹ which indicates an increasing collaboration among international agencies to help developing countries overcome barriers to trade.

Gender and the environment are related to the good governance approach adopted by the project. The potential environmental aspects of the project relate to a wide range of SDGs including SDG 6 “clean water and sanitation” by for example setting limits on certain contaminants allowable in effluents to water. Broad potential links are evident with other SDGs relating to the environment including SDG 13 “climate action” and SDG 15 “life on land”. It is evaluated the project has a potential to mitigate negative environmental impacts especially as many product and management system standards (e.g. ISO 14000 and ISO 50001) relate to environmental aspects (this was a finding of the Final evaluation of Phase 1 ARAC and it outlined in multiple publications on the impacts of developing QI). It is a specific finding that both ARAC and NABs reported an increased focus by ultimate beneficiaries on ISO 14001 for environmental management.

While a fully strategic approach for gender inclusiveness is assessed as to some extent lacking in the project and perhaps even UNIDO's wider approach to accreditation globally, significant work was done by the project towards ensuring gender parity and inclusiveness. For example, comprehensive work has been undertaken by UNIDO and partners on gender and physical infrastructure, but the gender dimension is generally not mentioned in UNIDO publications on accreditation projects, except in the most generic way regarding potential impact.

¹¹ Setting up Accreditation Bodies in Developing Economies: A guide to opening the door for Global trade (Vienna 2017)

3.6 Coherence and synergies

It is assessed the project is internally coherent with a synergistic link between other projects implemented to support ARAC by UNIDO as well as clear linkages to UNIDO's wider mandate and work with accreditation in other regions including Latin America, South Asia and South Africa. The full ARAC Phase II project aim of sustainability was a natural follow on from earlier developmental phases and was both logical and consistent with respect to phased technical assistance.

There was also synergy between the UNIDO SAFE project and the ARAC UNIDO support with both projects sharing the same steering committee and ARAC Executive Committee and the two initiatives were complementary. It is noted, however, that the SAFE evaluation found that there was an overlap between the two committees themselves which was sub optimal for governance.¹²

There is strong external coherence with the harmonization and coordination efforts of the LAS in terms of developing the unified Arab System for standards, technical regulation, quality infrastructure and food safety and the project is clearly in coherence with the AIDMO Arab Quality Infrastructure Strategy. Stakeholders also referenced the link between the UNIDO ARAC project and the cooperation with trade focused Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) also funded by Sida.

The project is consistent with Sida's strategies, particularly the "Regional Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)" in their initiative for Increased economic integration and improved opportunities for countries in the region to participate in free, sustainable and equitable regional trade.¹³ It is also consistent with their "Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in sustainable economic development 2018-2022" in the areas of strengthened conditions for free and fair trade and improved conditions for private sector development.

3.7 Sustainability

Sustainability is the most important indicator of performance of the ARAC project as sustainability was implicit in the title of the project "Support the ARAC to be sustained", project outcome 1. Output 1.1 and 1.2 and all key activities undertaken by the project. In addition to the required technical and financial sustainability for ARAC itself, the intention behind supporting 4 ARAC members to become ARAC MLA signatories was also sustainable revenue generation.. It is found overall that despite the need for a no cost extension to ensure financial sustainability there is little doubt project results and benefits will be sustained after the end of donor funding and potential sustainability is found to be **satisfactory**¹⁴. It is an important finding that senior management of ARAC confirmed that even without further UNIDO or donor support they would "find a way forward".

Financial sustainability

¹² Pp28 SAFE Terminal Project Evaluation

¹³ <https://www.government.se/country-and-regional-strategies>

¹⁴ This would not have been the finding had a no-cost-extension not been granted

Although sustainability is rated as overall satisfactory at the time of the evaluation (because of the NCE) there are still some critical potential risks to financial sustainability with the proposed project end date of 31 December 2020. It is found however these challenges relate more to timeliness. TUNAC has not yet been legally registered as the host of ARAC with ratification awaiting the Tunisian Parliament, ARAC has no bank account and there is the need for ILAC IAF reevaluation of ARAC which was delayed by COVID 19. However, with the granting of the NCE the evaluation would determine that sustainability will very likely be satisfactory as an eight month extension is likely enough time for legal registration and some ARAC members are already requesting how to pay their subscription.

After completion of UNIDO project, the ARAC budget will entirely be covered by the ARAC membership fees. The ARAC budget has been designed to cover the following expenses:

- international participation of ARAC representatives,
- ILAC / IAF evaluator intervention costs
- Capacity building activities
- technical secretariat costs.

The budget will be met from a phased increase in the membership fees (it was reported fees are initially low so as not to discourage initial membership), the ARAC MLA scope enlargement, and the number of certificates issued under the various recognized conformity assessment sectors. This budget, which remains relatively limited, is intended to cover ARAC activities but there does appear to be relatively limited flexibility with the budget. It was also reported by several stakeholders there was no specific budget for the Communications and marketing Committee. This represents a risk on financial sustainability especially, if as reported to the evaluation, there is a history of non-payment of contributions from other organizations in the region.

Through the various interviews, the evaluation team understand that the hosting solution will not be temporary; the reduced budget calculated on the basis of the members contribution and its evolution method, confirm this idea. It is also suggested the solution of hosting the regional cooperation body's secretariat by a national AB is not the best way to preserve the impartiality of ARAC. Even if this solution was adopted by the Asia-Pacific region, it was subsequently abandoned so that the secretariat of the regional cooperation body became completely independent and impartial.

There do not appear to be significant socio-political risks to the ARAC project results and the level of stakeholder ownership is assessed as very high. There is unanimity around the importance of having a regional cooperation body for accreditation for the Arab region. The Arab League is starting to integrate ARAC as a stakeholder in some internal works related to trade in the region. To increase the ARAC budget, the Arab League cannot directly contribute to fund ARAC; however they can provide political support to ensure a financial contribution from member countries. The LAS reported a good partnership between ARAC and LAS and LAS will encourage members states to financially support ARAC with all ministries pledging support to ARAC. The LAS also refereed to their relationship AIDMO and LAS built over the last 5 years because of UNDO.

It was reported that the evaluation process to determine the host (ultimately TUNAC) took longer than anticipated by the ARAC Executive Committee after it was clarified by the ILAC and IAF

that the hosting of ARAC must be by a legal entity. This also required the recruitment of a legal advisor and mapping and identification of the legal registration requirements of ARAC which was submitted to the Executive Committee. It was not agreed until September 2020 that a legal advisor would again need to support ARAC.

Although Tunisia has been selected by ARAC to be the host country and the agreement is signed by the ARAC chair, the agreement still needs to be signed by the Tunisian Ministry of Industry (Mol) and ratified by Tunisian Parliament. It was unclear how long this would take. Until this happens ARAC is not registered as a legal entity and cannot have a bank account. It is also recommended the ARAC secretariat move to the host country and that the secretariat function currently being professionally undertaken by the UNIDO CTA needs to be handed over.

The lack of financial assurance of sustainability for ARAC remains a major issue of concern for many senior stakeholders, a more general concern was the potential loss of momentum at the end of the original proposed date in December 2020.

Political will and trading relationships remain potential challenges to membership of ARAC as some countries will prefer to join the accreditation bodies of their major trading partners. They may even be pressured to do so as was the case with Tunisia and the EA.

A further potential challenge to effective sustainability is the fact that TUNAC will not provide a budget for the Executive Secretariat and the current total annual cost for secretariat personnel is estimated at 10,000 USD (about 833 per month) which is likely too low to encourage personnel sufficiently qualified to apply.

It is assessed that ARAC as an organisation would continue despite a period of potential financial insecurity (if no cost extension had been granted) and this was articulated by both former and current chairs of ARAC. The high relevance and coherence of the project intervention to the MENA region, the decision for the NCE indicating continued donor and UNIDO support and the evident strong sense of ARAC ownership (and sustainability) are also very positive signs for sustainability.

Technical Sustainability

ARAC peer evaluators reportedly continued to enhance their capacity and involvement in regional and global workshops, accreditation bodies were further involved in regional workshops reportedly consolidating the cooperation between ARAC and other Regional Cooperation Bodies and the project developed the new ARAC communication and gender activities. These all relate to the further technical capacity, consolidation and likely sustainability of ARAC.

While evaluators participate in peer evaluation on a voluntary basis, the CTA position is currently held by the UNIDO program that has provided ARAC with an international consultant with significant experience and skills in the field of peer evaluation and accreditation activities. His role in ARAC functioning is crucial for its sustainability, given the organization of ARAC requires a pivotal person with a mastery of the various aspects of accreditation at the national, regional and international levels.

The ARAC technical secretariat is currently paid by UNIDO on daily base, while the future

estimated budget for secretariat staff is USD 10,000 per year (approximately 800 USD per month), this is likely to be insufficient, taking into consideration the market reality, to recruit an appropriate qualified international expert.

When the ARAC secretariat will be hosted by the Tunisian accreditation body TUNAC, which, according to the hosting agreement, will provide the office, logistics and infrastructure, but not the technical secretariat expert (only a local possibility), the problem of technical expertise will remain unresolved. The possibility for some ARAC Abs, with important financial resources, to mobilize such expertise was discussed by the ET with some members without any decision being taken.

Environmental Sustainability

The extent to which the project has contributed positively or negatively to environmental sustainability is difficult to assess and discussions with stakeholders did not clarify this issue. While it is assessed the projects relevance is enhanced by the potential positive impact on environmental sustainability, previous evaluations and this one can only make a generic assumption based on the impact of (for example) implementing ISO 14000 and ISO 50001. There are no measurements attributable to the environment in the LF, the M&E system, project reports or case studies that specifically attempt to measure the contribution of the project. It is noted also that indicators currently outlined by the IRPF which closely link to SDGs would unlikely be measurable by this project. It might be possible for ARAC/UNIDO to report on the Number of new or improved green products made available or used (ENV.5) if it collected details from the NABs and ensured changes were a result of new accreditation resulting from ARAC MLAs. If the donor and UNIDO desire analysis on micro-level results related to the environment, generic assumptions (even if likely) currently remain unproven.

3.8 Gender mainstreaming

The project has focused on gender during implementation and has developed well beyond the Phase I evaluation which found there were not even gender related objectives. Parity between the sexes is almost assured in the composition of the various committees and groups and there are more women than men in key positions and at senior and decision-making levels.

The TE still finds that UNIDO could have benefited from a more a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming at the outset of activities. This was also a finding of the SAFE project terminal evaluation¹⁵. In the closing stages of the project UNIDO is focusing on developing a “vision” for ARAC on gender diversity and inclusion as well as the development of a gender charter. However, there still needs to be the allocation of gender and focal points in committees and the addition of gender and inclusivity in the overall strategic objectives of ARAC.

A gender strategy was outlined during the design phase which focused mainly on integrating gender principles in ARAC bylaws, procedures and strategies and the specific development of a gender policy for ARAC. A gender gaps analysis was undertaken in mid-2019 which found no gender policies or guidelines and limited awareness of inclusivity. At the time of the evaluation, work was being undertaken to list regional forums and institutions focused on

¹⁵ PP24 Independent Terminal Evaluation: Arab Food Safety Initiative for Trade Facilitation (SAFE Initiative).

gender diversity that could be linked to ARAC. A workshop was also being prepared to train staff from accreditation bodies on gender equality and women empowerment.

The comprehensive gender policy was collaboratively designed with ARAC bodies and discussed with members in 2020. The gender policy was endorsed by the ARAC Executive Committee in June 2020 and implementation of the policy commenced by providing training for ARAC accreditation body members and personnel involved in the accreditation process on Management of the Gender Diversity. Importantly, the Gender policy articulates key measures and actions for gender sensitive approaches associated with milestones, responsible parties and timelines. The implementation of this policy is anticipated to be ongoing during the extension phase until August 2021. ARAC now has agreed a Gender charter which pledges ARAC to broadly support gender mainstreaming, equality, inclusiveness, equal pay and opportunity, and intolerance of violence against women. All these aspects are to be embedded in the professional training of ARAC staff.

A significant emphasis during implementation was the focus on awareness raising and reporting on results disaggregated according to gender, Progress reports for example outline the percentage of women holding key positions in ARAC and ABs (including evaluators), committees membership and participation at regional workshops. It is a positive TE finding that Interviewees also reported a greater awareness is becoming evident. While, the extent to which trainings and workshops will be sufficient to affect behavior change remains somewhat problematic as gender equity and inclusiveness are assessed as ongoing challenges to the region¹⁶, it is found the project has significantly contributed to potential best practices.

4. Factors Affecting the Achievement of Results

The ongoing partnership approach between UNIDO and ARAC has been supported by UNIDO experts that were generally highly regarded by their counterparts. Project implementation, for example, was greatly facilitated by UNIDO providing ARAC with an international consultant with significant experience and skills in the field of peer evaluation and accreditation activities. However, monitoring and evaluation is not evaluated as supporting the achievement of results

4.1 Results based management and monitoring and evaluation

At the activity and output level Monitoring and Evaluation is found to be quite comprehensive. With progress reporting against activities and deliverables and an outline of reasons for any delays encountered.

That strengthening regional coordination on implementing cooperation in accreditation will facilitate regional trade & integration as well as enhancing health & safety, protecting the environment, and providing consumer protection is an ambitious objective. Although multiple studies refer to the positive impact of accreditation, these indicators remain rather generic and unmeasured in the ARAC project document. The social, economic and environmental effects

¹⁶ Progress Towards Gender Equality in the Middle East and North Africa Region (World Bank 2017). The WB identifies persistent challenges that remain. Specifically, gaps need to be addressed in the areas of women's economic opportunities, women's voice and agency, and gender specific vulnerabilities in conflict and fragility, as well as women's participation in reconstruction efforts.

of the project are difficult to assess due predominately to the lack of project measurement and the lack of collection of baseline data before the project commenced.

There is no real attempt to monitor at the impact level and to date there is no linkage to the Integrated Results Performance Framework (IRPF) of UNIDO or the associated Bennet Evaluation Hierarchy. It is provisionally assessed the project could certainly report against multiple levels of the Bennet hierarchy, especially activities outputs, engagement and involvement, reactions, knowledge attitudes skills, aspirations and practice and behaviour change. It is noted however the project would have a problem reporting against impact related to Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) without potentially large scale micro-level studies the cost of which would need to be considered against the potential benefit, especially with a relatively small budget. Again, this reinforces the problem the project has reporting against impact as defined in the project document.

It is determined the outcome and objectives are very ambitious and for the project to measure whether it is contributing to regional trade integration as well as enhancing health & safety, protecting the environment, and providing consumer protection there should be specific indicators related to this. If, for example, as anecdotal evidence suggests, that ISO 14000 is being increasingly applied by companies in the region, this is one indicator for environmental impact.

It is found that progress reporting is relatively comprehensive with results based management undertaken predominately against the project logical framework which was amended following the recommendations of the TE of Phase 1 in 2014. Some targeted indicators outlined in the LF were amended for measuring achievement based on discussions with monitoring meetings held by the UNIDO team. The new monitoring indicators were presented to the steering committee meeting (EXCOMM) in November 2019 and endorsed. The second annual progress report also includes more extensive analysis against project risks and challenges.

It is assessed that M&E measures principally at the output level of the project with less clear reporting against the projects objectives at the impact level. However, as determined in Section 3 in this report on project design there were no clear measurements of regional trade integration and its associated impacts and the development impact is hard to quantify. Indicators are, however, very comprehensive at the output level and quantitative measurement and reporting is relatively strong across both outputs. It is also noted Long term impact can only be measured *ex-post*.

It is a positive finding that the Project document does include a Theory Of Change and it is evaluated as comprehensive, though with relatively generic assumptions at the impact level. The TOC does not include an associated list of risks and assumptions which is common practice and this would have been useful for strategic management but there are risks and assumptions articulated elsewhere in the project document including assumptions outlined in the Logical Framework. That outcome will lead to impact would only be possible to ascertain with measurement and therefore remains generic and unproven, though at the TOC level it remains applicable as a theory.

4.2 Additional factors facilitating and hindering project results

Other factors that have had bearing on the project results have been a wide range of communication and media tools and the development of the Communications and Marketing Committee. However, it was a broad consensus from the highest political level to the individual NABs that Marketing and communication needs to be more proactive

Additionally it was a consensus that more political support was needed from AIDMO and LAS, especially as some felt economic integration is still not a priority between ARAB countries who continue to focus on Europe.

Though beyond the scope of the current project, a remaining challenge is the need for DB development (of all accreditation bodies) as ARAC doesn't list all accredited laboratories. Equally important is the need for the development of a communications budget for ARAC as communication of results, advertising and improved outreach were clearly identified needs identified by a wide range of regional and national stakeholders.

There is an important potential issue regarding ARAC MLA recognition and this rests with the issue of Nabs not being able to be accredited by multiple regional accreditation bodies. From an international recognition point of view, ARAC recognition is equivalent to other regional and international similar process (for Example ILAC, IAF, EA); and the technical merits and process leading to ARAC recognition is in line with international standards. However, International requirements are not a barrier to having more than one MLA recognition if the accreditation scopes / sectors are different. Brief case studies are discussed below.

Two North African Abs (ALGERAC, TUNAC) chose to join the European Accreditation MLA: The Tunisian AB (TUNAC) withdrew from ARAC-MLA to maintain its EA-BLA (EA BLA signatory for testing / medical / calibration / inspection and MS certification); the Algerian AB (ALGERAC) choose to sign the EA-BLA (For testing, inspection and calibration) instead of the ARAC MLA. These 2 countries respective economies are highly integrated in the European market. These countries are also discussing ACAA agreements with European Union with the objective of further promoting goods trade with the European Union by facilitating market access based on recognition of conformity assessment methods.

By having more than one MLA recognition, the Egypt AB sets a particular example for other institutions that may be followed by other AB faced with strategic choices. The EGAC signed an EA-BLA for Proficiency Testing Providers while maintaining their AFRAC-MRA and ARAC-MLA recognitions statue in the fields of for Calibration, Testing, Medical testing, Inspection and Management system certifications.

Alternatively, Tunisia (the agreed ARAC Secretariat host) wishes to sign the ARAC MLA for certification of persons. It is not guaranteed that this approach will succeed because Tunisia is already a signatory of recognition agreement with the EA for other sectors and the new sector requested to ARAC is covered by EA recognition.

There were discussions between ARAC and EA about the ALGERAC and TUNAC cases. The EA confirmed the equivalence between EA MLA and ARAC MLA, and the possibility to sign the

ACAA agreement between the EU and the concerned countries while maintaining or signing the ARAC MLA.

In this particular case, the decision related to the choice of the regional cooperation body for accreditation and the scope of the targeted recognition, should be discussed between ARAC and the concerned countries in association with other stakeholders (the Arab League for example), to find a transitional solution to the problem the choice between recognition by ARAC or other institutions.

More generally, to encourage the Accreditation Bodies to join ARAC and sign the ARAC MLA, ARAC's membership policy (especially during its early developmental phase) must take into consideration the context and specificity of each country and its economic and political interests, and be in line with the choices and development priorities of each country of its conformity assessment sectors.

According to a recent decision taken by the general assembly, ARAC members are committed to join ARAC MLA within 18 months (18 months to apply to ARAC-MLA signatory and another 18 months to be recognized), otherwise they become associate members. This rule does not necessarily encourage some members to join ARAC.

4.3 Overarching ratings table

Table 3: Overall Project Rating

#	<u>Evaluation criteria</u>	<u>Rating (1 lowest, 6 highest)</u>
A	Potential for Impact	5
B	Project design	4.5
1	• Overall design	5
2	• Log frame	4
C	Project performance	5
1	• Relevance	6
2	• Effectiveness	5
3	• Efficiency	4
4	• Sustainability of benefits	5
5	• Coherence	5
D	Cross-cutting performance criteria	4.7
1	• Gender mainstreaming	5
2	• M&E: M&E design M&E implementation	4
3	• Results-based Management	5
E	Performance of partners	5
1	• UNIDO	5
2	• National counterparts	5
3	• Donor	5
F	Overall assessment	4.8

5. Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

5.1 Conclusions

The project contribution to development results including effectiveness and progress to impact are generally very positive with almost unanimous positive feedback from stakeholders although it is found the project is still very much a work in progress. Effectiveness was certainly enhanced by project management, both in Vienna and regionally, the overall quality of TA and the evident long term experience and committed partnership approach adopted by UNIDO, ARAC and Sida.

It is assessed that UNIDO's implementation experience of previous and closely related projects, especially its focus on lessons learned from previous phases was a significant factor contributing to the development of ARAC. Effectiveness was enhanced by a dual parallel approach of developing regional accreditation capacity while also focusing on national capacity development, though it is found that support to ARAC was generally reported as the more substantial and there is the need for more coordination between conformity assessment bodies at the regional level although this is reportedly commencing. Quantifiable results of the project at the output/outcome level appear very positive when measured against original baseline targets with most exceeding expectation despite significant challenges caused by COVID 19. The project applied extensive, participatory selection criteria for countries to be supported towards future MLA with ARAC and at the regional level, ARACs internal committees have been developed as has their peer evaluation capacity with relevant and generally timely technical assistance (TA).

There remain some challenges. There is a need to further both environmental strategies, and the Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC) is not found to be proactive enough in disseminating the results and potential of ARAC. A major finding is the difficulty related to measuring the longer term multidimensional development impact, especially with limited key performance Indicators (KPIs). It is found that the full development impact might be realistic, however it is currently unproven and must be subjected to a full expert led ex post evaluation in order to fully inform the donor and UNIDO for future strategies. Regarding sustainability, Member States have agreed to a funding mechanism through annual fees that will allow ARAC to continue organizing activities and coordinating technical support, but this is not yet being implemented. There are positive indications of behaviour change between the regions NABs with reports of improved multi-country technical exchange, gender awareness and growing confidence in accreditation capacity and the evaluation finds very positive results for mainstreaming, replication and scaling up.

The ARAC Project has achieved substantial **impact at the organizational level** and highly positive achievements have resulted from the capacity building support provided to ARAC. This support has resulted in the operationalization of ARAC especially regarding the development of its internal technical and strategic committees. Support has resulted in the development and implementation of an information system. ARAC now has a document management system and the Peer evaluation process which has increased the qualification of peer evaluators, its membership process, the process for endorsement of ARAC General Assembly resolutions

and the election of ARAC key positions are now all done remotely which has been remarkably timely with the impact of COVID 19.

The main problem for ARAC is not enough accreditation bodies and national bodies did not get enough TA. There is also a need to provide pressure to politically encourage an increase in membership. Another problem is that Executive and MLA committees do not sufficiently currently cover environmental dimensions.

Additionally, the ARAC project supported ARAC Accreditation Body members in the digitalization of their accreditation processes by developing an accreditation process module. This IT solution covers the different steps of the accreditation process of ARAC Accreditation Body members, including the establishment of databases for assessors and decision makers. As such, it will also help ARAC Accreditation Body members to perform their accreditation activities in a more efficient way, as well as reduce costs, facilitate information sharing and limit loss of valuable information

This TE, (as well as the previous ARAC evaluations) finds UNIDO has a strong comparative advantage even against other UN agencies when it comes to flexibility and pragmatism in its approach. It was a consensus view that UNIDO was very responsive to need with one senior stakeholder reporting they could not recall a single instance when UNIDO was not responding to their requests.

The project would have benefitted from additional indicators designed for impact. UNIDO understood that enrolling stakeholders at the national level was pivotal to mobilize political support at the regional level but Regional trade integration is a multidimensional outcome or impact dependant on much more than the ARAC project.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations below particularly relate to the development and implementation of future projects with a particular focus on project design, impact measurement and sustainability Recommendations also refer to the experience of previous phases of ARAC support when relevant. It is anticipated recommendations are of relevance to UNIDO, the donor and ARAC. Some of the following recommendations were discussed with and verified by stakeholders during the TE.

Short-term Recommendations for UNIDO and the donor.

Sustainability and Impact

1. ***Apply for at least an additional six month non-cost extension to Sida.*** While the NCE was granted before the end of this evaluation this remains an **independently verified strong recommendation from the ET.** It is understood that with a moratorium on travel due to COVID 19 there remains an unused logistics budget which can to cover costs of the extension. It is essential to provide a bridging period of support to enable the financial sustainability for ARAC in the beginning of 2021, support the ILAC IAF re-evaluation, fully transfer UNIDO supported secretariat capacity to ARAC/TUNAC, further develop gender and marketing strategies, continue the activities reported as

delayed by COVID 19 and generally continue momentum at a crucial time in ARACs long road to full autonomy. This period is essentially the culmination of over a decade of support. **Responsible entities UNIDO and Sida.**

2. ARAC should find a long term practical financial or institutional solution to **recruit a secretariat expert** with the necessary skill level. In the short term it is recommended the CTA relocate to Tunisia to support the development and capacity building of the ARAC secretariat. **Responsible entities ARAC, UNIDO and TUNAC.**

Recommendations for UNIDO and ARAC for the project extension

3. UNIDO needs to **continue to support and facilitate the political will** to fully support ARAC with regional bodies such as the LAS or discussing the possibility of direct contribution of Arab countries to the budget. As another step, UNIDO Country Offices and relevant projects that focus on trade could prioritize or include a supportive element related to accreditation. **Responsible entities UNIDO and ARAC**
4. There is a priority identified need to **enhance communication and advocacy** for greater outreach and marketing of ARAC which was reportedly delayed by COVID 19. This also links closely to enhancing the engagement of end users and the private sector to enhance national consultation and further promote ARAC. **Responsible entities UNIDO and ARAC**
5. Consider undertaking a small number of case studies with clients of the NABs that have benefitted from the ARAC-MLA. This could help prove impact. **Responsible entities UNIDO and ARAC**
6. Beyond its main mission, ARAC has undertaken an action to promote PT providers. This kind of activity is very useful for the Arab region given its strong impact on the results reliability of evaluation processes. Given the situation of conformity assessment sectors in the Arab region, and in the absence of reference structures for the development and networking of these activities at the regional level, **ARAC should and could play a larger and more organized role to further support cooperation in some conformity assessment activities.** Representatives of the metrology laboratories would like to see ARAC providing more coordination among ABs clients. This could include the following
 - the provision of a database on expertise / audit or evaluation skills
 - the provision of a grouped list of laboratories accredited under ARAC MLA specifying scopes as well as technical annexes
 - organize inter-laboratory comparisons
 - organize the exchange of equipment calibration's standards and regulations.
7. **Consider an advocacy action to promote the use of the ATA Carnet between Arab countries as part of cooperation between laboratories or between laboratories and other stakeholders.** The ATA carnet (Admission Temporaire / Temporary Admission) facilitates international exchanges by simplifying customs formalities. The ATA Carnet replaces the various customs documents normally required for a temporary importation, temporary exportation or transit operation. This

procedure makes it possible in particular to participate in trade fairs, or to use professional equipment. In the case of metrology laboratories, the procedure makes it possible to calibrate equipment, calibrate standards, or participate in inter-laboratory comparisons. The ATA Carnet can be used in trade with countries that have adhered to the Brussels ATA Convention (1961) and / or the Istanbul Convention (1990) to cover the temporary admission of goods. Among the countries that have signed or accepted the ATA Carnet are the following Arab countries: Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, UAE, Qatar. <https://www.uscib.org/member-countries-ud-1582/> **Responsible entities UNIDO and ARAC**

Long term recommendations for UNIDO and Sida

Project Design

8. **Clearly articulate specific impact indicators in the design of future projects.** Planning for impact assessment should start as early as at the project or programme development stage. While it is understood transformational impact can take a long time beyond the life of a project it is very likely ARAC has already had some impact, it remains however unproven. **Responsible entities UNIDO future Programme Managers.**
9. **Ensure SMART indicators for gender and the environment** are considered during project planning and link these with the IRPF. Regarding gender it is necessary for UNIDO to increase focus of a gender lens on its substantial work with accreditation bodies. **Responsible entities UNIDO future Programme Managers.**
10. Ensure that potential need for micro-level support is considered during project design, especially in the areas of supporting National accreditation bodies early during implementation **Responsible entities UNIDO future Programme Managers.**

Impact

11. To inform UNIDO and Sida in terms of replication of potential upscaling it is very strongly recommended to **undertake an ex post impact evaluation** to be undertaken after the cessation of project assistance. This would be much more informative than the proposed follow up evaluation which can only verify work undertaken and completed (or not) by the end of the extension period. This project has formed part of an important regional long term commitment from the donor, development partners and stakeholders and many of the real impacts, ongoing constraints and lessons learned cannot yet be ascertained. This project is also evaluated as having potential global importance, especially for replication. Methodologies for measuring the impact of quality infrastructure are clearly articulated in "Measuring The Impacts Of Quality Infrastructure" published by the Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt (see bibliography). **Responsible entities UNIDO and Sida**

Evaluation

12. **Ensure sufficient planning for and timeliness of evaluations.** Limited timeliness of evaluation work was outlined as a weakness from the SWOT in the 2020-2024 Strategy for the Office of Evaluation and Internal Oversight. There are two specific points related to the ARAC evaluation.

- a. This evaluation independently recommends a no-cost-extension but this could not be articulated with the donor and UNIDO until after the NCE was already agreed.
- b. With the newly granted NCE this evaluation cannot consider the new extension though it is very likely a lot of critical work will complete during this period. It was evident from the outset of the evaluation that a NCE was essential because of delays in the formal registration of ARAC and the impact of COVID19. With unspent resources, the evident long term commitment from the donor and UNIDO and the critical financial period and need to continue momentum for ARAC it is independently evaluated the NCE was certain so the timing of this evaluation was not optimal. This remains a pertinent recommendation beyond the ARAC project as it is not unusual for a final UNIDO project evaluation to be followed by a NCE. **Responsible entities UNIDO IED and future programme Managers**

13. **Plan for remote evaluations as if they were being undertaken as a normal evaluation mission with travel.** While not ideal due to the lack of observation and face to face meetings (and ongoing follow up) remote evaluations are possible and UNIDO has undertaken them prior to COVID 19 due to security restrictions. However, meetings with stakeholders should be planned in advance in a time intensive manner as if the evaluation was in country for the normal 10-14 days. This is recommended regarding timeliness of evaluations. **Responsible entities UNIDO IED and future programme amangers**

5.3 Lessons learned

- Projects focused on accreditation (in this case ARAC) may likely be a driver towards trade integration, health and safety, protection of the environment, issues of justice, fair-trade and the safe and efficient and provision of essential services. However, these are complex multi-dimensional and macroeconomic impacts which are hard to measure and likely impossible to attribute to any single intervention. Impact Indicators should consequently be specific to the project activity and more realistic and measurable. If they are unmeasurable they remain unproven. Indicators also need to be time bound in the sense that they relate to the timeline of the project. If longer term impact is anticipated beyond the life of the project this will only be revealed by an ex post evaluation. It could be suggested difficulties in allocating SMART indicators at the impact level rest with both donors and implementing agencies who desire to imply substantial wide-ranging multidimensional impact for their respective audiences. While common, the risk to this approach is an unmeasurable and overambitious Impact statement.

5.4 Good Practices

- While only an evaluation of the UNIDO Phase II project support to ARAC the intervention must be put in the context of multiple phased support. It is clear the development of a regional accreditation body, where there was none before, requires sustained long term support. There is no doubt that continuing commitment from Sida

and UNIDO, the multiple phases of support from the creation to eventual (highly likely) sustainability of a globally recognized accreditation body and the responsiveness of both organisations to the ongoing demonstrated and requested needs of ARAC and the region can be assessed as a very best practice.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation can be found at the UNIDO website at the link below:

https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2020-11/TOR_RAB-140261_ARAC_TE-2020_051120%20final.pdf

Annex B: Evaluation Framework

Guiding evaluation questions	MoV					
Note: Questions will be adapted as necessary during implementation and will be adjusted according to the anticipated level of respondents knowledge/activity/time. Evaluation questions will be adapted depending on country specific context (nature of ARAC support)	ARAC	Donor	UNIDO	ARAC members	AIMDO	other stakeholders
Project Design and Intervention Logic						
To what extent were previous projects/evaluations used in the project design	x	x	x		x	
How does the project align to national and regional development (& donor) priorities and policies	x	x	x	x	x	x
To what extent were government counterparts, key stakeholders and beneficiaries involved in the project design	x	x	x	x	x	
What were the particular strengths and weaknesses of the project	x	x	x	x	x	
Were risk and mitigation strategies specifically factored into project design	x	x	x			
How was sustainability factored into Project Design	x	x	x	x		
Were outputs, outcomes, impacts and indicators SMART and did they generally prove correct during implementation	x	x	x			
Would you design, support and implement the project exactly the same. With hindsight what could have been done better	x	x	x	x	x	x
Were gender issues identified at the design stage	x	x	x	x		
Is the project/ARAC in line with the UNIDO and national/regional policies on gender equality and the empowerment of women	x		x	x		x
Relevance and Ownership						
How is the project relevant to intended target groups/beneficiaries	x	x	x	x		x

Are the main stakeholders/beneficiaries taking overall leadership of the project implementation	x	x	x	x		
What has been the type of involvement of donor/ government counterparts / private sector during implementation	x	x	x	x		x
To what extent outputs are/were sufficient to achieve the Project outcomes and objective	x	x	x	x	x	x
Efficiency						
How was coordination/synergies among UNIDO activities at the regional level? Was there for example coordination with other UN projects/agencies (Value Added)		x	x			
Have resources/inputs converted into outputs in a timely and cost-effective way? Any problems faced?	x	x	x	x		
To what extent overall were UNIDO services adequate (expertise, training, equipment, methodologies)	x		x	x		
Were UNIDO procurement services provided as planned and were they adequate in terms of timing and value	x		x	x		
Project Coordination and Management						
Does ARAC have independent financial, human and technical resources to contribute (sustainability)	x	x	x	x		
To what extent has the UNIDO/ARAC management structure contributed to generate the planned outputs and achievement of outcome and impact	x		x	x	x	
Has UNIDO management and overall field coordination mechanisms of the project been efficient and effective	x		x	x		
Has monitoring and self-evaluation (based on indicators for outputs, outcomes and objectives) been used in ARAC EXEC CTTEE etc. Has this resulted in changes (adaptive management)	x	x	x			
Were any changes in implementation approved and documented. By who?	x	x	x	x		
How was the project monitoring conducted and were resources sufficient	x	x	x			
What were the main barriers, if any, encountered during project implementation	x	x	x	x	x	

How has the project management/ ARAC addressed barriers and challenges	x	x	x	x		
To what extent is UNIDO Vienna involved in supervising and monitoring projects	x	x	x			
To what extent were project progress/ ARAC reports/M&E updated/ recorded systematically	x	x	x			
Effectiveness and Impact						
How does the project contribute to inclusive and sustainable Industrial Development (ISID)			x			
How does the project contribute to LED (micro to support macro)	x	x				x
What are the main outputs of the project so far? (To what extent and how has the capacity of the MLAs, ARAC and accreditation bodies increased)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Were there any unanticipated positive or negative consequences of the Project	x	x	x	x	x	
To what extent are outcomes established in the project document being achieved. Are outputs leading to outcomes and will outcomes lead to objectives (TOC approach)	x	x	x			
How have target Direct Beneficiaries / countries benefitted from the project in terms of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards development/ accreditation and certification (QI) • Trade Integration/coordination • Changes in import/export (certified through ARAC or not) • Improved Governance • Enhanced health and safety • Enhanced environmental protection • Consumer protection 	x		x	x		x

What could be improved (if anything) on UNIDO's model of intervention	x	x	x	x	x	x
Impact and Sustainability						
Specifically how has the project impacted intended beneficiaries?	x		x	x		
How is the project contributing to national/ regional /international development priorities	x	x	x	x	x	x
Are results sustainable and what further Govt. or donor assistance is required	x		x	x	x	x
What are the key risks to sustainability and what are the plans to ensure continuity after project end	x		x	x		
What is the level of regional /national funding & financing	x	x	x			
Crosscutting Issues						
Was gender mainstreamed, monitored and reported during implementation	x		x	x		
To what extent has the project contributed to empowerment of women and gender equality	x		x	x		
To what extent has the project contributed (positively or negatively) to environmental sustainability	x		x	x		
Are there opportunities for replication and upscaling	x	x	x	x	x	x

Annex C: List of Documents Reviewed

UNIDO Project Document 140261: Support the Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC) to be sustained, effective and internationally recognized as key driving force for regional trade integration. (UNIDO Vienna, May 2018).

Independent Terminal Evaluation: Arab Food Safety Initiative for Trade Facilitation (SAFE Initiative) "Enhancement of Regional Trade Capacities In Food Through Harmonized Regional Conformity Assessment And Food Safety Systems" UNIDO Project ID: 12054. (UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division Office of Evaluation and Internal Oversight, September 2020).

Independent Final Evaluation Support the implementation of the regional Arab Standardization Strategy with focus on the regional coordination on accreditation (UNIDO Evaluation Group Vienna, May 2014).

UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (2018): Evaluation Manual.

OECD/DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, 2002: Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness.

Setting up Accreditation Bodies in Developing Economies: A Guide To Opening The Door For Global Trade (UNIDO/ILAC/IAF June 2017).

Measuring the impacts of Quality infrastructure: Impact Theory, Empirics and Study Design (Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt Braunschweig und Jorge Gonçalves, Jan Peuckert Berlin 2011).

World Bank. 2017. Progress Towards Gender Equality in the Middle East and North Africa Region. Washington D.C.: World Bank.

Capacity Assessments Report to Support ARAC Peer-Evaluation Process For 4 Members Towards A Future Signatory Under The MLA System Of ARAC. The Turkish Accreditation Agency (TÜRKA), Submission Date to Vienna: 16 July 2019.

Support ARAC peer-evaluation process for 4 members towards a future Signatory under the MLA system of ARAC (Methodology document for the selection of the ARAC AB members to be supported).

Technical Support Action Plans for Jordan, Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia

ARAC Strategy 2017 – 2022, Approved by General Assembly, 7 November 2016

Arab Accreditation Cooperation [ARAC] Bylaws, Approved by General Assembly, 25 October 2020

ARAC Membership Fees Procedure, Approved by ARAC General Assembly, 23 June 2020

ARAC Executive Committee Terms Of Reference, Approved by General Assembly, 12 December 2019

ARAC MLA Committee Terms Of Reference, Approved by General Assembly, 5 March 2020

ARAC MLA Group Terms Of Reference, Approved by General Assembly, 5 March 2020

ARAC Technical Committee Terms Of Reference, Approved by General Assembly, 21 January 2020

ARAC Communication And Marketing Committee Terms Of Reference, Approved by General Assembly, 30 December 2016

Guidelines for Joining the ARAC Multi-Lateral Arrangement ARAC MLA, Approved by Executive Committee, 30 July 2020

ARAC Quality Manual, Approved by General Assembly, June 2016

Brochure on the Benefits of an ARAC Multilateral Recognition Agreement

ARAC Website <https://arab-accreditation.org/>

List of ARAC members in The ARAC General Assembly, Executive Committee, Technical Committees, Communication and Marketing Committee, MLA committee and lists of representatives from the 4 countries selected for technical MLA support. TURKAK

Annex D: List of Stakeholders Consulted

LIST OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

NAME	GENDER	DESIGNATION	ORGANIZATION
VIENNA/UNIDO			
Johannes Dobinger	M	Chief	UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division Vienna
Rafik Feki	M	PM ARAC Project	UNIDO Department of Digitalization, Technology and Innovation
Moslem Barack	M	CTA ARAC Project	UNIDO Morocco
Bastien Cheny	M	Advisor Communications and Marketing	UNIDO Vienna
Firas Ghasnen	M	PSD and M&E Advisor	UNIDO Vienna
Fatma M'Selmi	F	Gender Advisor	UNIDO Consultant
ARAC/NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BODIES			
Bahgat Abu Elnasr,	M	Director of the Department of Arab Economic Integration	League of Arab States
Amina Ahmed Mohamed	F	Head of EIAC, ARAC Chair, EC Chair ARAC MLA Signatory	ARAC and UAE Accreditation Body
Mahmoud Eltayeb	M	Former ARAC Chair	ARAC
Lana Marashdeh,	F	Head of JAS-AU ARAC MLA Group & MLA Committee Chair Executive Committee & GA member	ARAC and Jordan Accreditation Body
Yassine Ouali,	M	Head of TUNAC ARAC Executive Committee & GA member	ARAC and Tunisia Accreditation Body
Mohamed Ethmane,	M	Head of DNPQ ARAC MLA Committee & GA member	ARAC and Mauritania Accreditation Body
Abdelrahman Shtayeh,	M	Head of PALAC ARAC MLA Committee & GA member	ARAC and Palestinian Accreditation Body
Abdellatif Isbah	M	ARAC Member	ARAC and Palestinian Accreditation Body
Shams eddeen Omer	M	Head of SDAC ARAC MLA Committee & TC & GA member	ARAC and Sudan Accreditation Body
Chiheb Kooli	M	Stakeholder	Chair of Tunisian Conformity Assessment Body

Abdelwahed Mohammed Ibrahim	M	Head of IQAS ARAC TC & GA member	ARAC and Iraq Accreditation Body
Brahim Houla	F	ARAC CMC Chair ARAC EC member	ARAC
DONOR			
Walter del Castillo	M	Counsellor and Regional Programme Manager - Economic Integration and Trade	SIDA

Annex E: Structure of ARAC

