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FINAL EVALUATION – SUGAR SECTOR, ESWATINI

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FINAL EVALUATION – SUGAR SECTOR, ESWATINI

FINAL REPORT

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ACRONYMS

AAP	Annual Action Programme
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COMESA	The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESP	Eswatini Sugar Programme
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FA	Financing Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IL	Intervention Logic
IL	Intervention Logic
JC	Judgement Criteria
KE	Key expert
LSG	large-scale growers
LUSIP	Lower Usutu Irrigation Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-term Review
NAS	National Adaptation Strategy
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PMU	Project Management Unit
RES	Royal Eswatini Sugar
RG	Reference Group
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSF	small-scale farmer
SSGs	small-scale growers
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	terms of reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFP	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Description of the project

Background to the project

Eswatini is a relatively small African country with a population of just over a million people, living mainly in rural areas and small towns. The economy of Eswatini has been performing moderately well for the periods relevant to this evaluation, that is from 2009 until 2021, growing at some 2 percent per annum. Although Eswatini's economy has diversified in recent decades, agriculture remains an important part of total economic output.

Poverty has declined in Eswatini over the past several decades, to the extent that in 2017, 58.9 percent lived below the nationally-defined poverty level, by comparison with 69 percent in 2001. Nevertheless, most poverty remains rurally situated, with 52 percent of its rural population being defined as poor by comparison with 11 percent in the urban areas.

Poverty reduction efforts have therefore been mainly focused on Eswatini's rural areas; entrepreneurship and employment initiatives in these areas are an important part of EU-funded interventions in the country. In the past two decades, the largest of these have probably been those in the sugar sector, a major component of which are under review in the present evaluation.

Climatic variations have significant impacts upon agricultural output, particularly field crops. Irrigated agriculture therefore plays an important role in Eswatini. Sugar cane cultivation in Eswatini is mostly irrigated and estimates of the sugar value chain contributions to gross domestic product (GDP) vary between twelve and sixteen percent.

Whereas historically sugar cane cultivation was the preserve of large estates often owned by millers, plus a few more relatively wealthy, independent medium scale growers, in the past three decades the impressive expansion of the industry as a whole was led by small-scale growers (SSGs) whose holdings varied in size but averaged 75 hectares. By about 2005, however, many of these SSGs were struggling financially, as has often been the case in southern Africa more generally. This was mainly due to rising input costs, particularly the costs of cane haulage to mills, and also caused by erratic irrigation and farm management practices.

Description of the project/programme and its objectives

The EU interventions under evaluation focused upon enhancing the profitability (and in most cases the economic viability) of the Eswatini SSGs by enhancing transportation and irrigation infrastructure so as to reduce costs and enhance yields; both of those objectives were also being assisted by training initiatives supported by the EU.

The Eswatini government in 2006 adopted a National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) for the sugar sector, partly influenced by the anticipated reductions in sugar exports to the EU as a result of changes to trade policy, favouring European sugar producers over imports. In many respects, the EU sugar sector interventions under review were an outgrowth of the NAS, and a team of EU-appointed experts in 2007 identified a range of so-called Additional Measures that could be funded by the EU consistent with the Eswatini NAS.

Amongst others, a number of bridge and roads improvements were identified that were projected to shorten distances of cane haulage for SSGs to mills and enhance SSG area accessibility generally. Together with projects enhancing irrigation infrastructure and training initiatives, these comprised the bulk

of budget items funded out of the 2009, 2010 and 2011 EUD sugar sector budgets for Eswatini comprising some 83 million EUR, and whose derived activities unfolded over more than a decade up to 2021. Funds were also allocated for social infrastructure initiatives in SSG areas, including the building of new schools.

More precisely, these budgets were as follows:

- Swaziland Annual Action Programme (AAP) 2009 – Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Support to Sugarcane Small growers, Diversification and NAS Coordination (31/03/2010 – 31/03/2019, budget: EUR 16,500,000
- Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2010 – Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Road Transport Infrastructure (22/02/2011 – 21/06/2020, budget: EUR 12,057,000
- Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2011 – Improving the Competitiveness of the Sugar Industry and Reducing Poverty (28/03/2012 – 28/12/2021, budget: EUR 54,267,000

Evaluation methodology

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to conduct an overall independent assessment of the past performance of the EU measures in the sugar sector, paying particular attention to its results measured against its expected objectives, and the reasons underpinning such results; and to derive Key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve future Interventions (ToR, p.3). The evaluation is intended to serve accountability, decision-making, and learning and management purposes.

The scope of the evaluation included the two main areas of physical intervention to assist SSGs in Eswatini, namely mostly the Lower Usuthu Smallholder Irrigation Project (LUSIP) and the Komati Downstream Development Project (KDDP), where the full range of budget activities described under the Description of the Project above were deployed; and one other area (Malkerns) where a small part of the sugar project funds went to enhancing ailing/aging irrigation infrastructure.

Evaluation questions

After reducing a wide range of possible questions to five essential questions linked to the OECD-DAC criteria, a complex evaluation matrix was developed, comprised of five evaluation questions and associated OECD-DAC and other evaluation criteria, judgment criteria and indicators or information required, and information gathering methods and sources of information to be exploited.

In summary, these questions and their associated judgement criteria were:

- EQ1: To what extent has the programme been able to achieve benefits for final beneficiaries and target groups?
    - Judgement Criteria: Distribution, numbers, and characteristics (e.g. gender) of beneficiaries and their levels of gain, especially in regard to enhanced yields and reduced costs as a result of the EU-sponsored transport infrastructure and irrigation enhancements
- EQ2: How efficient was programme delivery?
    - Judgement Criteria: Resources deployed compared to impacts (ratios) in comparative perspective, in that efficiency implies some version of a cost-benefit ratio
- EQ3: How much more competitive is the Eswatini sugar sector?

- Judgement Criteria: Sector performances before and after ; comparatives within SADC (ratios). Especially relevant will be average yields per hectare per annum and average costs of transport per ton hauled, given stated objects in the Financing Agreements

- EQ4: How well were the specific objectives of the programme and its projects met, and why?
  - Judgement Criteria: Intervention's quarterly and annual progress reports, and technical reports; I&AP/field observations. Indicators of profitability, yield, costs, and of nature of beneficiaries

- EQ5: To what extent will the impacts and benefits be sustained over time, and why?
  - Judgement criteria: Critical criteria for assessing sustainability in the future. I&AP observations; projections based upon trends and causal analyses of factors underlying them.

Methodology

The methodology entailed triangulating or cross-checking multiple sources of evidence relating to the EQs and judgement criteria, including:

1. The very extensive research documentation conducted by inter alia by the Mid-term Reviewers, independent researchers, and sometimes researchers commissioned by the EUD over a decade, especially on SSGs and their costs and production outputs; also other research-based documentary sources on the Eswatini sugar value chain for example available from the Eswatini Sugar Association, independent agricultural consultants, and academics;

2. A wide range of interviews with Key Informants inter alia in the Eswatini Canegrowers Association, the Eswatini Sugar Association, millers' representatives, government officials, specialist agricultural scientists, and previous employees/consultants within the EUD sugar sector programmes;

3. Extensive field studies of growing (including irrigation), harvesting and haulage practices in SSG areas;

4. Extensive field studies of the location and quality of the physical infrastructure funded by the EU in SSG areas (roads, bridges, schools, irrigation);

5. A bespoke sample survey study of costs and revenue trends and socio-economic factors amongst actually operating SSGs within Eswatini as of the time of this review (August to October 2021).

Limitations

To some extent, the final review process came late after the interventions, but on the other hand there was some virtue to this insofar as the impacts of such interventions take time to reflect in terms of SSG results. In addition, sustainability is often better assessed after a period of some years following such interventions. However, there are also some accompanying limitations, insofar as several the people implementing the interventions had since moved on.

A second limitation is that, given the focus specifically upon SSGs and the relatively short time allocated to do the review, developing a fuller picture of the wider sugar value chain trends and possibilities for the sector was only partially possible. Nevertheless, a significant context for this Review is the 130-page Study of the Swaziland Sugarcane Value Chain initiated under the auspices of the EUD and published in 2017 (published after the Mid-term Review of 2016) and which contains much useful information and insight in relation to context.

In particular, it may be observed through a reading of that report that relationships between inputs and outputs in sugarcane growing, and relationships between outputs, prices and profitability, are not as simple as they might seem at first. Consequently, due care needs to be exercised with respect to understanding the reasons for performances of SSG indicators, as we explain at various points in the remainder of this Review.

Key findings

Answers to the evaluation questions and findings

RELEVANCE. The EU interventions were found to be highly relevant by supporting a large number of vulnerable but potentially productive people in an economic sector where Eswatini has competitive and comparative advantages. Jobs from constriction added to enhanced incomes from sugar and each contributed to an improved human development index (HDI) in the past decade.

EFFECTIVENESS. The final beneficiaries and target groups of the EU interventions were the SSGs, and households associated with them, and all of the documented research and our interviews with key informants in Eswatini as well as field observations suggest that on this dimension the programme more than adequately met its objectives. Specifically, the profitability of SSGs was improved, contributing to their financial viability (e.g. in being able to pay off costs for initial investments in planting, fertilisation, weeding, etc). Transport costs were reduced on a per tonne basis but because yields also increased (through irrigation, better fields management), aggregate transport costs stayed constant, and are now rising again through inflation. However, overall, profitability was and is enhanced.

EFFICIENCY. In terms of objective indicators, programme efficiencies were comparatively good, since the level of funding passed a minimum threshold to make measurable positive impacts by comparison with similar other projects in southern Africa. In terms of subjective indicators, those who worked in the programmes recollect them as the most efficient they have experienced.

SUSTAINABILITY. Because SSGs are now self-supporting and part of a very strong value chain which is competitive in the African context, they continue to perform well and are projected to do so. Site visits revealed exceptionally high standards of cultivation, fields management and irrigation amongst others. However, climate change will put pressures on the need for irrigation efficiencies, inflation is eroding past savings in transport costs and rising electricity costs to drive irrigation systems are a key future vulnerability.

IMPACT. The impacts of the EU interventions were found to be profound, and every Key Informant interviewed spontaneously offered that the EU interventions were positive ‘game changers’. One of many indicators of success is that Eswatini is now the leading single sugar exporter to Kenya, despite there being several other African sugar producers closer to Kenya. Another indicator are evidently rising standards of living in SSG areas.

EU ADDED VALUE. Numerous widely experienced commentators pointed out that, without the EU interventions, most SSGs in Eswatini would have likely failed. This is also the view of the CEO of the Eswatini Canegrowers’ Association and that of the consultant team for this Final Review. These conclusions are all the more important in the light of so many indicators that the SSGs are self-sustaining after the EU intervention, and contributing substantially towards a highly competitive sugar industry, no longer dependent upon the EU market and now a leading exporter into SADC and COMESA markets. With its slim government resources devoted to a wide range of priorities in a country, for example with high HIV-AIDS infections and more recent COVID-19 issues, the EU value-added was as good as any could have hoped for.

Conclusions

Conclusions

1. The EU intervention in the sugar sector in Eswatini, especially those components under review here, were very successful according to all OECD-DAC criteria, and the EU value-added was critical. A level of resource was committed that passed thresholds for measurable impacts. The sector was well chosen for comparative/competitive advantages in regional context.
2. Climate considerations were built into project design by emphasising irrigated agriculture although gender mainstreaming was less evident.
3. There are/were many women beneficiaries, but in line with widespread African customs and land tenure practices, it was men who were the more evident beneficiaries.
4. A focus on needy beneficiaries need not be inconsistent with economic growth prospects: that is EU support for a 'bottom tier' can have 'trickle up' effects within a value chain .
5. Sustainability prospects are enhanced when building upon sound development fundamentals. Without good basic agricultural management in a promising sector, additional sustainability challenges (climate resilience, green energy etc. are not affordable).

Lessons learned

1. Build upon economic sectors in which in an African context the country has distinct Competitive and Comparative Advantages.
2. Focus upon assisting vulnerable but potentially successful smaller parties in building a highly competitive agri-value chain and which is labour-intensive in nature.
3. Commit a level of resource that is sufficient to make a measurable impact, and which has multiplier effects throughout the sector value chain and even beyond it.

Recommendations

1. Recommendation 1: To communicate the success of the EU interventions in the Eswatini sugar sector, and the reasons for the success, more widely both within and outside Eswatini.
    - Implemented by: The EU Delegation to Eswatini
    - Priority: Short to Medium Term
    - Importance: High
2. Recommendation 2: To encourage and facilitate a shift to proven, cost-effective solar energy driven electricity systems for irrigation and household use in SSG areas.
    - Implemented by the EU Delegation to Eswatini
    - Priority: Short to Medium term
    - Importance: High

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Contextual analysis

1.1.1. Country background

Eswatini is a relatively small African country, with a population of just over a million people, living mainly in rural areas and small towns. According to the 2017 Eswatini population census, "the population of Eswatini is predominantly rural; out of the total population figure of 1,093,238 in the 2017 census the rural population accounted for 833,472 which is 76.2 percent"[1].

The economy of Eswatini has been performing moderately well for the periods relevant to this evaluation (from 2009 until 2021) growing at some 2% per annum. Although Eswatini's economy has diversified in recent decades, agriculture remains an important part of total economic output, although often with fluctuating growth rates, partly dependent upon weather conditions. In the agriculture sector, field crops are especially susceptible to such fluctuations, for example the growth rate in field crop economic output varied from negative figures to a plus twenty six percent per annum by 2018, as demonstrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Field crop economic output 2011-2018

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
6.0%	-1.5%	-0.3%	3.3%	-1.6%	-28.4%	23.2%	26.2%

Source: Kingdom of Eswatini, National Accounts Estimates 2018

Given this context, irrigated agriculture plays an important role in Eswatini, which – except for the highlands where mainly forestry is practiced – is a country which is otherwise characterised by a comparatively dry climate with some 700 mm of rain annually.

Poverty has declined in Eswatini over the past several decades, to the extent that in 2017, 58.9% lived below the nationally-defined poverty level, by comparison with 69% in 2001[2]. Nevertheless, most poverty remains rurally situated, with 52% of its rural population being defined as poor, in comparison with 11% in the urban areas[3].

Therefore, poverty reduction efforts have been mainly focused on Eswatini's rural areas, including EU-funded entrepreneurship and employment initiatives, which constitute an important part of EU interventions in the country. Probably the largest of these in the past two decades have been those in the sugar sector, a major component of which are under review in the present report. In addition, water provision in rural areas has contributed to a major improvement in national development. As is noted in 4.3.i.c, while only about 39% of the total population had access to reliable sources of water in 1990, the figure increased to 74% in 2012. The greatest improvement has been in the provision of water to the rural population, from 25% of the population in 1990, to 69% in 2012 among the rural population.

[1] The Kingdom of Eswatini, *The 2017 Population and Housing Census Volume 3*

[2] Source: World Bank, *Poverty and Equity Brief*, *Eswatini*, October 2019.

[3] World Bank, op cit.

1.1.2. Sector background

It is widely understood that the sugar sector is 'the heartbeat' of the Eswatini economy[4]. Outside of services, agriculture is Eswatini's largest employer[5], and within this sector, sugar cultivation and animal husbandry are the largest contributors.

A distinctive feature of the sugar sector is its complex value chain supporting a large number of other industries in Eswatini, and its role in exports securing foreign exchange, as elaborated later in this report. In terms of economic output, estimates vary of sugar's contribution to GDP, ranging from 12% to 16%. These are unusually high contributions by comparison with many other contributions, eclipsing even Malawi's probably second-placed 10% contribution of sugar to GDP[6].

By way of context: in terms of a trajectory of change, sugar cane area harvested for Eswatini was 58,523 ha (as of 2020, according to the Eswatini Sugar Association's Annual Report of 2020/1). Most of this area is irrigated, by contrast to dry-land cane cultivation which is mostly practiced in adjacent South Africa for example. The area harvested had increased from 14,398 ha in 1970, growing at an average annual rate of 3.05%. The cultivation of sugar cane supplies three mills – two in the north and one in the south of the country – which had traditionally exported significant amounts of sugar to Europe. Figure 1 below outlines this growth over time, as well as the contributions of large-scale growers (LSGs) and small-scale growers (SSGs).

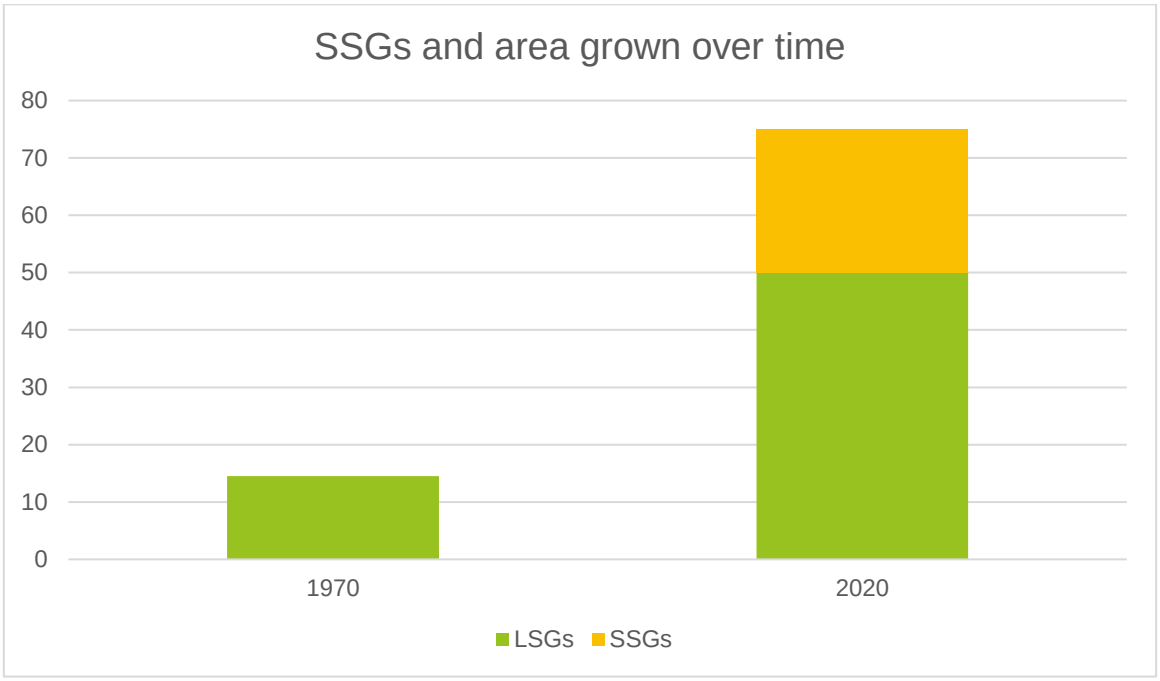

Figure 1 SSGs and Area Grown over time

Source: Eswatini Sugar Association (2021) and Mr. Mike Ogg SSG Consultant, Tshaneni (interview 27 September 2021)

So-called SSGs contributed a significant component of growth in the areas cultivated from the 1990s onwards. SSG holdings averaged some 75 ha, but amongst whom most of some two hundred (thus about 15,000 ha)[7] were financially at risk due to a variety of factors (input costs, yields, management practices)

[4] In the words of an EU Delegation official at presentation of Intermediary note on 30/9/2021

[5] The Kingdom of Eswatini, *The 2017 Population and Housing Census Volume 5*

[6] https://mitc.mw/trade/index.php/sugar-production-and-consumption.html#:~:text=Sugar%20contributes%20about%2010%25%20of,of%20the%20country%27s%20agricultural%20sector. To choose a SADC country of similar population size but also with a sugar legacy, sugar now contributes less than 1 percent to Mauritius' GDP (https://www.cabri-sbo.org/uploads/files/Documents/CS-Mauritius-Sugar-cane-ENG.pdf)

[7] Figures derived inter alia from the Annual Report of The Eswatini Sugar Association 2020/2021 and extended interview with SSG consultant Mr Mike Ogg in Tshaneni, Eswatini on 27/9/2021.

by the early 2000s. The challenges of these SSGs were deepened when the prospects for sugar exports were greatly reduced by changes to EU sugar import policies in the early 2000s.

In response, a National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) for the Eswatini sugar sector was adopted in 2006 and, deriving from this, the EU Delegation facilitated *inter alia* an expert mission to identify so-called Accompanying Measures that would be funded by the EU to support the industry – in particular its SSGs – in reducing costs and enhancing yields, whilst readjusting its export focus to be within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) trading blocs.

1.1.3. The Action(s)

This report constitutes a contribution to the Final Review of the EU's expenditures of over eighty million euros from three budgets for 2009, 2010 and 2011, intended for expenditure over longer periods. More precisely, these were as follows:

- Swaziland Annual Action Programme (AAP) 2009 – Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Support to Sugarcane Small growers, Diversification and NAS Coordination (31/03/2010 – 31/03/2019, budget: EUR 16 500 000.00
- Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2010 – Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Road Transport Infrastructure (22/02/2011 – 21/06/2020, budget: EUR 12 057 000,00
- Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2011 – Improving the Competitiveness of the Sugar Industry and Reducing Poverty (28/03/2012 – 28/12/2021, budget: EUR 54 267 000.00

Whilst the above were the budget allocation dates, actual implementation entailing, besides training, *inter alia* the upgrading of roads, bridges and irrigation which took considerably longer, and when a Mid-term Review reported in 2016, much of this infrastructural and related work was still in progress.

Whilst the focus of the report is on SSG beneficiaries – given the statements of objectives in the 2009, 2010 and 2011 Financing Agreements – the importance of value chain analysis in appraising the reasons for indicator change – as identified in the Inception Report – will become apparent at several subsequent points in this review. To choose but one example, there is little point to an SSG growing sugarcane unless there is a sugar mill within reasonable distance of a grower, since the value that can be realised from such cane only materialises after crushing when prices are assigned (via the Sugar Association) to the sucrose recovered and to the fibrous stalk remains (termed bagasse).

It is in the context of such a value chain perspective that the specifics of the Actions adopted become possible to appreciate, for instance the building of bridges and roads to shorten distances between SSGs and mills, because in general, the costs of delivering cane to mills are costs that SSGs (and growers more generally) have to bear.[8] As is further elaborated in sections to follow, numerous roads and bridges of this nature were funded out of the budget allocations under review here, as well as some schools for children in the newly established SSG areas, and irrigation equipment and training initiatives also drew from these budgets.

[8] There are some exceptions for longer distance growers where mills offer a transport subsidy to growers (personal communication, from Nontobeko Mabuza of the Eswatini Sugar Association in November 2021).

1.2. The scope of the evaluation

1.2.1. Objectives

The objectives of this Final Review were to provide:

- "An overall independent assessment of the past performance of the EU measures in the sugar sector, paying particular attention to its results measured against its expected objectives, and the reasons underpinning such results"; and
- "Key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve future Interventions" (ToR, p.3).

This evaluation is intended to serve accountability, decision-making, and learning and management purposes.

In assessing performance, it is important to understand not only what the interventions were but how they intended to achieve change. An interlinked Intervention Logic (IL) and Theory of Change (ToC) evidently served as strategic context and reference frame for the implementation of the EU-supported Eswatini Sugar programme and its Actions. In the documents provided/reviewed, these tools (IL and ToC) were mostly implicitly rather than explicitly stated.

As per the ToR requirements, however, the evaluation team have more explicitly unpacked the IL and ToC as summarised in ANNEX 4: INTERVENTION LOGIC / LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRICES. A distinction is made between various levels of intended impact and outcome, from the more general/overall to the immediate. The three main sources of information that have informed the reconstruction in ANNEX 5 are the Midterm Review Report (MTR), the three Financing Agreements (FAs) and the 2007 extensive EU document 'Identification Mission for an Infrastructure Improvement Programme in the Sugar Sector in Swaziland'. In summary, the core of the IL was in terms of ultimate outcome, that improved sugar sector efficiency and competitiveness was being aimed at, specifically though achieving the enhanced profitability of small-scale sugar cane growers, via enhanced transport infrastructure reducing transport costs and improved irrigation increasing grower's profitability.

For the evaluation, the IL also includes the classification of **intermediate** and **immediate outcomes**. As such, each defined key result is coupled to an immediate outcome, e.g., a new road or bridge, but it is the intermediate and/or ultimate outcomes which are often of greatest policy and programme evaluation interest. Methodologically, establishing measures of Overall Impacts for example Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at the highest level in the IL table is often difficult[9], whereas indicators at lower levels tend to be more precise. In any event, the evaluation team have paid specific attention to ensuring that the different levels of outcomes reflect the realistic timing of effect and impact of outputs and activities.

In accordance with the ToR provisions, the evaluation team proposed a set of Evaluation Questions (EQs) and Judgment Criteria (JCs) during the Inception Phase, and these were refined and approved by the EU Delegation to Eswatini. These EQs largely guided assessments whilst conducting documentary analysis during the desk phase[10], and also informed priorities during the field phase[11] as well as influencing the structure of the present Final Report.

[9] Actually, Eswatini's GDP (as already discussed) and Human Development Indexes (HDI) did improve significantly after the period of programme implementation (see for example the Human Development Report, Eswatini, 2020 0f the UNDP, but the extent to which this can be at least partially accounted for by the interventions under review is not simple to determine, as we will elaborate in sections to follow.

[10] Partly because discoveries through research in the Desk Phase led to following up on avenues not previously anticipated

[11] For example, what to observe, where and why

In selecting core EQs the team noted the ToR's emphasis upon:

1. **Five standard OECD DAC criteria**, namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency (i.e., programme performance), sustainability and impact.

2. **EU-specific criteria of added value and coherence**. The evaluation team proposes that the evaluation takes account of added value and coherence primarily at the intermediate and ultimate levels of the Intervention Logic.

3. **Mainstreaming**, where and when possible and relevant, of gender, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Leave No-One behind principle and rights-based approach.

The table in ANNEX 3: summarises the agreed EQs and related indicators and specifies/justifies their relevance with the aforementioned provisions of the ToR, as discussed above. The five fundamental EQs also took account of the issues and needs specified by stakeholders during the kick-off meeting, including the programme's impact upon the efficiency and comparative competitiveness of the Eswatini sugar sector. The evaluation team has given specific attention to ensuring that the approach to formulating the EQs was to ensure complementarity to – rather than duplication of - the work undertaken by the MTR. For example, the MTR was fairly detailed in its investigations into operational matters and the Project Management Unit (PMU) and related entities, and hence these internal aspects of efficiency were relatively well covered there. Comments on comparative perspectives on efficiency were therefore made where we could add additional value.

1.2.2. Limitations

To some extent, the final review process came late after the interventions, but on the other hand there was some virtue to this insofar as the impacts of such interventions take time to reflect in terms of SSG results. In addition, sustainability is often better assessed after a period of some years following such interventions. However, there are also some accompanying limitations, insofar as several of the people implementing the interventions had since moved on.

A second limitation is that, given the focus specifically upon SSGs and the relatively short time allocated to do the review, developing a fuller picture of the wider sugar value chain trends and possibilities for the sector was only partially possible. Nevertheless, a significant context for this Review is the 130-page *Study of the Swaziland Sugarcane Value Chain* initiated under the auspices of the EUD and published in 2017 (published after the Mid-term Review of 2016) and which contains much useful information and insight in relation to context.

In particular, it may be observed through a reading of that report that relationships between inputs and outputs in sugarcane growing, and relationships between outputs, prices and profitability, are not as simple as they might seem at first. Consequently, due care needs to be exercised with respect to understanding the reasons for performances of SSG indicators, as we explain at various points in the remainder of this Review.

2. ANSWERED QUESTIONS / FINDINGS

2.1. RELEVANCE

EQ1: To what extent has the programme been able to achieve benefits for final beneficiaries and target groups?

At the most macro-level, the overall objective of 'Improve Eswatini's social and economic goals' and on the indicator of Gross Domestic Product changes over time, the evidence is positive: GDP grew on average 2 percent per annum since the interventions[12], although proving how much EU-sponsored construction and the enhanced sugar sector contributed to this, is more complicated than is allowed for by the data. However, it is likely that enhanced sugar output played a significant role since exports of goods by Eswatini (of which sugar was a major component) rose strongly especially after 2012[13]. Eswatini sugar output increased substantially between 2012 and 2015, but the actual quantity of raw sugar exported decreased slightly from 614,850 MT in 2015/6 to 572,475 MT in 2019/2020, mainly as a result of reductions in exports to previous core markets in South Africa and the EU (but fortunately partly offset by major growth in exports to Kenya and made up for by growth in aggregate refined sugar exports from 25,915 MT in 2015/6 to 54,603 MT in 2019/20)[14].

In addition, the considerable expenditure on construction would have generated over a thousand construction jobs for several years, and enhancements in southern African road infrastructure is generally known to be one of the best single influencers of subsequently enhanced economic growth rates[15]. Along with this, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that: "between 1990 and 2019, Eswatini (Kingdom of)'s HDI value increased from 0.541 to 0.611, an increase of 12.9 percent"[16]. This performance would have been much better were it not for the substantial impact of HIV/AIDS upon life expectancy in Eswatini up to 2005[17]. In short, the macro-indicators suggest that the EU interventions could have been implicated in a significant period of socio-economic improvements in Eswatini.

At a more micro-level, the final beneficiaries and target groups of the EU interventions were the SSGs, and households associated with them, and all of the documented research and our interviews with key informants in Eswatini as well as field observations suggest that on this dimension the programme more than adequately met its objectives relating to SSGs (see also 4.3.i.b). Specifically, the profitability of SSGs was improved, contributing to their financial viability (e.g. in being able to pay off costs for initial investments in planting, fertilisation, weeding, etc).

In terms of documented research at a more micro-level regarding EQ1, a key indicator here is reduced transport costs for SSGs. There was some apparently conflicting evidence at the level of farmers on reduced costs of haulage. On the one hand, the Impact Evaluation Report on NAS of 2014 stated that: "The reduction in the haulage cost as a result of improved roads is yet to manifest. The mechanism to transfer the benefits gained by transporters and haulage companies as a result of good roads to farmer companies is yet to be developed" (p. 23).

[12] Kingdom of Eswatini, *GDP by economic activity and GDP by expenditure for Swaziland 2011-2018*

[13] Kingdom of Eswatini, *GDP by expenditure, implicit deflators*

[14] https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Sugar%20Annual_Pretoria_Swaziland_04-15-2020

[15] J Fedderke and Z Bogetic, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3989, August 2006

[16] http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/SWZ.pdf

[17] Ibid.

However, according to this NAS report, the increased costs of haulage partly reflected increased fuel prices[18] and other such input costs, as well as probably increased yields (this concurred with our own assessment). This last factor is relevant because the rising costs referred to in the 2014 Impact Evaluation Report are per hectare costs rather than per tonne, and yields are known to have increased during their period of study. This explanation (yield increases) would also be consistent with the same impact report's observation on p.27 that the profit margins of farmers per hectare increased during the same period.

Such an analysis would also be consistent with the observations of experienced agricultural advisors who worked with Eswatini SSGs before and after the EU interventions, as is elaborated further below. However, it is of course also true that EU-sponsored transport cost reductions would have been somewhat localised. Moreover, it should be noted that the costs and revenues structures of SSGs are regionally differentiated within Eswatini, according to a 2014 Business Sector Analysis done for the EU[19].

This being the case, more localised field observations and qualitative insights became important during the Field Phase to supplement what we had learned during the Desk Phase. Concerning changes to other costs, rising electricity costs (which are the second largest portion of costs after haulage) are shown in the existing research[20] to be a potential area for concern. However, unlike transport costs, reductions in electricity costs were not an explicit objective of the EU programmes under review, although in terms of sustainability implications they remain important, as is further elaborated on discussions on sustainability later.

2.2. Effectiveness

Regarding EQ1: another major objective of the Programmes under review was to enhance irrigation effectiveness for SSGs. It is widely known in the sugar industry that irrigation greatly improves farm yield and profitability[21]. In regard to evidence on the effectiveness of irrigation infrastructure, the best documentation consulted to date appears to exist on the Malkerns Canal case (financed however under EDF and not under EUD sugar programmes), although irrigation infrastructure was also supplied through the EU programmes under review in other regions, more usually via overhead irrigated piping and spray systems[22] which we elaborate upon in greater detail elsewhere in this report.

EU-sponsored overhead irrigation in Eswatini could have been a contributor to slightly improved yields in the later periods under review (from 101 MT 2013/4 to 103 MT in 2019/20), as is elaborated in numerous research reports on yield trends within the sugar industry[23]. In qualitative evidence, in terms of in-person interviews, there was not a single dissenting voice about significant benefits accruing to SSGs and associated households[24]. As the CEO of Eswatini Cane Growers put it, "half of our members would not

[18] This point is also made in the independent research of Nhlaga-Ndloovu and Nhamo *op cit* on Eswatini SSGs: "…transport and haulage costs increased from E1.70[1]/tonne/km in the year 2013/14 to E2.30/tonne/km in 2014/15. The increase in the fuel price meant an increase in the cost of sugarcane haulage, on farms, and an increase in costs associated with the delivery of sugarcane at the mill and input supplies needed for general on-farm activities resulting in reduced net income for farmers in the study area.".

[19] Study by NAS TA Business Unit, *Business Sector Analysis (BSA) 2013/4, Smallholder Growers in Swaziland, Farmer Company Sector*, November 2014.

[20] Study by NAS TA Business Unit, *Business Sector Analysis (BSA) 2013/4, Smallholder Growers in Swaziland, Farmer Company Sector*, November 2014.

[21] "With suitable conditions of adequate temperature and sunlight, cane grows in direct proportion to the amount of water available. For each 100 mm of soil water used by the crop, approximately ten tonnes per hectare of cane is produced."(Irrigation-Manual-F-LowRes2.pdf (sugarresearch.com.au). https://sugarresearch.com.au/sugar_files/2017/02/Irrigation-Manual-F-LowRes2.pdf)

[22] See pp 15-17 of *Mid-Term Evaluation for the AMSP/AAP 2011 for the National Adaptation Strategy Focal Sector Sugar in Swaziland*, EUD Eswatini (no date given on report but assumed 2016); and interviews with Key Informants.

[23] See for example USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Eswatini Sugar Annual, Rapid Expansion of Eswatini Sugar Industry Continues, USDA, 2019.

[24] Team Leader interviews (in date order) with D Pringle, D Renshaw, M Ogg (all technical agricultural specialists who have dealt with Eswatini SSGs during early September 2021), Eswatini irrigation expert R Brown on 19/9/2021, with EUD and Eswatini Government representatives at meeting on 20/9/2021; discussion with CEO of Eswatini Canegrowers Association Dr Sipho Nkhambule 20/9/2021; interview with Ms Fumani Ndlovu previously assisting EO on project now Director of a Youth NGO on 23/9/2021; interview with Mr Barry Nxumalo of Eswatini Canegrowers Association on 23/9/2021; interview with Mr Ndlovu of Eswatini Sugar Association at Simunye on 27/9/2021; extended interview with SSG consultant Mr M Ogg at Tshaneni of 27/9/2021 and interview with Royal Eswatini Sugar's Mr Mchawe Dlamini at Mhlume on 27/9/2021.

be here today without EU support in the past". The more systematic research on secondary sources for this review also corroborates the collective stakeholder impressions reported above[25].

In terms of the team's online survey of Key Informants and individual farmer studies, similarly positive comments were made on the impacts on beneficiaries, as is reflected in ANNEX 8: REPORT ON SMALLHOLDER SUGARCANE FARMERS SURVEY AND KEY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION RESULTS to this report. Of course, there was nuance on detail, but on aggregate, the responses reflected recognition of major EU contributions in this regard.

There were some very strong statements by Key Informants on the extent of beneficiary gains over time, for example:

- "The EU's contribution to the Eswatini sugar industry was very positive. Before they came most small farmers were not able to afford development costs and pay off their loans" (Former SSG advisor now Youth NGO Director, Manzini, 23 September 2021).
- "I have been working with SSGs in Eswatini for 21 years. When I was first doing this, there was real poverty here and some of these programmes were conceived as poverty alleviation programmes. People were then worried about their children's school fees. Now they are paying for university education, many people have cars, and you can see from houses etc it has been totally transformed in these rural areas, The EU intervention catalysed this. These successes are not widely advertised" (Agricultural Scientist, Tshaneni, 27 September 2021)
- "I was here before the EU intervention. Growers have benefited immensely by the funds" (Agricultural Scientist, Mhlume, 27 September 2021).
- "During the EU time yes, the roads helped but they were also particularly involved in training growers, and this really helped a lot" (Extension Services Manager, Simunye, 27 September 2021).

These qualitative assessments correspond to more systemic quantitative assessments as reported elsewhere in this Review. In summary, in terms of intended beneficiary gains, the field evidence was strongly positive, and supported by observations in the farming areas of the quality of schools and school clothing, food that people were eating, and other similar indicators (see also 4.3.iv.a).

Having said this, there is one area of concern in that, whilst the EU intervention was initially successful in reducing the transportation costs of SSGs, evidence from a survey conducted by the team in the north shows that eleven out of the twelve had experienced increasing costs of cane haulage since 2006, with such costs currently rising at about 5% per annum. These rises (which are in line with general inflation) are corroborated by other independent research reported elsewhere in this Review[26].

2.3. Efficiency

EQ2: How efficient was programme delivery?

In relation to EQ2 at the most macro-level and in terms of comparative efficacy and impact, it is possible to benchmark Eswatini SSG enhancements in terms of international comparative cases. There exists a substantial literature on support for cane growing SSGs inter alia in Malawi, Zambia and South Africa[27].

[25] For example , the 2017 Value Chain study done by Hulla Human Dynamics for EUD

[26]For example Nhlaga-Ndloovu and Nhamo *op cit*

[27] Landell Mills (2012) *Final Evaluation of the Accompanying Measures for the Sugar Protocol countries – Zambia,* EUD, Zambia; Landell Mills, (2013) *END OF TERM EVALUATION OF THE ACCOMPANYING MEASURES FOR SUGAR 2007 IN MALAWI,* EUD, Malawi, and J.J McCarthy (2018) *TONGAAT HULETTS SUGAR AND JOBS FUND SUGAR CANE DEVELOPMENT (JF3/1728) FINAL REVIEW REPORT,* Jobs Fund, Pretoria. More generally see https://www.agricane.com/small-scale-grower-developments

Having reviewed this material, our conclusion is that the Eswatini Additional Measures level of financial support have been comparatively generous; for example, Zambia received only 6 million euros and Malawi somewhat over 5 million euros[28]. However, the evidence is that these quite small grants achieved barely measurable impacts, whereas in the Eswatini case, quite strong measurable impacts were achieved. In that sense, the Eswatini programmes were comparatively more efficient.

At an intermediate level, the MTR was better placed than the Final Review team in terms of fieldwork to evaluate operational efficiencies, since MTR work was able to monitor the programme in progress. They returned a broadly positive report on operational efficiencies. This was corroborated by our interviews in September 2021 with former employees within or consultants to the programme in Eswatini. They commented that, in retrospect the level of practical project management efficiencies was of the highest standard that they had encountered, and the consultant firm Human Dynamics and their staff were for example complimented in this regard[29].

Furthermore, objective indicators of efficiencies are the observations that, several years after completion, there remains a very high quality of transportation and irrigation infrastructure installed with EU funding (see illustrations in ANNEX 5:).

In terms of responses from the online survey of Key Informants, the responses indicated little criticism of the programme's efficiency, although sometimes a lack of synchronicity with government was noted (ANNEX 8:).

2.4. Impact

EQ3: How much more competitive is the Eswatini sugar sector?

As we observe in later discussions under Sustainability, Eswatini's global competitiveness in sugar is being demonstrated with its recent export successes in especially the wider African market, despite policy measures introduced to curtail exports its two core markets in South Africa and the EU (and, arguably, in the former case policy mounting pressures to reduce Eswatini exports implicitly reveal Eswatini's competitiveness *vis a vis* South African producers).

Looking at it within SADC context, one way of answering questions on Eswatini competitiveness is through listening to several independent agricultural specialists familiar with the sugar industry as a whole and SSGs in particular both in Eswatini and with other SADC countries. Such specialists have in fact been specifically interviewed by the team on the question of the comparative competitiveness of Eswatini's sugar value chain. In terms of responses from these experienced independent agricultural specialists[30], the main themes of response have been:

- The observation that Eswatini sugarcane SSGs had been struggling financially around a decade or more ago, and that there had been various interventions to assist them; and that the challenges faced by SSGs were quite similar to those faced by SSGs elsewhere in southern Africa. However, it was confirmed that the EU had done some major infrastructural and agricultural management enhancement investments in support of Eswatini SSGs since then, notably training, roads, bridges, canals and irrigation; and that especially the training had been effective and, at the level

[28] Landell Mills, (2012, 2013), *op cit.*

[29] Interview Ms Ndlovu.

[30] Those interviewed were Mr Duncan Pringle, AndisaAgri CEO with 40 years' experience supporting SSGs in Southern Africa including Eswatini (the latter in 2007, 2013 and 2018); Mr David Rendall, independent agricultural consultant, formerly worked in Eswatini for ten years (now in New Zealand) did a series of missions for IFAD on the LUSA project and 4 years with EU as an ESWADE advisor and advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture; also part of UNOPS team assisting in Eswatini. He was part of EU team designing the EU interventions under Review here; and Mr Mike Ogg and agricultural scientist with thirty years of experience of supporting sugarcane SSGs in southern Africa who began working in Eswatini in 1999.

of roads and bridges, the EU interventions had positive effects, especially two bridges had significant impacts upon reduced transport costs.

- The SSF (small-scale farmer) grants facilitated by EU were also critical to impact success. Many were previously struggling, and larger scale farmers were reportedly waiting for them to fail to buy them out. The EU grants made a huge difference to enable some 200 SSFs to survive – many were at significant risk before. EU business management support was also helpful. Business management mentoring assisted especially younger people to rise within the hierarchy of SSG producers. There was also a Development Planning Process, which included an important story about taking national land, retiring it back to the chiefs, and then reallocating back on a more egalitarian basis.

- Also, in relation to EQ3, agricultural scientists commented that whilst the EU Accompanying Measures were successful in terms of the infrastructural contributions towards making the Eswatini sugar industry more competitive, there were – in some of their minds – ambiguities about the beneficiaries of such competitiveness. For example, some argued that irrigation was technically successful, but the irrigation initiatives had the effects of expanding the areas of land under cane and increasing yields generally. This, some argued, could have led to declining overall prices for sucrose delivered to mills and, as such, partially undermined SSG cost advantages gained for example through reduced transport costs. The weakness in such an argument, however, is that it assumes Eswatini sugar production, milling and pricing as a closed economic system whereas demand forces are mainly beyond Eswatini's borders, and prices likewise are determined mainly outside. Thus their hypothesis was difficult to verify with the available evidence. Moreover, even if there was such evidence, any such reduction in price could have also been passed on to local consumers and international buyers, the last-mentioned of which appear to be increasingly buying Eswatini sugar on a delivered price/quality basis.

Another dimension of competitiveness is what economists refer to as comparative and competitive advantages – whether a region's attributes place it in a strong position relative to other regions in producing a particular commodity. The north-east corner of Eswatini especially, but also the southeast, have long been prominent areas of irrigated sugar cultivation in southern Africa. Their flat, fertile soils and rivers together with warm temperatures have offered ideal contexts for such cultivation. In the northeast, two mills – one at Simunye and the other at Mhlume (both owned by the Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation or RES) indicated by red dots on the map in ANNEX 5: Figure 13 – crush the majority of Eswatini's cane. The large areas of sugarcane between these mills, long cultivated by RES and other large growers, constitute some of the most extensive carpets of irrigated sugarcane agriculture evident anywhere in southern Africa (see ANNEX 5 Figure 11). The remainder of cane is crushed at a mill at Big Bend in the southeast, where irrigated sugar cultivation has also been practiced even longer than in the north, with the mill being established there in 1956. In that case, the Great Usutu River was the original key water source for irrigation, whereas in the northeast, the Mbuluzi and Komati Rivers played similar roles.

The three mills, however, had greater crushing capacity than even the initial ten thousand plus hectares of corporate irrigated agriculture could supply. Nevertheless, as the areas of cane grown expanded including via SSGs, even at the end of September 2021 (just before the most intensive harvesting) a sign outside the most recently built (if not equipped) of the three mills (Simunye) reflected that over a hundred and fifty thousand tonnes of sugar had been produced there in the year so far (ANNEX 5 Figure 12). To put this in comparative perspective, this is about the same amount produced by a typical South African mill such as Darnall or Gledhow in the space of an entire year[31].

The high throughput at such mills is partly a result of additional cane supply made possible through additional supply by SSGs recently established to the west of the traditional corporate farms. This

[31] www.kzntransport.gov.za/public_trans/freight_databank/kzn/industries/sugar_distribution/index_xml.html

situation contrasts with problems reported in adjacent KwaZulu-Natal in September 2021, where the mills were reportedly unable now to crush SSG cane[32]. In other words, in comparative and competitive advantage terms, the Eswatini value chain is both strong in balance.

In terms of fieldwork, several areas of cane cultivated by SSGs in both northeast and southeast zones were inspected on site by the Team Leader and farming practices were found to be of a very high standard, with very good weed control for young cane growth, irrigation systems in good working order, no evidence of diseases, etc. One example here (in the north) would be Farmers' Associations undertakings between Sihhoye and Tshaneni (ANNEX 5 Figure 14) which form part of an extensive complex of SSG growing in that area.

Apart from irrigation infrastructure, roads and bridges upgraded and/or installed in the area with EU funds and were found to be in good condition and playing important roles in minimising transport costs and in general facilitating access in Eswatini's north, which decades ago was reportedly a weak feature of the region[33].

Fieldwork in the south-eastern LUSIP area included visiting most areas of SSG activity there, examining current farming practices, irrigation practices and the quality of physical infrastructure including roads and bridges that were either installed or upgraded drawing upon EU funds (bearing in mind that this infrastructure absorbed most of the funds). The quality of farming, irrigation and the condition of the roads and bridges were also found to be of a very high standard. The same is true of schools established/upgraded in the areas using EU funds, with signboards remaining demonstrating EU contributions, and with evident widespread use and high standards of maintenance by the government and local community.

The photographs in ANNEX 5: MAPS & PHOTOS (taken on 22/9/2021 by the Team Leader) give some indications of these qualities in the areas between the towns of Siphofaneni and Big Bend in the map in ANNEX 5 Figure 3 in those areas southwards of the MR8 road shown on that map, these areas comprising the bulk of farming within the Lower Usutu Irrigation Programme (LUSIP).

One of the widely acknowledged most important pieces of infrastructure funded by the EU, the bridge across the river at Siphofaneni, shown in a photo in ANNEX 5 Figure 5 taken midway across bridge. This bridge facilitated connections between the MR8 at Siphofaneni and the SSG farming areas astride the upgraded road to St Philips (this upgrading was also funded by the EU). The quality of that bridge and the road to St Philips were amongst the highest the Team Leader had encountered in the whole of Eswatini and are used by the wider community and not just farmers, with many private cars and taxis using them, as well as children using the road as a thoroughfare to schools also funded by the EU..

Although it is not as widely used as the EU-sponsored Dvokolwako bridge in the north, reportedly, the Siphofaneni bridge has been the recipient of a prize for design and execution excellence[34], a report that would certainly be congruent with the team's field observations on it. Along the newly resurfaced road from the Siphofaneni bridge towards St Philips were numerous farming areas and several cane replanting areas were advertised as being supported by EU funds (ANNEX 5 Figure 6). The quality of cultivation and weeding remains high.

In the southeast, irrigation equipment supported by the EU and operated by SSGs were operational everywhere and in good order, once again. Such irrigation greatly increases yields. Reportedly however, the electricity costs of operating such irrigation systems have been rising and constitute a significant sustainability challenge, which is a matter that we return to later in our report.

[32] Report in Eswatini Observer newspaper, September 27, 2021

[33] Interviews Nxumalo, Stevens, Ogg

[34] Interview with former EU-supported project team member Ms Fumani Ndlovu, Manzini 23/9/2021

On the dimension of diversification, qualitative field observations of this in the south were not extensive (however see for example Figure 10 in ANNEX 5). Nevertheless, feedback from online interviews were that some former exclusively sugar growers in the south were rapidly partially shifting to bananas, for financial reasons. On the other hand, and in more general terms, it was widely acknowledged that the EU interventions had greatly contributed towards securing a strong sugar role for SSGs and the value chain as a whole in the south. In the words of one respondent: "the objective was met, new cane development area of about 1300 hectares for small scale farmers were achieved. In addition, sugarcane area that was low yielding because of old ratoons was replanted to boost yields. Increased cane area and cane yield means factory capacity is fully utilised as the factory expansion in 2011 had not been fully utilised because of the slow development of cane area over the years. Therefore, fixed production cost of a tonne of sugar reduces with increased cane crushed increasing competitiveness of the sugar industry"[35].

Outside of the two (north-eastern and south-eastern) regions discussed above, there was also expenditure in the Malkerns area, where there is medium scale mixed farming including sugar. As was explained in our Desk Note, the Malkerns Canal was only partly financed out of the EU/Eswatini sugar budgets, but our field inspections in the area confirm (i) that the canal is in very good operational condition as of September 2021 (see Figure 17 in ANNEX 5) and (ii) that it is used to irrigate substantial tracts of medium-scale sugar farming, which are an important part of the Eswatini sugar value chain as a whole.

Given the likely high costs of cane haulage in the Malkerns area (it is a long distance from mills), there is more crop diversification than for example in the LUSIP areas. Despite transport subsidies, the distance of cane from the mills was reported by farmers in the area to be a factor in their reduction in sugarcane cultivation[36]. Other factors relate to better climate adaptation and prices for other crops. Macadamia trees for example are evident and reportedly a growing land use here[37] (also more drought resistant than cane), and pineapples are an important crop alternative. Elsewhere in Eswatini amongst SSGs, the transport subsidy combined with security of demand for the sugarcane product likely go a long way towards explaining a lack of crop diversification practices.

There are fruit canning and fruit juice factories in the Malkerns area reflecting part of the longer sugar value chain in Eswatini; and in the nearby Matsapa industrial area there is a relatively unique – in world terms – soft-drink essence factory which relies upon cheap Eswatini sugar to produce globally competitive ingredients for some of the world's most recognised soft-drink brands.

EQ4: How well were the specific objectives of the programme and its projects met, and why?

A specific objective in terms of impact was that of diversification. On diversification, which was an agreed objective of the relevant AAPs, there is evidence that SSGs have been doing this extensively, whether encouraged by EU programmes or not. An analytical report based on their surveys of Eswatini SSGs recently by Mhlanga-Ndlovu & Nhamo (2016) for example noted that "… the small-scale farmers have engaged in the diversification of farming systems that include livestock farming, growing food crops and other cash crops for farm gate sales to make additional income". However, apart from anecdotal evidence on diversification by SSGs specifically encouraged by EU programmes[38], we are not aware of more systematic evidence of an overt EU role in that regard.

Reportedly, the EU is sometimes 'blamed' for prioritising sugar cane and, in the process, implicitly financing the reduction of grazing land, and land allocated to other crops, especially so in areas under the LUSIP programme. However, it should be noted that whilst cattle and beef are an important part of Eswatini's rural economy, that sector is considerably less labour intensive than irrigated sugar, which has

[35] Interview 3, online survey

[36] Discussion with Farmer Hulley (previous Swaxziland Sugar Association Chair), 30/9/2021 in Malkerns.

[37] Discussion with Farmer Hulley op cit

[38] For example the video https://www.facebook.com/European-Union-in-Swaziland-248831481951665/videos/eu-helps-rehabilitate-malkerns-canal/644273735740769/.

average labour inputs of 10 workers per hectare[39] versus substantially lower rates for cattle husbandry[40]. The question of other crops as alternatives remains relevant, however, since vegetables for example are usually more labour-intensive than sugar.

On other aspects of the more specific objectives of the EU's Eswatini sugar programme, the core of these entailed physical interventions like building/upgrading roads and bridges to reduce transport costs, and installing irrigation equipment to increase yields, both of which led to enhanced profitability.

An 'Identification Mission for an Infrastructure Improvement Programme in the Sugar Sector in Swaziland' report was completed in 2007 with regard to the proposed physical interventions, most of whose proposals were in fact funded out of the budget lines under evaluation here. In that report, there was a motivation for eight roads/bridges interventions, justified in terms of transportation costs savings for farmers/SSGs. Table 7.2 in that report entitled 'Farmers, Hectares and Haulage Cost Savings' reasonably calculated that "the total quantifiable transport costs savings from the eight roads projects are E4 245 516/year and the total number of hectares of sugar cane that will benefit from these roads will be 8 964 ha".

Two bridges, that at Siphofaneni (in the south), and that at Dvokolwako (in the north) were projected to be the greatest contributors to these savings. The evidence we have gathered cannot exactly corroborate these projections, but they do appear to be of the right order of magnitude. In addition, there were other benefits, as will be apparent from our observations below.

In terms of social infrastructure, several high-quality EU-supported schools were viewed in SSG areas. They were all of a high standard and evidently operating well (an example is shown in ANNEX 5 Figure 9).

2.5. Sustainability

EQ5: To what extent will the impacts and benefits be sustained over time, and why?

An important part of the answer to this question rests upon the comparative quality of sugar cultivation, especially amongst SSGs. As our observations above suggest, on this score Eswatini (and its SSGs) appear to be doing very well. From our field work in September 2021, compared to our five decades of previous experience of the sugar industry elsewhere in southern Africa and Mauritius, observed standards are high and this impression is corroborated by agricultural scientists working there[41].

Overall standards of sugar farming and milling in Eswatini as described above is evidently making Eswatini more competitive in global sugar markets. For example, a recent report (referred to shortly) reflects that – despite it being thousands of kilometres away from Eswatini – the sugar producing country of Kenya relies heavily on Eswatini sugar imports, based largely upon Eswatini's growing record/reputation for high quality sugar at a competitive price. The Times of Eswatini Newspaper of 19 September 2021[42] carried a substantial report on these exports and showed that Eswatini recently 'delivered nearly seventy thousand tonnes p.a. to Kenya'[43], by comparison with second placed Zambia

[39] Dryland cultivation of sugar uses less labour but some comparative figures for adjacent KwaZulu-Natal are discussed inter alia by Nkosingiphile Samuel Zulu, Melusi Sibanda and Bokang Stephen Tlali in their research article, Factors Affecting Sugarcane Production by Small-Scale Growers in Ndwedwe Local Unicipality, South Africa, *Agriculture* 2019, 9, 170; doi:10.3390/agriculture9080170.

[40] See for example the article by Oluwaseun Samuel Oduniyi , Theresa Tendai Rubhara and Michael Akwasi Antwi , Sustainability of Livestock Farming in South Africa. Outlook on Production Constraints, Climate-Related

Events, and Upshot on Adaptive Capacity, *Sustainability,* 2020, 12, 2582; doi:10.3390/su12072582

[41] Interviews Ogg, Dlamini.

[42] Article entitled 'Eswatini sells over 200 000 tonnes of sugar to Kenya'.

[43] According to comment from Nontobeko Mabuza there was some imprecision of terminology in the news article in that the figures referred to were allocations rather than actual sales.

with forty-one thousand tonnes, and third-placed Mauritius with thirty-six thousand tonnes. Other well-known sugar producing African countries nearby to Kenya were exporting much less to them, suggesting a very professional and competitive sugar industry in Eswatini which the EU has contributed greatly towards.

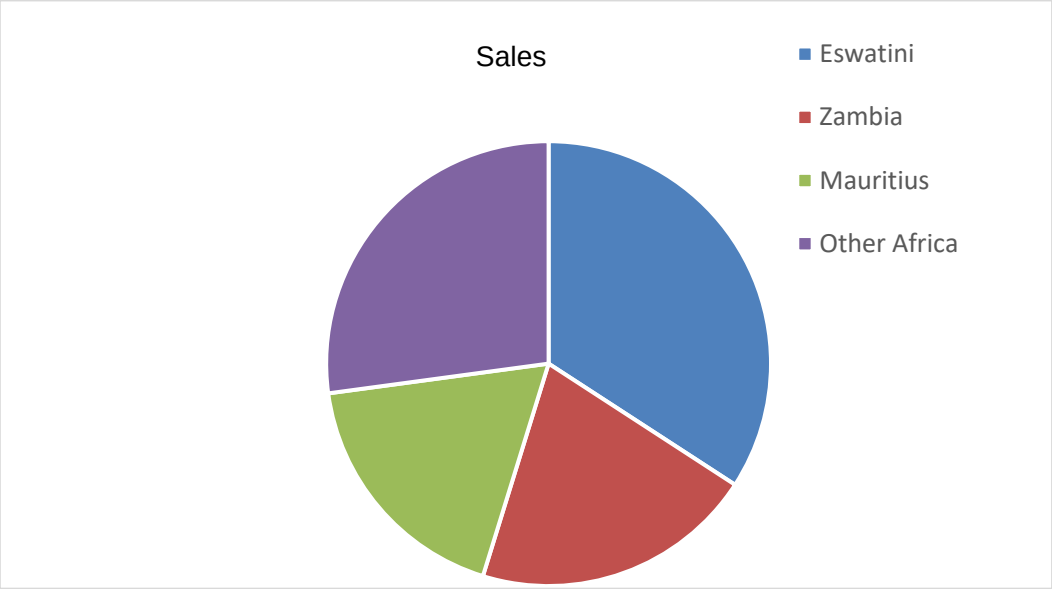

Figure 2 Proportionate shares of 2020/1 of sugar allocations by Kenya

Source: the Times of Eswatini newspaper, 19 September 2021

Indeed, a further dimension of sustainability is that Eswatini has successfully switched from dependence upon exports to Europe to most exports within the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) area, which in 2021 comprised 62% of all Eswatini sales (SACU is comprised of Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa)[44].

Given that sugar is one of the few economic sectors that Eswatini has global comparative advantages in, compared to most African countries closer to Kenya (several of which, like Zambia or Ethiopia are much larger and more economically diversified), the EU has therefore not been participating in a zero-sum game within the COMESA trade block with its relatively strong support for Eswatini sugar. Rather, it has supported the country's latent potentials and specific comparative advantages within the COMESA bloc.

A great deal of the interview responses amongst Key Informants focused upon sustainability, which is perhaps not surprising given that the programmes under review here were completed several years ago. There were many themes here, but the overall collective tone was positive, with a sub-set of concerns about climate change, some aspects of rising costs, and management or governance concerns in respect of SSGs.

To begin with the broad consensus of a positive nature on sustainability, there was not one Key Informant amongst those engaged by the Team Leader before and during the Field Phase who did not volunteer that they saw a positive future for the Eswatini sugar industry. This was a relatively unexpected finding as sugar is not a fashionable industry in global terms on the health, environmental and marketing fronts.

There has been growing pressure to reduce sugar consumption on health grounds in many of the richer countries accompanied by so-called 'sugar taxes' in these, on the assumption that it contributes *inter alia* to obesity. In environmental terms, sugar cultivation is sometimes criticised by environmentalists as contributing towards so-called 'green deserts' (with low biodiversity); and on the marketing front, many African and Caribbean countries that were previously reliant upon sugar exports, have been finding their

[44] Eswatini Sugar Association, Integrated Annual Report 2020/21

traditional export markets closed off under pressure from competitive producers elsewhere (in the last twenty years or so).

Notwithstanding this set of pressures, whereas sugar production in adjacent countries like South Africa has been reduced or static in the past two decades, in Eswatini it has gone from strength to strength and is widely expected to have a positive future. Perhaps counter-intuitively, this has also gone hand-in-glove with agricultural diversification in Eswatini, the latter partly in response to climate change.

Climate change was indeed the most frequently mentioned of sustainability challenges amongst Key Informants, being mentioned by over a half of them[45]. Having said this, there was not complete clarity amongst all those discussing it as to what the exact effects would likely be or how serious they were to the future of the industry. A close second in terms stakeholder-identified challenges for the future were rising costs, particularly electricity costs[46]. In one case, it was reported that an SSG had encountered a monthly electricity account of E700 000 (due to pumping costs for irrigation)[47]. As part of a more general pattern, another experienced analyst of SSG costs reports that electricity comprises 30% of SSG costs in 2021, by comparison to 15% a decade ago[48].

An interest in the prospects for solar energy solutions was often expressed by these same people, although solutions to financing it were flagged as an immediate challenge[49]. There is some useful case study material based on SSG cases in Eswatini that shows potential solutions to solar financing challenges[50]. This set of mentions about electricity costs is paralleled by the series of systematic studies of SSG cost's structure trends reviewed *inter alia* in the Desk Note for the present Review.

A close third in terms of frequency of mentions about challenges to sustainability going forward was that of management or governance issues, mentioned also by close to half of all Key Informant interviews conducted by the Team Leader[51]. There were somewhat different interpretations offered about the specific nature of these challenges[52] but widespread reports of intra-group conflicts for example over alleged kickbacks in procurement, through to varying concerns about relationships with chiefs and/or trends towards modernisation of business practices.

None of these concerns are unique to Eswatini however, and similar concerns (at least about rising input costs and governance) have been reported by SSGs for example from neighbouring South Africa[53]. Given also the evidently rising comparative global competitiveness of the Eswatini sugar industry, on balance the sustainability aspects of the EU interventions into the sugar value chain in Eswatini and its benefits for SSGs seem to be good.

This is supported by the physical quality and durability of EU-funded infrastructure installed, although there have been a few comments about localised damages (e.g., melted tar patches due to burning tyres placed on roads during political protests) caused by recent events within Eswatini[54], which were also corroborated by field observations. Political instability in the future could be a factor influencing sugar sector sustainability.

[45] Amongst those mentioning it (in date order) were Messrs Ogg, Brown, Nkambule, Nxumalo, Ndlovu, Dlamini

[46] Mentioned in date order by Messrs Ogg, Brown, Nkambule,, Ms Ndlovu, Mr Ndlovu and Nxumalo.

[47] Interview, Mr Dlamini.

[48] Interview, Mr Ogg.

[49] This point was also made to us the Eswatini Canegrowers representatives on several occasions.

[50] RMI, *Company ABC Energy Project: Phase 1 Report*, RMI Tshaneni, *May 2021*

[51] Mentioned in date order by Messrs Rendall, Ogg, Nkambule, Ndlovu and Nxumalo.

[52] Interview Mr Ogg

[53] Interview with Mr Pringle and also reflected in the Team Leader's previous work with SSGs in the KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa.

[54] Interview Mr Nxumalo.

3. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The EU interventions under review here were in part a product of recommendations arising out of the Eswatini government's National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) for the Sugar Sector as elaborated in 2006. Possibly because of this, we therefore found no evidence of any incoherence regarding government policies[55] emerging from any of the key informant interviews; and miller or Eswatini Sugar Association representatives noted the strong complementarity of the EU interventions with their own programmes[56]. See also 4.3.vi.a.

In terms of EU value-added, numerous senior and widely experienced commentators pointed out that without the EU interventions most SSGs in Eswatini would have likely failed. This is also the view of the CEO of the Eswatini Canegrowers' Association and that of the consultant team for this Final Review. These conclusions are all the more important in the light of so many indicators that the SSGs are self-sustaining past the EU intervention, and contributing substantially towards a highly competitive sugar industry, no longer dependent upon the EU market and now a leading exporter into SADC and COMESA markets. With its slim government resources devoted to a wide range of national priorities, for example high HIV-AIDS infections and more recent COVID-19 challenges, the EU value-added was as high as any could have hoped for.

As has already been explained in Section 2, the programmes performed well on all the OECD-DAC criteria, and there was congruence with other EU programmes and mainstreaming, although these were more implicit than explicit in the results rather than in terms of apparent intentions. The MTR was better placed than the Final Review team to make comments on these aspects but did not report much in relation to them. Our own surveys suggest that gender strategies could have been more aggressively implemented (4.3.vii.d).The work of other evaluation researchers on SSGs in Eswatini also suggests that more could be done regarding gender equity in terms of beneficiaries, and that property relations are important in that regard. For example, the 2014 *National Adaptation Strategy First Round Impact Evaluation Report* stated that: "The women members (shareholders) of farmer companies were more empowered than non-members as they had better employment opportunities, more cash in hand, improved mobility, information and knowledge[57]". Other issues requiring attention in the future have already been discussed under Section 2.5 above (sustainability) and relate mainly to rising SSG input costs and climate change.

The ability to overcome such challenges to sustainability in the future will depend – in large part – on the overall economic and financial strength of the Eswatini Value Chain. At present it is strong, as has been discussed in Section 2 above. However, apart from sustainability vulnerabilities already discussed, a missing ingredient going forward could be in the area of future value-chain prospects, despite stakeholder protestations to the contrary[58]. For example, we asked the question 'will Eswatini follow other small, sugar-economy country trajectories like Mauritius and add a greater variety of revenue sources from the full stalk, such as electricity from mills sold into the national grid, ethanol, animal feeds, etc?' of several well-informed stakeholders and they referred to some electricity co-generation from mills, but mainly pointed to differences in regulatory environments in countries like Mauritius which made for more favourable prospects in deriving 'full value from the (cane) stalk'[59]. In our assessment, it would be prudent

[55] There were some comments from former EU deployees about sometimes difficult operational synchronicity with government , but they were not seen as major impediments.

[56] Interviews Mr Ndlovu, Mr Dlamini.

[57] NAS First Round Impact Evaluation Report, op cit p ii

[58] Feedback from interactions with EUD representatives and Eswatini Canegrowers and Eswatini Sugar Association members and other stakeholders through the fieldwork phase.

[59] Interview, Eswatini Canegrowers Association, 20 September 2021.

for the Eswatini government to prioritise working on such regulatory differences now, to ensure continued value-chain competitiveness of the Eswatini sugar industry into the future (see Section 4 to follow).

A further and possibly more politically complicated challenge lies in the direction of land tenure (see also 4.3.iii.b). Eswatini is hardly unique in an African context in respect to land tenure challenges, and in the interviews with key informants, they were not emphatic but rather ambiguous on their views on land tenure[60]. From a large variety of interactions during fieldwork in Eswatini, whilst the review team were strictly apolitical, it was difficult to avoid noticing the large number of respondents who commented on what they perceived as a problematic political context in the country; and, in certain instances, there was reference to actual or potential linkages of this to the sugar industry.

Whatever the merits of such observations, if any of this politicisation leads to material damage to Eswatini's value chain, the consequences for Eswatini's social fabric could be profound and tragic, given the wide spread of beneficiaries in that chain. Moreover, from an EUD perspective, the evidently greatly successful EU interventions in the sector (which are rare in the African context) could be turned from an important success story which still needs to be properly told, into one more sad story of the vulnerability of African development aid to African political instabilities.

[60] Most respondents did not mention tenure as an issue, but management issues derived from collective ownership were seen as possible impediments. Mr Ogg visualised solutions lying in the direction of marketisation and trading of shares in collectively owned and operated farms.

4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Lessons learnt

The EU's interventions into the Eswatini sugar sector have been unusually successful in comparative terms. There appear to be three centrally important lessons of these interventions for EU practices more generally throughout Africa:

- Build upon economic sectors in which in an African context the country has distinct Competitive and Comparative Advantages.
- Focus upon assisting vulnerable but potentially successful smaller parties in building a highly competitive agri-value chain and which is labour-intensive in nature.
- Commit a level of resource that is sufficient to make a measurable impact, and which has multiplier effects throughout the sector value chain and even beyond it.

4.2. Conclusions

The EU intervention in the sugar sector in Eswatini, especially those components under review here, were very successful according to all OECD-DAC criteria, and the EU value-added was critical. Climate considerations were built into project design by emphasising irrigated agriculture although gender mainstreaming was less evident. There are/were many women beneficiaries, but in line with widespread African customs and land tenure practices it was men who were the more evident beneficiaries.

Overall, in terms of the key socio-economic indicators of impact and sustainability it is difficult to imagine a more successful intervention in Eswatini. Nevertheless, there are sustainability considerations to be watched. Table 2 below summarises the key elements of success.

Table 2 Main conclusions

#	Conclusion	Reasons	Transfer value
1	The EU's interventions in the sugar sector were comparatively very successful in southern African context.	A level of resource was committed that passed thresholds for measurable impacts. The sector was well chosen for comparative/competitive advantages in regional context.	Applicable to other EUD interventions in Eswatini and elsewhere in Africa.
2	A focus on needy beneficiaries need not be inconsistent with economic growth prospects: that is EU support for a 'bottom tier' can have 'trickle up' effects within a value chain.	The beneficiaries were part of a potential robust and competitive value chain and were trained and supported to make valued contributions to it.	Applicable both to other interventions in Eswatini and throughout Africa.
3	Sustainability prospects are enhanced when building upon	Without good basic agricultural management in a promising sector, additional sustainability	Applicable both to other interventions in Eswatini and throughout Africa.

	sound development fundamentals.	challenges (climate resilience, green energy etc. are not affordable).	

4.3. Recommendations

The programmes under review have drawn to a close, and the EU Delegation has moved on to other priorities now including horticulture. It would be reasonable to assume that positive lessons learned from the sugar sector will be carried forward on these new domains. However, there are two specific recommendations that must be made regarding the sugar sector itself:

1. **Recommendation 1:** To communicate the success of the EU interventions in the Eswatini sugar sector, and the reasons for the success more widely, both within and outside Eswatini.
    - Implemented by: The EU Delegation to Eswatini
    - Priority: Short to Medium Term
    - Importance: High
2. **Recommendation 2:** To encourage and facilitate a shift to proven, cost-effective solar energy driven electricity systems for irrigation and household use in SSG areas.
    - Implemented by the EU Delegation to Eswatini
    - Priority: Short to Medium term
    - Importance: High

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE – PART A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- ### Policy background

Eswatini has a total population of approximately 1.2 million, is highly rural (77% of the total population), and it is classified as a middle-income country. However, due to its highly skewed income distribution, many of the economic and social indicators seem to belie this classification. Despite a relatively high per capita income of USD 5,708, giving it a ranking of 106 out of 181 countries, 69% of the population live on less than USD 1 per day. Eswatini's UN Human Development Index ranking has fallen from 103 in the 90's to 142 during the times of the interventions under the evaluation.

Eswatini has also the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world, which has led to a co-epidemic and resulted in the halving life expectancy from 56 years in 1086 to 32 years in 2007. In 2019, it was approximately 60 years. Over half of Eswatini's population is below 20 years old and estimations say that 144,000 are orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs). There is evidence that fundamental societal changes are taking place, with the majority of children (32%) being brought up by their mother or with no parent (28%) at all. Nuclear families are the minority (23%). This, coupled with the high unemployment rate (around 30%) has created serious concerns for the future.

Economically, Eswatini is highly dependent of South Africa, not only is the Emalangeni pegged to the South African Rand but South Africa accounts for 90% of Eswatini's imports, 60% of its export and 70% of its electricity.

Eswatini's economy contracted by an estimated 3.2% in 2020 after growing by 2.2% in 2019. Manufacturing declined sharply as export-oriented industries were constrained by temporary business closures, disruptions in global value chains, and weak demand. However, information and communication services performed well, due to increased demand for online services. Agriculture also posted marginal gains, thanks to favourable weather and continued investments. The fiscal deficit worsened to 8.6% of GDP in 2020, from 5.3% in 2019, prompting the government to approach international financial institutions for budget support. Gross public debt, which includes domestic arrears, rapidly rose to nearly 48% of GDP from 38% in 2019, well above the government's threshold of 35% of GDP. Authorities are committed to clearing domestic arrears, which remain high at about 5% of GDP.

The sugar industry is of critical importance to Eswatini's development, employing over 12,000 people and contributing 12% to GDP. Eswatini has a clear comparative advantage in the sector, ranking in the top-five global sugar producers in terms of efficiency.

Previously, Eswatini exported 120,000 tonnes (approximately 20% of annual production) to the EU under the Sugar Protocol, and a further 30,000 tonnes under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). To improve the industry's competitiveness, the government and the industry drafted the National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) in 2006. Under the NAS, the industry committed itself to investing over EUR 200 million in order to increase efficiency, diversify into new products (e.g. electricity co-generation, ethanol) and improve economies of scale by expanding refining capacity.

Presently, Eswatini exports about 600,000 tonnes of sugar, of which about 53% to SACU and 258,000 tonnes to the EU. The production cost ranges between 250 and 300 USD/tonnes being the third most competitive industry among the SACU sugar producers.

Smallholders currently produce 20% of the sugar cane in Eswatini. However, emergent smallholders have been particularly vulnerable to the lower sucrose prices, as they seek to

make the transition from rain-fed subsistence agriculture to the management of irrigated cane.

- **The Interventions to be evaluated**

Titles of the Interventions to be evaluated	• **Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2009 - Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Support to Sugarcane Small growers, Diversification and NAS Coordination** • **Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2010 - Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Road Transport Infrastructure** • **Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2011 – Improving the Competitiveness of the Sugar Industry and Reducing Poverty**
Budgets of the Interventions to be evaluated	• EUR 14,324,979.12 • EUR 10,038,632.93 • EUR 51,371,564.58
CRIS numbers of the Interventions to be evaluated	• DCI-SUCRE/2009/020-576 • DCI-SUCRE/2010/022-044 • DCI-SUCRE/2011/022-709
Dates of the Interventions to be evaluated	• Start: 31/03/2010 – End: 31/03/2019 • Start: 22/02/2011 – End: 21/06/2020 • Start: 28/03/2012 – End: 28/12/2021

- **Stakeholders of the Intervention**

The **Contracting Authority** of the interventions is the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD) who is the representative of the beneficiary country as well as the National Authorising Officer under the European Development Fund (EDF).

The MEPD is **the supervisor**; however, the relevant line ministries support specific components of the projects.

The Roads Department of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MoPW&T) participates in **on-site supervision**, and assist in the preparation of snagging lists. The MoPW&T approves the works prior to final acceptance at the end of the defects liability period, and will assume responsibility for future maintenance.

A **steering committee** was also set up to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the NAS projects. It meets at least twice a year and has representatives of the MEPD, the sugar industry and all relevant line ministries:

- The PS of MEPD, NAO, the contracting authority (Chairman),
- PS Ministry of Public Works and Transport (Alternative Chair),
- Ministry of Public Works and Transport.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives,
- Ministry of Finance,
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy,
- Eswatini Sugar Association (ESA),
- Eswatini Cane Growers Association (ECGA),
- CEO of Ubombo Mill,
- CEO of ESWADE.
- The Restructuring and Diversification Management Unit (RDMU)
- A representative of the Head of Delegation of the European Union

A **Technical Assistance Team (TAT)** was set up to assist the Beneficiary in the implementation of the project, providing:

1. Technical expertise tasks, including strategic advice with regards to the sugar sector, training and capacity building on project cycle management and EU procedures, implementation support, support to coordinate of stakeholders, setting up a monitoring and evaluation system, support on the integration of cross cutting issues.
2. Administrative, preparatory and ancillary tasks relating to planning, monitoring, reporting on project components, procurement and financial management.

OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

- Global objective

  Systematic and timely evaluation of its programmes and activities is an established priority of the European Commission. The focus of evaluations is on the assessment of achievements, the quality and the results of Interventions in the context of an evolving cooperation policy with an increasing emphasis on result-oriented approaches and the contribution towards the implementation of the SDGs.

  From this perspective, evaluations should look for evidence of why, whether or how these results are linked to the EU intervention and seek to identify the factors driving or hindering progress.

  Evaluations should provide an understanding of the cause and effect links among: inputs and activities, and outputs, outcomes and impacts. Evaluations should serve accountability, decision-making, and learning and management purposes.

- Specific objectives

  The main objectives of this evaluation is to provide the relevant services of the European Union with:

  - an overall independent assessment of the past performance of the EU measures in the sugar sector, paying particular attention to its results measured against its expected objectives, and the reasons underpinning such results;
  - key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve future Interventions.

  In particular, this evaluation will accurately capture the impact of EU assistance under the EU Sugar Accompanying Measures. Although the evaluation should consider policy documents at various levels (i.e. EU Strategy, MIPs, and AAPs) greatest weight should be given to monitoring the various Financing Agreements.

  The main user of this evaluation will be the Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Eswatini.

- Requested services, including suggested methodology

  a) Scope of the evaluation

  The evaluation will assess the Intervention using the six standard DAC evaluation criteria, namely: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. In addition, the evaluation will assess one EU specific evaluation criterion, which is:

  - the EU added value (the extent to which the Intervention brings additional benefits to what would have resulted from Member States' interventions only);

  The evaluation team shall furthermore consider whether:

  - gender, environment and climate change were mainstreamed;
  - the relevant SDGs and their interlinkages were identified;

- the principle of Leave No-One Behind and the rights-based approach methodology was followed in the identification/formulation documents and the extent to which they have been reflected in the implementation of the Intervention, its governance and monitoring.

b) Indicative Evaluation Questions

The specific Evaluation Questions as formulated below are indicative. Based on the latter and following initial consultations and document analysis, the evaluation team will discuss them with the Evaluation Manager and propose in their Inception Report a complete and finalised set of Evaluation Questions with indication of specific Judgement Criteria and Indicators, as well as the relevant data collection sources and tools.

Once agreed through the approval of the Inception Report, the Evaluation Questions will become contractually binding.

- Relevance

  i. Projects' designs (relevance and quality) consider the following:
  - Were the projects' concept/logic and designs optimal to achieve the desired objectives?
    - Assess the appropriateness of the Projects designs in relation to the problems to be resolved when the projects were designed, and at the time of the final evaluation.
    - Assess the appropriateness of the institutional focus at design stage
    - Were the projects rooted in and effectively integrated with national strategies?
  - Were relevant gender issues adequately addressed in projects' designs?
    - How was gender analysis of the context, sector, problem, stakeholders considered during the formulation of action
    - Evaluate the process of stakeholders' consultation leading to the formulation of the action, incl. role of relevant civil society organisations (CSO) working on gender Equality and women empowerment.
    - Was the action consistent with the national policies or international instruments on gender equality and relevant international human rights obligation? How? If not, why?
    - To what extent did the planned activities address the causes of gender inequality and discrimination and reach the relevant beneficiaries, including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged?

  ii. Assess the projects preparation processes (formulation, inception) and its products (logframes, objectively-verifiable indicators of achievement, Projects Operations Plans, Annual Work plans); whether projects documents include adequate guidelines for implementation of the projects.

  iii. Do the projects' objectives remain valid and relevant in projects in relation to the Government policy and the real needs of the intended beneficiaries? Did they result in strategic value added if they are achieved?

- Efficiency

  i. Review the performance of the management of the projects in terms of the quality of day-to-day management, including: (1) Financial System - Assess any bottlenecks in the system of financial management between donors, contracting authority and Implementation Partners. Also, adherence to EU regulations (procurement and procedures) (2) management of personnel,

information, property (3) timely report and document production (4) internal management and control mechanisms (5) respect for deadlines.

ii. Assess to what extent the costs of the projects have been justified by the benefits that have been generated.

iii. How efficient and cost effective is the current EU programmes approach to investment (grant versus loan ratio) in view of the country's developmental needs. What current weaknesses and opportunities exist in the current model and how can more support be integrated to improve the benefits.

iv. Review the quality of the projects; monitoring undertaken by the supervisory ministry, the projects management, beneficiaries, the contracting authority and the office of the EU. Do management systems, including M&E, reporting and financial systems function as effective management tools, integrate and use gender analysis, facilitate effective implementation of the projects, and provide sufficient basis for evaluating performance of the Projects?

v. To what extent are the actions effectively contributing to the creation of favourable conditions for advancing gender equality? Are resources (financial, time, people, technical and gender expertise) sufficient to address the gender inequalities? What services, infrastructures or/and goods are reaching men and women, boys and girls as a result of the actions?

- Effectiveness

i. Assess whether the planned benefits have been delivered and received, as perceived mainly by the key beneficiaries, contracting authority, EU and other concerned parties.
   - Assess any obstacles/bottlenecks/outstanding issues on the contracting authority and/or donor side that were limiting the successful implementation and results achievement of the projects.
   - Assess factors external to the projects that were affecting successful implementation and results achievements. To what extent did policies remain conductive to achieving intended results, including policy impact and replication of the lessons being learnt from project implementation?

ii. Review the performance of the technical assistance in carrying out their Terms of Reference. Comment on the quality and appropriateness of the short-term consultant assignments and their outputs, needs to commission short-term studies on specific issues e.g integration of AMIS in e-Gov strategy, role of insurance companies, management of pack houses, etc.

iii. Assess whether the balance of responsibilities between the various stakeholders were appropriate.
   - Were the projects' institutional and implementation arrangements suitable for the successful achievement of the projects' objectives or were there any institutional obstacles hindering the implementation or operations of the project? Among other issues, assess: Capacity of the implementing agency, including with respect to annual work planning, financial management and reporting, and M&E, Adequacy of technical and advisory support staffing.

iv. Assess whether any shortcomings were due to a failure to take account of crosscutting or overarching issues such environmental protection and climate change during implementation.

v. Has the governance of the Action taken care of its Gender Mainstreaming (GM) and Gender Equality (GE) objectives within the wider context of a

Rights-Based Approach and translated those objectives into specific actions and results? Were specific risks and challenges inherent to the achievement of GM/GE adequately taken into consideration and mitigated? How? What assumptions were made with regard to gender division of rights, labour, responsibilities, etc.? Were these assumptions accurate and relevant?

- Impact
  i. Examine to what extent the planned overall objectives have been achieved, and assess how far that was directly due to the projects.
  ii. Examine positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
  iii. What has been the role the private sector in the implementation of the programmes (input supply to processing level), and how can the involvement of the private sector and the civil society be improved?
- Sustainability
  i. Assess how far all stakeholders (including the private sector and the civil society) were consulted on the objectives of the projects from the outset, whether they agreed with them and remained in agreement throughout the duration of the projects.
  ii. Review and comment on the sustainability of the projects. This should include an analysis of the level of political support from the Government and an indication of whether the Government, implementing partners and other stakeholders are likely to continue funding any of the initiatives.
  iii. Assess the probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time i.e. in terms of systems, institutions, financing, and in terms of anticipated poverty reduction impact.
  iv. Are the actions promoting sustainable changes for gender equality and women empowerment? How? What more could have been done to promote greater sustainability with regard to GM/GE and changes in gender power relations? If so, how?
  v. Are planned exit/handover strategies appropriate and timely? How does this exit strategy address elements of GM/GE? To what extent and how were the local partners and different beneficiaries (including rights holders and duty bearers) involved in defining and implementing the exit strategy?

In addition to assessing the evaluation questions above, the team should analyse any other pertinent issues that need to be address.

- Required outputs

The evaluation process will be carried out in five phases:

i. Inception
ii. Desk
iii. Field
iv. Synthesis
v. Dissemination

The outputs of each phase are to be submitted at the end of the corresponding phases as specified in this synoptic table:

Phases of the evaluation	Key activities	Outputs and *meetings*
Inception Phase	• Initial document/data collection • Background analysis • Inception interviews • Stakeholder analysis • Reconstruction (or as necessary, construction) of the Intervention Logic, and/or description of the Theory of Change (based upon available documentation and interviews) • Methodological design of the evaluation (Evaluation Questions with judgement criteria, indicators and methods of data collection and analysis) and evaluation matrix	• *Kick-off meeting with the Contracting Authority and the Reference Group* • Inception report • Slide presentation of the Inception Report
Desk Phase	• In-depth document analysis (focused on the Evaluation Questions) • Interviews • Identification of information gaps and of hypotheses to be tested in the field phase • Methodological design of the Field Phase	• Desk Note • Slide presentation of key findings of the desk phase • *Meeting with Reference Group*
Field Phase	• Gathering of primary evidence with the use of interviews, focus groups, storytelling sessions, surveys, etc. • Data collection and analysis	• *Initial meetings at country level with* the steering committee and technical assistance team • Max 10 page Intermediary Note • Slide Presentation of key findings of the field phase • *Debriefing with the Reference Group*
Synthesis phase	• Final analysis of findings (with focus on the Evaluation Questions) • Formulation of the overall assessment, conclusions and recommendations • Reporting	• Draft Final Report • Executive Summary according to the standard template published in the EVAL module • Final Report • Slide presentation • *Meeting with Reference Group*
Dissemination phase	• Organisation of the final presentation seminar via teleconference to a broader group of stakeholders (notably involving relevant private sector, farmer's representative, other key stakeholders playing a role to develop the value chain, related investment, exports and jobs)	• *Final presentation seminar* tabling a leaflet describing important results or early signs of positive impacts of the actions, as identified during the evaluation

- **Inception Phase**

  This phase aims at structuring the evaluation and clarifying the key issues to be addressed.

  The phase will start with initial background study, to be conducted by the evaluators from home. It will then continue with a kick-off session via teleconference between the Contracting Authority and the Reference Group and the evaluators. Half-day presence of all evaluators is required. The meeting aims at arriving at a clear and shared understanding of the scope of the evaluation, its limitations and feasibility. It also serves to clarify expectations regarding evaluation outputs, the methodology to be used and, where necessary, to pass on additional or latest relevant information.

In the Inception phase, the relevant documents will be reviewed (see annex I).

Further to a first desk review of the political, institutional and/or technical/cooperation framework of EU support to Eswatini, the evaluation team, in consultation with the Evaluation Manager, will reconstruct or as necessary construct, the Intervention Logic of the Intervention to be evaluated.

Furthermore, based on the Intervention Logic, the evaluators will develop a narrative explanation of the logic of the Intervention that describes how change is expected to happen within the Intervention, all along its results chain, i.e. Theory of Change. This explanation includes an assessment of the evidence underpinning this logic (especially between outputs and outcomes, and between outcomes and impact), and articulates the assumptions that must hold for the Intervention to work, as well as identification of the factors most likely to inhibit the change from happening.

Based on the Intervention Logic and the Theory of Change the evaluators will finalise i) the Evaluation Questions with the definition of judgement criteria and indicators, the selection of data collection tools and sources, ii) the evaluation methodology, and iii) the planning of the following phases.

The limitations faced or to be faced during the evaluation exercise will be discussed and mitigation measures described in the Inception Report. Finally, the work plan for the overall evaluation process will be presented and agreed in this phase; this work plan shall be in line with that proposed in the present ToR. Any modifications shall be justified and agreed with the Evaluation Manager.

On the basis of the information collected, the evaluation team should prepare an Inception Report; its content is described in Chapter 5.

- **Desk Phase**

  This phase is when the document analysis takes place. The analysis should include a brief synthesis of the existing literature relevant to the Intervention.

  The analysis of the relevant documents shall be systematic and reflect the methodology developed and approved during the Inception Phase.

  Selected phone interviews with the programme management, the relevant EU services and key partners in Eswatini may be conducted during this phase to support the analysis of secondary sources.

  The activities to be conducted during this phase should allow for the provision of preliminary responses to each evaluation question, stating the information already gathered and its limitations. They will also identify the issues still to be covered and the preliminary hypotheses to be tested.

  During this phase the evaluation team shall fine-tune the evaluation tools to be used during the Field Phase and describe the preparatory steps already taken and those to be taken for its organisation, including the list of people to be interviewed, dates and itinerary of visits, and attribution of tasks within the team.

  At the end of the desk phase a **Desk Note** and a Slide Presentation will be prepared; its content is described in Chapter 5.

- **Field Phase**

  The Field Phase starts after approval of the Desk Note by the Evaluation Manager.

The Field Phase aims at validating/changing the preliminary answers formulated during the Desk phase and further completing information through primary research.

If any significant deviation from the agreed work plan or schedule is perceived as creating a risk for the quality of the evaluation or not respecting the end of the validity of the specific contract, these elements are to be immediately discussed with the Evaluation Manager and, regarding the validity of the contract, corrective measures undertaken.

In the first days of the field phase, the evaluation team shall hold a briefing meeting with the programme management, Delegation, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

During the field phase, the evaluation team shall ensure adequate contact and consultation with, and involvement of the different stakeholders; with the relevant government authorities and agencies. Throughout the mission the evaluation team will use the most reliable and appropriate sources of information, respect the rights of individuals to provide information in confidence, and be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments.

At the end of the field phase, the evaluation team will summarise its work, analyse the reliability and coverage of data collection, and present preliminary findings in a meeting with the programme management, the EU Delegation, and the Reference Group.

At the end of the Field Phase an **Intermediary Note** and a Slide Presentation will be prepared; its content is described in Chapter 5.

- **Synthesis Phase**

This phase is devoted to the preparation by the contractor of **two distinct documents**: the **Executive Summary** and the **Final Report**, whose structures are described in the Annex II; it entails the analysis of the data collected during the desk and field phases to answer the Evaluation Questions and preparation of the overall assessment, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

The evaluation team will present, in a single Report with Annexes, their findings, conclusions and recommendations in accordance with the structure in Annex II; a separate Executive Summary will be produced as well, following the compulsory format given in the EVAL module (see Annex II).

The evaluation team will make sure that:

- Their assessments are objective and balanced, statements are accurate and evidence-based, and recommendations realistic and clearly targeted.
- When drafting the report, they will acknowledge clearly where changes in the desired direction are known to be already taking place.
- The wording, inclusive of the abbreviations used, takes into account the audience as identified in art. 2.1 above.

The evaluation team will deliver and then present via teleconference the **Draft Final Report** to the Reference Group to discuss the draft findings, conclusions and recommendations. One day of presence is required of the evaluation team.

The Evaluation Manager consolidates the comments expressed by the Reference Group members and sends them to the evaluation team for the report revision, together with a first version of the Quality Assessment Grid (QAG) assessing the quality of the Draft Final Report. The content of the QAG will be discussed with the evaluation team to verify if further improvements are required, and the evaluation team will be invited to comment on the conclusions formulated in the QAG (through the EVAL Module).

The evaluation team will then finalise the **Final Report** and the **Executive Summary** by addressing the relevant comments. While potential quality issues, factual errors or methodological problems should be corrected, comments linked to diverging judgements may be either accepted or rejected. In the latter instance, the evaluation team must explain the reasons in writing. After approval of the final report, the QAG will be updated and sent to the evaluators via EVAL Module.

- **Dissemination phase**

  The findings of the study will be presented to stakeholders via teleconference organised by the Evaluation Team.

➢ Language of the Specific Contract
English

➢ Management team member presence required or not for briefing and/or debriefing

- At the EU level

  The evaluation is managed by the Evaluation Manager of the EUD Eswatini; the progress of the evaluation will be followed closely with the assistance of a Reference Group consisting of members of EUD Eswatini, representatives of MEPD, MoA, beneficiaries and private sector.

  The main functions of the Reference Group are:
  - To define and validate the Evaluation Questions.
  - To facilitate contacts between the evaluation team and the EU services and external stakeholders.
  - To ensure that the evaluation team has access to and has consulted all relevant information sources and documents related to the Intervention.
  - To discuss and comment on notes and reports delivered by the evaluation team. Comments by individual group members are compiled into a single document by the Evaluation Manager and subsequently transmitted to the evaluation team.
  - To assist in feedback on the findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations from the evaluation.
  - To support the development of a proper follow-up action plan after completion of the evaluation.

- At the Contractor level

  Further to the Requirements set in the art. 6 of the Global Terms of Reference and in the Global Organisation and Methodology, respectively annexes II and III of the Framework contract SIEA 2018, the contractor is responsible for the quality of: the process; the evaluation design; the inputs and the outputs of the evaluation. In particular, it will:
  - Support the Team Leader in its role, mainly from a team management perspective. In this regard, the contractor should make sure that, for each evaluation phase, specific tasks and outputs for each team member are clearly defined and understood.
  - Provide backstopping and quality control of the evaluation team's work throughout the assignment.
  - Ensure that the evaluators are adequately resourced to perform all required tasks within the time framework of the contract.

LOGISTICS AND TIMING

Please refer to Part B of the Terms of Reference.

REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to Part B of the Terms of Reference.

REPORTS

Please refer to Part B of the Terms of Reference.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Definition of indicators

- **Content of reporting**

  The outputs must match quality standards. The text of the reports should be illustrated, as appropriate, with maps, graphs and tables; a map of the area(s) of Intervention is required (to be attached as Annex).

- **Comments on the outputs**

  For each report, the Evaluation Manager will send to the Contractor consolidated comments received from the Reference Group or the approval of the report within 5 calendar days. The revised reports addressing the comments shall be submitted within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the comments. The evaluation team should provide a separate document explaining how and where comments have been integrated or the reason for not integrating certain comments, if this is the case.

- **Assessment of the quality of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary**

  The quality of the draft versions of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary will be assessed by the Evaluation Manager using the online Quality Assessment Grid (QAG) in the EVAL Module (text provided in Annex IV). The Contractor is given – through the EVAL module - the possibility to comment on the assessments formulated by the Evaluation Manager. The QAG will then be reviewed following the submission of the final version of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary.

  The compilation of the QAG will support/inform the compilation by the Evaluation Manager of the FWC SIEA's Specific Contract Performance Evaluation.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Please address any request for clarification and other communication to the following address(es):

- Luís Miguel Pascoal – Programme Officer: Luis-Miguel.PASCOAL@eeas.europa.eu
- Giuseppina D'Urso – Evaluation Contact Point: Giuseppina.D'URSO@eeas.europa.eu

* * *

ANNEX I: INFORMATION THAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE EVALUATION TEAM

- Legal texts and political commitments pertaining to the Intervention(s) to be evaluated
- Country Strategy Paper [country/region] and Indicative Programmes (and equivalent) for the periods covered
- Relevant national / sector policies and plans from National and Local partners and other donors
- Intervention identification studies
- Intervention feasibility / formulation studies
- Intervention financing agreement and addenda
- Intervention's quarterly and annual progress reports, and technical reports
- European Commission's Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Reports, and other external and internal monitoring reports of the Intervention
- Intervention's mid-term evaluation report and other relevant evaluations, audit, reports
- Relevant documentation from National/Local partners and other donors
- Guidance for Gender sensitive evaluations
- Calendar and minutes of all the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Intervention(s)
- Any other relevant document

Note: The evaluation team has to identify and obtain any other document worth analysing, through independent research and during interviews with relevant informed parties and stakeholders of the Intervention.

ANNEX II: STRUCTURE OF THE FINAL REPORT AND OF THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The contractor will deliver – **preferably through their uploading in the EVAL Module - two distinct documents**: the **Final Report** and the **Executive Summary**. They must be consistent, concise and clear and free of linguistic errors both in the original version and in their translation – if foreseen.

The Final Report should not be longer than 35 pages. Additional information on the overall context of the Intervention, description of methodology and analysis of findings should be reported in an Annex to the main text.

The presentation must be properly spaced and the use of clear graphs, tables and short paragraphs is strongly recommended.

The cover page of the Final Report shall carry the following text:

''*This evaluation is supported and guided by the European Commission and presented by [name of consulting firm]. The report does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the European Commission*''.

Executive Summary	A short, tightly-drafted, to-the-point and free-standing Executive Summary. It should focus on the key purpose or issues of the evaluation, outline the main analytical points, and clearly indicate the main conclusions, lessons to be learned and specific recommendations. It is to be prepared by using the specific format foreseen in the EVAL Module.

The main sections of the evaluation report shall be as follows:

1. Introduction	A description of the Intervention, of the relevant country/region/sector background and of the evaluation, providing the reader with sufficient methodological explanations to gauge the credibility of the conclusions and to acknowledge limitations or weaknesses, where relevant.
2. Answered questions / Findings	A chapter presenting the answers to the Evaluation Questions, supported by evidence and reasoning.
3. Overall assessment *(optional)*	A chapter synthesising all answers to Evaluation Questions into an overall assessment of the Intervention. The detailed structure of the overall assessment should be refined during the evaluation process. The relevant chapter has to articulate all the findings, conclusions and lessons in a way that reflects their importance and facilitates the reading. The structure should not follow the Evaluation Questions, the logical framework or the evaluation criteria.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.3 Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt generalise findings and translate past experience into relevant knowledge that should support decision making, improve performance and promote the achievement of better results. Ideally, they should support the work of both the relevant European and partner institutions.

4.1 Conclusions

This chapter contains the conclusions of the evaluation, organised per evaluation criterion.

In order to allow better communication of the evaluation messages that are addressed to the Commission, a table organising the conclusions by order of importance can be presented, or a paragraph or sub-chapter emphasizing the 3 or 4 major conclusions organised by order of importance, while avoiding being repetitive.

4.2 Recommendations

They are intended to improve or reform the Intervention in the framework of the cycle under way, or to prepare the design of a new Intervention for the next cycle.

Recommendations must be clustered and prioritised, and carefully targeted to the appropriate audiences at all levels, especially within the Commission structure.

5. Annexes to the report

The report should include the following annexes:

- The Terms of Reference of the evaluation
- The names of the evaluators (CVs can be shown, but summarised and limited to one page per person)
- Detailed evaluation methodology including: options taken, difficulties encountered and limitations; detail of tools and analyses.
- Evaluation Matrix
- Intervention logic / Logical Framework matrices (planned/real and improved/updated)
- Relevant geographic map(s) where the Intervention took place
- List of persons/organisations consulted
- Literature and documentation consulted
- Other technical annexes (e.g. statistical analyses, tables of contents and figures, matrix of evidence, databases) as relevant
- Detailed answer to the Evaluation Questions, judgement criteria and indicators

ANNEX III: PLANNING SCHEDULE

This annex must be included by Framework Contractors in their Specific Contract Organisation and Methodology and forms an integral part of it. Framework Contractors can add as many rows and columns as needed.

The phases of the evaluation shall reflect those indicated in the present Terms of Reference.

		Indicative Duration in working days[1]		
Activity	**Location**	**Team Leader**	**Evaluator …**	**Indicative Dates**
Inception phase: total days				
•				
•				
Desk phase: total days				
•				
•				
Field phase: total days				
•				
•				
Synthesis phase: total days				
•				
•				
Dissemination phase: total days				
•				
•				
TOTAL working days (maximum)				

[1] Add one column per each evaluator

ANNEX IV: QUALITY ASSESSMENT GRID

The quality of the Final Report will be assessed by the Evaluation Manager (since the submission of the draft Report and Executive Summary) using the following quality assessment grid, which is included in the EVAL Module; the grid will be shared with the evaluation team, which will have the possibility to include their comments.

Action (Project/Programme) evaluation – Quality Assessment Grid Final Report				
Evaluation data				
Evaluation title				
Evaluation managed by			**Type of evaluation**	
CRIS ref. of the evaluation contract			**EVAL ref.**	
Evaluation budget				
EUD/Unit in charge			**Evaluation Manager**	
Evaluation dates	**Start:**		**End:**	
Date of draft final report			**Date of Response of the Services**	
Comments				
Project data				
Main project evaluated				
CRIS # of evaluated project(s)				
DAC Sector				
Contractor's details				
Evaluation Team Leader			**Evaluation Contractor**	
Evaluation expert(s)				

Legend: scores and their meaning

Very satisfactory: criterion entirely fulfilled in a clear and appropriate way
Satisfactory: criterion fulfilled
Unsatisfactory: criterion partly fulfilled
Very unsatisfactory: criterion mostly not fulfilled or absent

The evaluation report is assessed as follows		
1. Clarity of the report		
This criterion analyses the extent to which both the Executive Summary and the Final Report: **ARE EASILY READABLE, UNDERSTANDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE RELEVANT TARGET READERS** **HIGHLIGHT THE KEY MESSAGES** **THE LENGTH OF THE VARIOUS CHAPTERS AND ANNEXES OF THE REPORT ARE WELL BALANCED** **CONTAIN RELEVANT GRAPHS, TABLES AND CHARTS FACILITATING UNDERSTANDING**  **CONTAIN A LIST OF ACRONYMS (ONLY THE REPORT)** **AVOID UNNECESSARY DUPLICATIONS** **HAVE BEEN LANGUAGE CHECKED FOR UNCLEAR FORMULATIONS, MISSPELLING AND GRAMMAR ERRORS** **THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IS AN APPROPRIATE SUMMARY OF THE FULL REPORT AND IS A FREE-STANDING DOCUMENT**		
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Score**
Contractor's comments	**Contractor's comments**	

2. Reliability of data and robustness of evidence		
This criterion analyses the extent to which: **DATA/EVIDENCE WAS GATHERED AS DEFINED IN THE METHODOLOGY** **THE REPORT CONSIDERS, WHEN RELEVANT, EVIDENCE FROM EU AND/OR OTHER PARTNERS' RELEVANT STUDIES, MONITORING REPORTS AND/OR EVALUATIONS** **THE REPORT CONTAINS A CLEAR DESCRIPTION OF THE LIMITATIONS OF THE EVIDENCE, THE RISKS OF BIAS AND THE MITIGATING MEASURES**		
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Score**
Contractor's comments	**Contractor's comments**	

3. Validity of Findings

This criterion analyses the extent to which:

FINDINGS DERIVE FROM THE EVIDENCE GATHERED

FINDINGS ADDRESS ALL SELECTED EVALUATION CRITERIA

FINDINGS RESULT FROM AN APPROPRIATE TRIANGULATION OF DIFFERENT, CLEARLY IDENTIFIED SOURCES

WHEN ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF THE EU INTERVENTION, THE FINDINGS DESCRIBE AND EXPLAIN THE MOST RELEVANT CAUSE/EFFECT LINKS BETWEEN OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

THE ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE IS COMPREHENSIVE AND TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION CONTEXTUAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Score
Contractor's comments	**Contractor's comments**	

4. Validity of conclusions		
This criterion analyses the extent to which: • Conclusions are logically linked to the findings, and go beyond them to provide a comprehensive analysis • Conclusions appropriately address the selected evaluation criteria and all the evaluation questions, including the relevant cross-cutting dimensions • Conclusions take into consideration the various stakeholder groups of the evaluation • Conclusions are coherent and balanced (i.e. they present a credible picture of both strengths and weaknesses), and are free of personal or partisan considerations • (If relevant) whether the report indicates when there are not sufficient findings to conclude on specific issues		
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Score**
Contractor's comments	**Contractor's comments**	

5. Usefulness of recommendations		
This criterion analyses the extent to which the recommendations: • Are clearly linked to and derive from the conclusions • Are concrete, achievable and realistic • Are targeted to specific addressees • Are clustered (if relevant), prioritised, and possibly time-bound • (If relevant) provide advice for the Action's exit strategy, post-Action sustainability or for adjusting Action's design or plans		
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Score**
Contractor's comments	**Contractor's comments**	

6. Appropriateness of lessons learnt analysis *(if requested by the ToR or included by the evaluators)*	
This criterion is to be assessed only when requested by the ToR or included by evaluators and is not to be scored. It analyses the extent to which: • Lessons are identified • When relevant, they are generalised in terms of wider relevance for the institution(s)	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Contractor's comments	**Contractor's comments**

Final comments on the overall quality of the report	Overall score

ANNEX V: THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

The definition and the number of the DAC evaluation criteria has changed following the release (10 December 2019) of the document "Evaluation Criteria: Adapted Definitions and Principles for Use" (DCD/DAC(2019)58/FINAL).

The evaluators will ensure that their analysis will respect the new definitions of these criteria and their explanatory notes. Reference and guidance documents are being developed and can be found here: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

Unless otherwise specified in the chapter 2.2.1, the evaluation will assess the Intervention using the six standard DAC evaluation criteria and the EU added value, which is a specific EU evaluation criterion. Their definitions are reported below:

- **DAC CRITERIA**
    - **Relevance**: the "extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change."
    - **Coherence**: the "compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution."
    - **Effectiveness**: the "extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups."
    - **Efficiency**: the "extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way."
    - **Impact**: the "extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects."
    - **Sustainability**: the "extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue."

- **EU-SPECIFIC CRITERION**
    - **EU added value**: the extent to which the Intervention brings additional benefits to what would have resulted from Member States' interventions only in the partner country. It directly stems from the principle of subsidiarity defined in the Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union

      (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/7/the-principle-of-subsidiarity).

TERMS OF REFERENCE – PART B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Benefitting Zone

Eswatini

2. Contracting authority

The European Union, represented by the European Commission, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

3. Contract language

English

LOCATION AND DURATION

4. Location

- Normal place of posting of the specific assignment: Home based
- Mission(s) outside the normal place of posting and duration(s): Eswatini (10 working days)

5. Start date and period of implementation

The indicative start date is 16/08/2021 and the period of implementation of the contract will be 90 days from this date (indicative end date: 14/11/2021).

REQUIREMENTS

6. Expertise

The minimum requirements covered by the team of experts as a whole are detailed below:

- Qualifications and skills required for the team: A master level or post-graduate studies in irrigation, agricultural, rural engineering or any development-related field. Communication and team-work skills; Knowledge of the Project Cycle Management; Computer literacy and proficiency in IT applications relevant to the assignment.
- General professional experience of the team: At least 6 years of experience in agriculture, land management, rural infrastructure or any related sectors.
- Specific professional experience of the team: At least 6 years of experience acting as team leader/expert for evaluations of development projects and knowledge on gender equality/ mainstreaming.
- Language skills of the team: Excellent analytical, facilitation and communications skills and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders

Additional expertise requirements for the team composition:

Position	Expert category	Minimum requirements	Minimum number of working days	Additional information
Expert	Cat. III (>3 years of experience)	At least 3 year experience in the sectors related to the Lot 1	30	
Expert	Cat. II (>6 years of experience)	At least 6 year experience in the sectors related to the Lot 1	20	

7. Incidental expenditure

No incidental expenditure provided for in this contract.

8. Lump sums

No lump sums provided for in this contract.

9. Expenditure verification

No expenditure verification report is required.

10. Other details

No other details provided for in this contract.

REPORTS AND DELIVERABLES

11. Reports and deliverables requirements

Title	Content	Language	Submission timing or deadline
Inception report	• Intervention logic • Stakeholder map • Methodology for the evaluation, incl.: Evaluation Matrix: Evaluation Questions, with judgement criteria and indicators, and data analysis and collection methods • Analysis of risks related to the evaluation methodology and mitigation	English	Within 7 Day(s) After the project start

Title	Content	Language	Submission timing or deadline
	measures • Work plan Number of pages: 10		
Desk report	• Preliminary answers to each Evaluation Question, with indication of the limitations of the available information • Data gaps to be addressed, issues still to be covered and hypotheses to be tested during the field visit Number of pages: 5	English	Within 21 Day(s) After the project start
Draft final report	Detailed structure in Annex II	English	Within 60 Day(s) After the project start
Final report	Detailed structure in Annex II	English	Within 74 Day(s) After the project start
Restitution seminar	The findings of the study will be presented to stakeholders via teleconference organised by the Evaluation Team.	English	Within 90 Day(s) After the project start

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION TEAM

Landell Mills has extensive experience in providing evaluation services, all of which comply at least with OECD-DAC standards and evaluation criteria, while some have also been implemented in accordance with DCED standards. Landell Mills is implementing or has implemented over thirty programme evaluations since 2005, mainly for the EU. Our in-house Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team is actively engaged in developing the evaluation community by improving Landell Mills' practice and contributing to the discipline through Landell Mills' membership of the UK Evaluation Society. Landell Mills' evaluation work requires a range of evaluation methods and analytical frameworks for which the company can access both internal and external expertise. To generate rigorous, evidence-based results, the methodologies carefully employ qualitative and quantitative methods (document review, surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews) for analysis using a variety of key evaluation skills and methods, including theory of change/intervention logic workshops, contribution analysis and benchmarking.

Dr Jeffrey McCarthy - Team Leader. Dr McCarthy has over twenty years of experience in project and programme evaluations for the EC and other international development agencies operating in Africa. He has especially deep knowledge of the sugar industry in the SADC region, where he has undertaken detailed fieldwork on sugar farming by both small-scale growers and larger companies in Eswatini's neighbouring northern KwaZulu-Natal areas, including doing surveys of agricultural workers' conditions and perceptions and, in 2018 evaluating gender equality in the (South African) Jobs Fund's creation of subsidised new work in sugar cane planting. At a policy level he has facilitated, amongst others, a Social Compact for the South African Sugar Industry and a SADC-wide (including Eswatini) agreement on regional sugar trade. He is experienced in the most recent modalities of EU evaluations and programme management and recently led the Final Evaluation of EU Budget Support for a Pro-Poor Policy Development Programme in South Africa (2019). He has extensive experience in project evaluation including substantial knowledge of Project Cycle Management, Logical Framework, Theory of Change and evaluation tools. In terms of adaptations to the sugar sector in smaller sugar producing but export-dependent countries, he has had experience in this regard in Mauritius, serving as a consultant to their largest sugar company on diversification strategies during the period 2008-2014. His comparative experiences inter alia in vegetables and fisheries/aquaculture, and in land reform and tenure issues in many different parts of Africa, allow him to contextualise programme achievements beyond the horizons of Eswatini sugar, thereby assisting funders to assess comparative value. He was made Honorary Professor at the University of Witwatersrand in 1989 (at the age of 37) in recognition of his work on future development policies for post-apartheid South Africa.

Dr Bon'sile Faith Nicollete Mhlanga-Ndlovu - Key Expert 2. Dr Mhlanga-Ndlovu is one of leading evaluation experts in the field of agricultural development programs in Eswatini. She has secured a PhD in Environmental Science with a thesis on-climate change vulnerability and adaptation in the sugar sector of Eswatini. Ms Mhlanga-Ndlovu has around 20 years of demonstrated professional experience in programme evaluation. She has reviewed existing national, regional and international policy frameworks and sectoral documents on agricultural development and provided technical assistance to Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration with regards to sugar sector. Ms Mhlanga-Ndlovu provided her expertise for setting up a monitoring and evaluation system, evaluation assessment and make recommendations for the future intervention in agricultural land management, sugar sector development, rural infrastructure, climate change aspects, integrated of cross cutting issues like and gender mainstreaming and environmental issues. Additionally, she has wide range of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) experience with government, national and international development agencies such as WFP, UNDP, SADC and Ministry of Agriculture. Dr Mhlanga-Ndlovu has extensive experience in project management, baseline survey, data collection and analysis, report compilation and presentation. She has good command of English, Siswati and Zulu languages and has excellent facilitation and communications skills.

ANNEX 3: EVALUATION MATRIX AND METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION MATRIX + METHODOLOGY DETAILS			
EVALUATION QUESTIONS	**DAC AND OTHER EVALUATION CRITERIA**	**JUDGMENT CRITERIA AND INDICATORS OR INFORMATION REQUIRED**	**INFORMATION GATHERING METHODS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO BE EXPLOITED**
EQ1: To what extent has the programme been able to achieve benefits for final beneficiaries and target groups?	Relevance, EU-specific; mainstreaming, notably gender – notice the Financing Agreements emphasised SSGs enhanced profitability	Distribution, numbers and characteristics (e.g. gender) of beneficiaries and their levels of gain, especially in regard to enhanced yields and reduced costs as a result of the EU-sponsored transport infrastructure and irrigation enhancements	Studies of existing reports (e.g. Quarterly Progress Reports) and existing studies and surveys of SSGs. Results of new, online survey and key informant interviews. Interviews with Key Informants. Content analyses of key informant perspectives, cross-tabular and graphical analyses of quantitative indicators.
	Preliminary assumptions: • Determination of gender of beneficiaries and climate change mitigation impacts is technically possible, and a full beneficiary list and contacts for them exists		
EQ2: How efficient was programme delivery?	Efficiency, EU-specific (e.g. coherence)	Resources deployed compared to impacts (ratios) in comparative perspective, in that efficiency implies some version of a cost-benefit ratio.	Mid-term Review report covered operational efficiencies, but follow-up interviews with key informants can be used to elaborate. Comparisons of capital outlay to impacts in comparable initiatives in SADC region, using figures from Eswatini project documentation and other available SADC region documents and figures. Cross-tabular and graphical analyses of quantitative indicators.
	Preliminary assumptions:		

	• Retrospective information on operational efficiencies exists. There is sufficient in common between similar SADC region initiatives to allow for reasonable comparisons		
EQ3: How much more competitive is the Eswatini sugar sector?	Effectiveness, EU-specific (e.g. EU value added)	Sector performances before and after ; comparatives within SADC (ratios). Especially relevant will be average yields per hectare per annum and average costs of transport per ton hauled, given stated objects in the Financing Agreements	Reviewing existing Eswatini reports, done both by or for EU, by Eswatini government and by independent bodies. Yield and costs figures before and after interventions as may be also inferred from online survey. Cross-tabular and graphical analyses of quantitative indicators.
	Preliminary assumptions: • Data before and after exists and allow for comparison, and it is methodologically possible to separate out the efficacy of various interventions (government, EU, other donors, Millers, Canegrowers, etc) and the complementarity		
EQ4: How well were the specific objectives of the programme and its projects met, and why?	Impact, EU-specific (e.g. gender, climate change mitigation, EU value-added)	Intervention's quarterly and annual progress reports, and technical reports; I&AP observations. Indicators of profitability, yield, costs, and of nature of beneficiaries	Reviewing reports, collecting information via online survey, interviews with Key Informants. Content analyses of key informant perspectives, cross-tabular and graphical analyses of quantitative indicators.
	Preliminary assumptions: • Observations on the ground should correspond to specific objectives		
EQ5: To what extent will the impacts and benefits be sustained over time, and why?	Sustainability, EU-specific, mainstreaming (e.g. climate change)	Critical criteria for assessing sustainability in the future. I&AP observations; projections based upon trends and causal analyses of factors underlying them.	Collecting data on yields, costs and constructing trend lines into the future. Analysis of causal factors and testing of analysis with Key Informants. Assessing Eswatini sugar performance within comparative SADC context and global market conditions e.g. via United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Services Reports, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reports, etc.

			Assessing likely impacts of climate change projections. Graphical analyses.
	Preliminary assumptions: • Unknown or unpredictable variables in the future can be discounted for having major potential future impacts		

Table 3 Matrix of Evaluation Questions

ANNEX 4: INTERVENTION LOGIC / LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRICES

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES	INTERVENTION MECHANISM	THEORY OF CHANGE ASSUMPTION	INDICATORS
Overall impact	Improve Eswatini's social and economic goals.	Sugar sector efficiency and competitiveness, and especially grower profitability, enhance national economic output and quality of life.	Gross Domestic Product and Human Development Index[61] changes.
Ultimate outcome	Improved sugar sector efficiency and competitiveness, specifically the enhanced profitability of sugar cane growers.	Enhanced transport infrastructure and irrigation increase grower's profitability.	Objective indicators such as yields, costs and internal rate of return (IRR) of growers and subjective impressions of growers and other stakeholders.

Table 4 Reconstructed Intervention Logic and Theory of Change

[61] The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

ANNEX 5: MAPS & PHOTOS

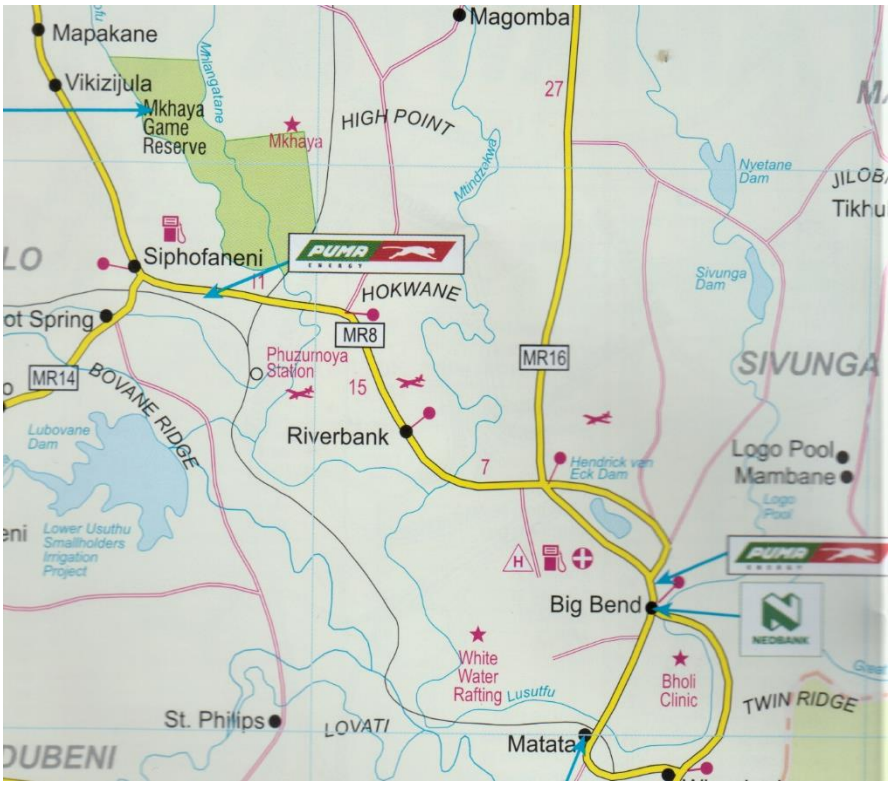

Figure 3 Map of fieldwork area in the south

Figure 4 LUSIP areas near Makapane, towards Siphofaneni

Approaching the LUSIP areas from the north-west, photograph taken from near Makapane towards Siphofaneni in the map above. Notice the light green flat lands in the middle to far distance reflected cane under irrigation in the LUSIP scheme, in contrast to the drier areas in their surrounds and foreground.

Figure 5 Siphofaneni bridge view

Figure 6 Fields along the St Philips upgraded road

Figure 7 Resurfaced road towards St Philips

A portion of the resurfaced road towards St Philips with an upgraded bridge across the Mlatuzane River also funded by the EU. This road was possibly the highest standard of surface that the Team Leader encountered throughout his extensive travels in Eswatini.

Figure 8 Sprinkler irrigation systems operating on SSG farms in the vicinity of St Philips near to the EU-upgraded road

Figure 9 A new EU-funded school at St Philips (entrance gate in view)

Figure 10 Evidence of some crop diversification within LUSIP SSG irrigation areas with the growing of maize in the foreground and sugar cane in background

Figure 11 Portion of the large areas of corporate irrigated cane cultivation between Simunye and Mhlume mills

Figure 12 Figures on sugar made by September 2021 for the year displayed outside the Simunye mill on 26/9/2021

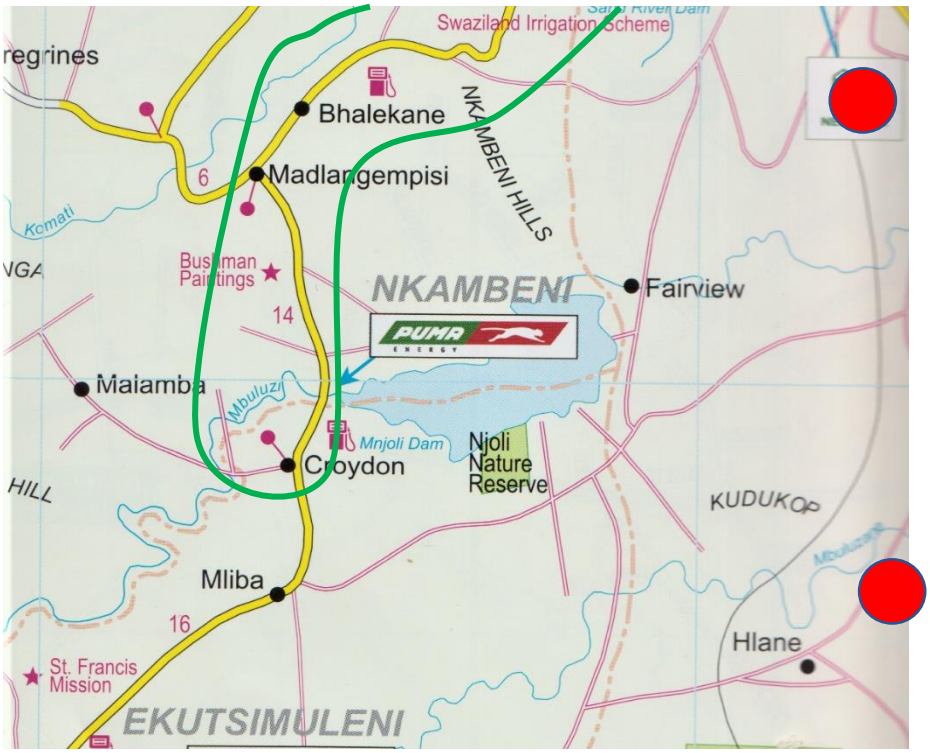

Figure 13 Map indicating approximate locations of SSG areas viewed (green outline) and mills (red)

Figure 14 Portion of new cane growth at a SSG Farmer's Association field between Sihhoye and Tshaneni

Figure 15 Irrigation canal near Sihhoye

Figure 16 Bridge across the Mbuluzi River financed by the EU.

This not only enables cane from SSG areas to reach Simunye mill more easily but carries some twenty vehicles a minute of general traffic as part of upgraded roads connecting the north to the centre of the country

Figure 17 Portion of the Malkerns Canal in September 2021

The Canal which supplies water to adjacent sugar fields (the field to the left was under sprinkler irrigation and was reflecting only very early stage growth after planting/weeding).

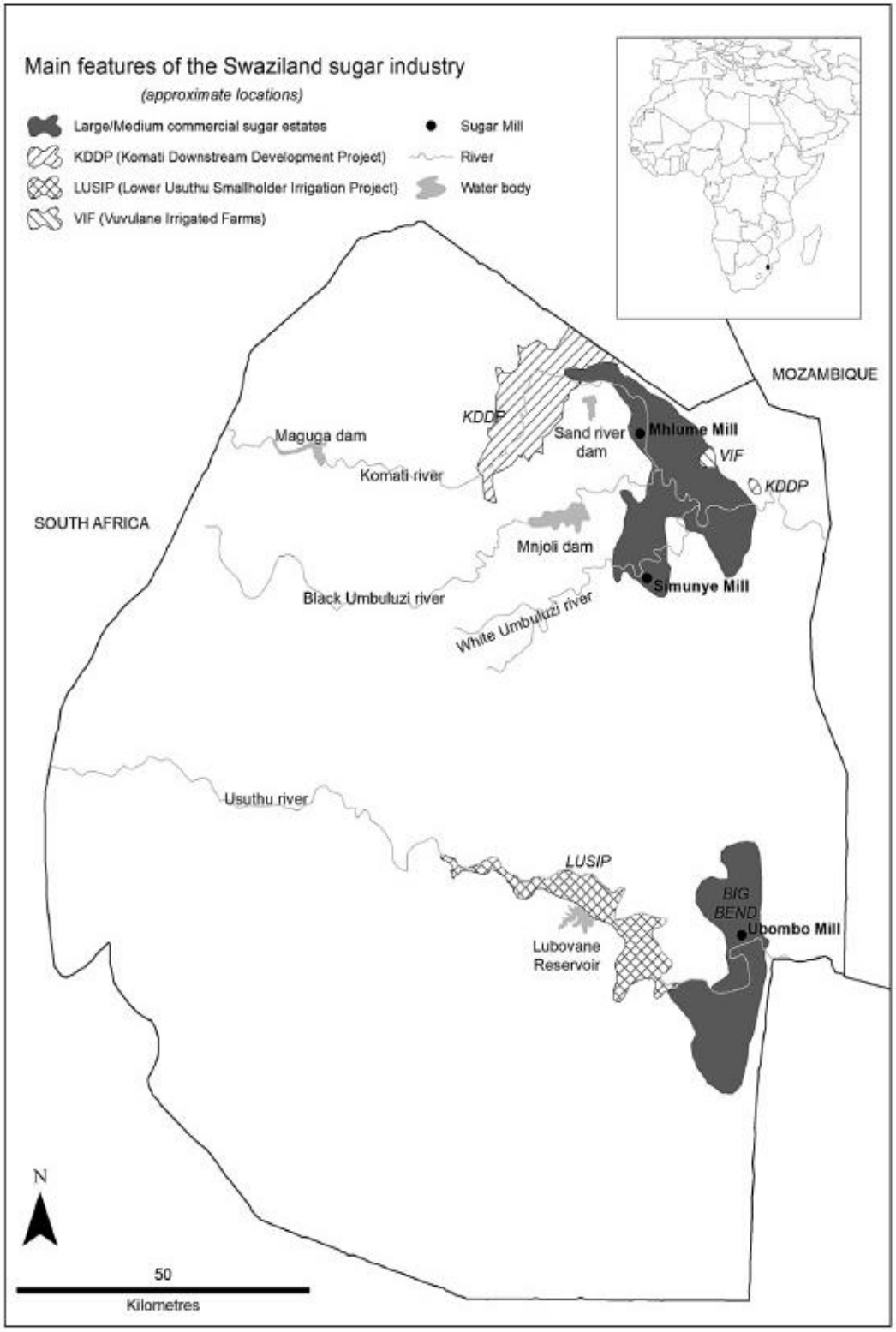

Figure 18 Swaziland sugar sector map. Source: 2017 Value Chain Study for EU Delegation, Eswatini

ANNEX 6: LIST OF PERSONS/ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

Dates	Team Leader	KE2	Inputs by others
17-19 September	Mr Rex Brown, irrigation engineer, Eswatini		Observations in the field at Malkerns
20 September	Meeting with EU Delegation and Department of Economic Planning representative and feedback; Meeting with Eswatini Canegrowers Dr Nkhambule and Mr Nxumalo	Meeting with EU Delegation and Department of Economic Planning representative and feedback; Meeting with Eswatini Canegrowers Dr Nkhambule and Mr Nxumalo	EU Delegation; Eswatini Canegrowers
21-22 September	Discussion with Mr Malcolm Stevens, former senior accountant at Mhlume Mill re. situation in north prior to SSG area; field studies in south	Surveys of SSGs; online survey of key informants	Key informants, SSG respondents
23-24 September	Meeting with Mr Nxumalo of Eswatini Canegrowers about period he was involved in EU implementation; field studies	Surveys of SSGs; online survey of key informants	Project managers, SSG respondents
25-28 September	Field studies in north; Interviews with Mr Ndlovu of Eswatini Sugar Association; Mr Ogg consultant to SSGs and related development agencies; and Mr Dlamini Projects Executive with Royal Eswatini Sugar Association and former SSG liaison officer. Commence intermediary Note.	Preliminary analysis of SSG and survey results	Industry role-players relevant to sustainability
29 September	Preparation of Intermediary Note/slides	Preliminary analysis of SSG and survey results	Landell Mills
30 September	Presentation to Reference Group. Interviews Discussion with Farmer Hulley former Swaziland Sugar Association Chair	Presentation to Reference Group	Reference Group, Discussion with Farmer Hulley former Swaziland Sugar Association Chair

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ANNEX 8: REPORT ON SMALLHOLDER SUGARCANE FARMERS SURVEY AND KEY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION RESULTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The EU provided support to the Kingdom of Eswatini between 2009 and 2014, where the EU contributed €120 million (approx. 1.2 billion SZL) through the 10th EDF to boost Eswatini's development initiatives including the support to the sugar sector. Eswatini was also a major beneficiary of Commission funding in support of the adaptation of its sugar industry in line with the phasing out of the favourable Sugar Protocol and received a total allocation of €129m for the period 2006-2013. Under this budget, the EU supports implementation of the country's National Adaptation Strategy (NAS)62, which aims to ensure the continued economic viability of the sugar sector in the country. NAS seeks to enhance the institutional capacity of Ministry of Economic Planning and Development of Eswatini (MEPD) and others for strengthened implementation of the NAS; increase the productivity and efficiency of small and medium scale sugarcane growers; improve transport infrastructure to reduce the costs of transporting sugarcane to the mills; preserve and enhance market access for sugar; and improve the living standards of rural communities dependent on sugar production. The key interventions falling under this EU support, and those to be evaluated by this assignment, are:

TITLES OF THE INTERVENTIONS TO BE EVALUATED	BUDGETS OF THE INTERVENTIONS TO BE EVALUATED	DATES OF THE INTERVENTIONS TO BE EVALUATED
Swaziland Annual Action Programme (AAP) 2009 – Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Support to Sugarcane Small growers, Diversification and NAS Coordination	EUR 16 500 000.00	Start: 31/03/2010 – End: 31/03/2019
Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2010 – Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Road Transport Infrastructure	EUR 12 057 000,00	Start: 22/02/2011 – End: 21/06/2020
Swaziland Annual Action Programme 2011 – Improving the Competitiveness of the Sugar Industry and Reducing Poverty	EUR 54 267 000.00	Start: 28/03/2012 – End: 28/12/2021

The main user of this evaluation will be the Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Eswatini. The main objectives of this evaluation are to provide the relevant services of the European Union with:

- An overall independent assessment of the past performance of the EU measures in the sugar sector, paying particular attention to its results measured against its expected objectives, and the reasons underpinning such results;
- Key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve future Interventions.

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

As proposed and approved during the inception phase, the core Evaluation Questions were selected based on the ToR's emphasis upon the underlisted:

[62] https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/nationaladaptationstrategy.pdf

- **Five standard OECD DAC criteria,** namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency (i.e., programme performance), sustainability and impact.
- **EU-specific criteria** of added value and coherence- considerations for added value and coherence primarily at the intermediate and ultimate levels of the Intervention Logic.
- **Mainstreaming of gender,** Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Leave No-One behind principle and rights-based approach where relevant.

The results are discussed in the section that follows.

i. Data collection tools and sampling

a. Key stakeholder consultation

The questionnaire contained seven sections that included: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency (i.e., programme performance), sustainability and impact, coherence and EU added value. The questions asked were mainly qualitative but allowed for inclusion of quantitative responses. Questionnaires were emailed on the 7 September and stakeholders were allowed up to 17 September to send back responses. The organisations included in the consultation were selected from the list of key stakeholders indicated in the TOR and some added with the support of the EUD: Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, Eswatini Sugar Association (ESA), Eswatini Cane Growers Association (ECGA), Ubombo Sugar, ESWADE, Delegation of the European Union, National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBOARD), Eswatini Maize Corporation, Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation (RESC), FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) and Farmer Groups (FAs).

Email responses were however only received from Eswatini Cane Growers Association (ECGA), Ubombo Sugar, ESWADE, Delegation of the European Union, Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation (RESC). Other organisations consulted included: Cantebury (Nsoko) and Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation on opportunities and challenges on growing crops other than sugarcane.

b. Household survey

The household survey tool contained sections on general profile, household characteristics, employment status, nutritional status, sugarcane irrigation impacts, expenditure issues and access to important services (see Annex 3). The field survey was conducted from 20 to 24 September 2021 by two enumerators who worked in parallel in KDDP and LUSIP.

The household survey was conducted with the KDDP and LUSIP famers and they are as listed:

KDDP: Ntisheni, Intamakuphila, Nyakatfo-Bambanani, Nyakatfo-Hlomani, Sivukile, Mankontjane, Phakama-Mafucula, Ayandza, Inkululeko yemadvodza, Buhle Besive, Mnyangombili, Bambanani maliba.

LUSIP: Vuka Sive sa Maja, Phuzamoya Ltd, Sesibonile, Mbabala, Mngongomaneni, Umchwele Ltd, Mganyaneni FA, Maphobeni cane Growers, Madwaleni, Asibebahle Mbabala, Kuhle Kubonela Farmers Pty (ltd) and Kuselangeni.

ii. Limitations

Most of the key stakeholders contacted for the online survey did not respond. Even the ones that responded, they cited that at some point during the programme, they were not part of the sugar sector and therefore cannot comment much. The farmers in the KDDP were a bit of a challenge to consult as ESWADE has weaned them and they can only be approached directly. Furthermore, the household survey had not been planned for as it came as a proposal during the inception phase that conducting

such would shed some light on impact beyond the farm level. Consequently, this activity could only be allowed about two weeks to initiate, carry out and complete.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

i. Relevance

a. Country development needs and priorities

The objectives of the EU intervention/ strategy *Annual Action Programme 2011 – Improving the Competitiveness of the Sugar Industry and Reducing Poverty (EUR 51,371,564.58)* is considered very relevant and consistent with beneficiaries' needs, country development needs, and priorities. The country very much needed interventions to mitigate against the impacts of the 2005 drought that resulted in more than 300 000 people requiring food assistance.63 Furthermore, the EU intervention was very instrumental since it was aligned to the Government poverty reduction strategy and action plan aimed at tackling declining economic growth and increasing poverty.64 In addition the EU intervention through improved irrigation systems was phenomenal towards improving competitiveness and food security as are the aspirations of the National Irrigation Policy (2005). The main objectives of the irrigation policy are to ensure that the irrigated agriculture sub-sector in Eswatini contributes fully to economic growth and poverty reduction as well as to optimize the productivity of water in the country's agricultural sector among others.

The country was still lagging behind target with regards to Goal 1, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger comprises as per the requirements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2000-2015 of the United Nations. The country was also not performing well with regards to Goal 7 on water access. Therefore, the EU interventions have been very relevant as they were aimed at poverty reduction through diversification and water access. The EU intervention has contributed significantly to water access in Eswatini as the closeness of the water to households through the farms has allowed for the provision of potable water. While only about 39 % of the total population had access to reliable sources of water in 1990, the figure increased to 74% in 2012. The greatest improvement has been in the provision of water to the rural population, from 25% of the population in 1990, to 69% in 2012 among the rural population.[65]

b. Beneficiaries needs at farm level

The EU intervention objective was met through addition of new cane development area of more than 1000 hectares for small scale farmers. In addition, low yielding sugarcane due to old ratoons was replanted to boost yields. Irrigation systems were installed to increase cane yields with 100tc/h as the target yield. Farmers were migrated to abstract water from established canals in LUSIP and reservoirs in KDDP as opposed to water abstraction in the river. The irrigation systems resulted in improved operations efficiency resulting to improved cane production.

Prior to the EU intervention, the smallholder farmers were faced with various challenges that negatively affected their farm proceeds. Included in this list were bank loans taken for capital costs, high haulage costs (within which the poor condition of roads was stated to be a factor considered before transportation rates were applied). The 70% grant on capital cost therefore, significantly improved farm income due to the reduced burden on the need to repay back only the operational loan. *The Annual Action Programme 2010 – Accompanying Measures for Sugar – Road Transport Infrastructure (EUR 10,038,632.93)* contributed to improved road infrastructure which meant reduced 'burn to crush' time which in turn significantly improved cane quality resulting in better sucrose abstraction and income.

[63] National Multi Hazard Contingency Plan 2015 – 2017 (NDMA)

[64] The Swaziland Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (PRSAP) 2007 (MEPD)

[65] World Bank 2014

On the side of the **millers,** the increase in planted cane area and improvement of cane yields enabled full utilisation of mill capacity to compensate for the expansion done in 2011. Consequently, this translated to increased competitiveness of the sugar industry.

c. Intervention objectives relevance to current circumstances and response to changes in context.

Through the intervention, the project assisted farmers abstracting irrigation water directly from the river to abstract from a more reliable, guaranteed water supply such as the Lubovane Dam and associated infrastructure. Such a move was very important in minimising reliance on the fluctuating river flow levels as a result of climate change experienced through drought and floods. Farmers abstracting directly from the river reported that pumps and associated equipment were submerged in water due to the floods experienced during 2008 and the recent Cyclone Eloise.[66] The change from furrow irrigation to sprinklers and centre pivots where suitable were installed to improve efficiency and water measuring devices (flow metres) were installed to ensure efficiency.

It is important to indicate that the farm designs especially the siting of pumps, initially did not factor in the impacts of climate change on irrigation and as such, pumps are either drowned during floods and abstraction becomes difficult during droughts as water levels decline and rivers shrink.

d. Projects and the country programme adjustment to retain continued relevance

The programme allowed for adjustments however, the process of approval for adapting to the changing environment was seemingly too cumbersome and long. The government tasked the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD) to monitor implementation of the projects. Adjustments made included the change in abstraction from the Usutu River in the LUSIP to the Lubovane Dam and canal. The development of the AAPs over years maintained the relevance of the actions to needs. Changes were made to the projects during the drought to adapt to arising needs of the time such as the planting of seedcane which was initially not foreseen but was later added due to demand. It was discovered that some of the replanted fields were no longer performing as expected due to dilapidated irrigation systems and as part of adjustments, rehabilitation of irrigation systems was allowed for on top of replanting.

ii. Effectiveness

a. The extent to which observed effects of cheaper transport costs and better yields) link to the intervention.

The intervention was meant to increase the competitiveness of the sugar industry and to alleviate poverty in poor communities, increased cane area provided employment opportunities, increased yields increased revenue while the transport costs reduced the production cost and increased operating profit that ended as dividends to the smallholder beneficiaries. To a great extent the cheaper transport and improved yields contribute to the profitability and sustainability of the sugar businesses as well as better livelihood for the households. Better roads resulted in timely harvesting and delivery at mills through improved turnaround time for trucks leading to quality cane crushed. Thus, the income generated has been used to uplift their standard of living evidenced by modern houses and the influx of businesses especially in the beneficiary communities.

"The EU support was very helpful and as a result I was able to buy myself a car and also built my family a good house" (Smallholder Farmer- Ayandza Farmer Company, 21 September 2021)

The roads and revenue generated have provided school children in rural communities an opportunity to access schools and health facilities as well as improved affordability to pay school fees, and there is an

[66] NDMA, 2021

increased flow of transport which was not available before. School attendance has improved and additional classes, feeding kitchens and teacher houses have been constructed.

Nevertheless, more effort is needed in improving household poverty levels which can be achieved through addressing prevailing challenges (haulage, electricity and tax issues) which will then translate to more dividends.

b. Achievement of objectives through results

To a significant extent the results will have and still lead to achievement of objectives. The planned positive effects are improved access to essential services i.e hospital, clinics, sanitation etc for direct and indirect beneficiaries. Poverty levels improved through increased income earned through employment and dividends as well as affordability and access to nutritious food. Training and capacity building (business plan development, business management, record keeping etc) contributed to empowerment that allowed communities to make informed decisions on various issues including business and social. Spin off business have been established and have led to more community members benefiting in terms of direct and indirect employment.

There were unintended effects such as land disputes which resulted in delayed development and abandoning some arable land. To some extent some FAs ended up losing some of their hard-earned income as it was utilised in resolving the disputes through lawsuits. This challenge has also resulted in negative relations between communities as some of the disputes remain unresolved due to the pervading land tenure system used in land governance in the country. There are appearances of non-cohesion between included and excluded cane growers.

The farmers were adversely affected through high interest rates from banks, high tax and electricity costs. and overall farm extension with more focus on agronomic extension at the expense of sustainable business development, engineering support and social governance and cohesion support).

The mills were affected by slow increase on land under production after they had taken loans to increase the capacity of the mills.

c. Operational / political / institutional problems and constraints

Social challenges were experienced as a result of land governance issues leading to poor governance of the farmer schemes. Some of the chiefs and traditional leaders had poor knowledge on how to support the sugar development in their communities and their lack of understanding caused implementation delays. Other issues included taxation laws that hit hard on the farmers and as well as electricity costs that could not be and have not been negotiated with Eswatini Electricity Company (SEC).

iii. Efficiency

a. Objectives realistic, given the time and budget allocated to the intervention

The objectives are considered reasonably realistic and budget adequate as the EU conditions are clear and straightforward hence eliminating unnecessary project delays. Nevertheless, time was limiting especially because approval and decision making by the government on adjustments in the implementation programme took a long time. At times projects had to be put on hold until an approval was received which unfortunately affected several beneficiaries and stakeholders. The procurement processes were time consuming which resulted in budget being underutilised even though new were on the rise, but they ended up not being met.

b. EU interventions cost-efficiency

The EU interventions are considered cost effective with some stakeholders considering the procurement processes to be very strict with many complicated limitations. The coordination meetings helped reduce

duplication. The grant modality experience was mainly limited to the contracting authority while other key stakeholders had limited knowledge and experience in grant modality consequently, the beneficiaries were not well equipped with the financial requirements.

"Ubombo Sugar for instance had to provide resources to beneficiaries as a result of delayed payments." (Agric Engineering Manager- Ubombo Sugar, September 2021*).*

c. Timely and efficient reporting and monitoring

The design of the practice is considered to be timely and efficient as it included a viable Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plan and methodology that was based on outcomes and indicators. However, there was no baseline to measure progress against making attribution and contribution of the project difficult to ascertain. The M&E reports produced were discussed at meetings, but recommendations were not adequately implemented. The M&E was there throughout the programme, but areas not adequately covered were for instance the roads.

Training was conducted to help key stakeholders develop smart objectives as the ones contained in the proposal were considered not easy to measure. The project ensured that all designed work activities were measured, and progress tracked with all reports compiled and submitted on time.

A log frame was developed and was always included in the reporting system. The developed logical framework acted as a guide towards the realization of desired results. Since the Log frame was considered an unofficial document for a long period, some delays were experienced with regards to reporting on interventions as well as feedback on reports. M&E was taken into consideration during the design of the intervention. The MEPD arranged monitoring visits where most stakeholders participated during the implementation of the projects. The implementing entity was also tasked with preparing interim and final reports.

d. Timeliness of the projects processing and implementation

They were timely even though there were cases of projects being approved with retrospective starting dates which caused complications in some cases. Consequently, the implementing agent had to request for the extension of implementation period due to drought periods that were not anticipated at project design.

A concept note was prepared for the Contracting Authority (CA) to treat the four similar projects as a programme so as to effectively utilise resources, but this was however not acknowledged by the CA, yet it could have enhanced the understanding of the Projects by the CA. As a result, treating the four projects separately created more work for the CA and EU in reading four similar reports in the long term.

The projects were also delayed by the requirement for a Guarantee which the beneficiaries were not aware of. Factors such as drought, inadequate water supply, the need for rehabilitation, delayed uptake of some of the proposed actions delayed implementation and addendums had to be signed before changes could be implemented. Some delays were as a result of drought conditions where the Government had to put on hold new cane planting.

e. Efficient of the procurement processes

The procurement process was considered excellent in preventing abuses but a bit complex to understand and at times no in line with implementing organisations own policies.

"They were efficient even though they would sometimes clash with RESC's procurement policy. For example, the procurement rules allowed the beneficiary to use the company procurement procedure where relevant, however, the rule of origin of the materials was limiting at first as it did not allow procurement of Materials in the neighbouring South Africa, yet the costing of the project assumed that material would be purchased in South Africa. " (Dlamini-RESC, September 2021).

iv. Impact

a. Intervention influence positive change at the three levels: individual, community, and national

The impact of the EU sugar policy reform has been felt most acutely by three Swazi groups: 1) small-scale cane growers who have seen the price of sugar lag behind rapidly inflating costs and been unable to pay off their debts, 2) workers who have seen jobs retrenched, outsourced and 'casualised' as the sugar mills reduce labour costs, and 3) local communities which relied on social amenities provided by the mills. All three have benefited in terms of income, socio economically as well as national agricultural contribution to GDP. Employment opportunities greatly improved at community as well as national especially in the MSME sector. At the national and community levels, the level of education is improving and there is decline in cases of waterborne diseases as well as food security.

Individual beneficiaries had their income increased as a results of yearly dividends from sucrose proceeds, communities have booming businesses in the cane area which were not there before the project and there are more households with employed people as the projects generates employment opportunities to local community members. For example, in the financial year 2017 / 18 the total dividends from sugarcane for LUSIP farmers was at **E41 346 375,72** while in the financial year 2020/21 the total dividends were at **E43 505 033,20** which shows an increase in total income generation for LUSIP farmers. Beneficiaries and non-FA members benefited as individuals through employment opportunities, communities benefited in terms of potable water and schools' improvement. There is an increase in the number of modern houses and the livelihood of the people has improved. Newly established schools were assisted with additional classrooms to increase the intake of the number of primary school leavers who had benefitted from free education and now needed a place in secondary schools.

At **community level**, business activity thrived, and small towns developed making access to services easier. Sanitation and water projects were implemented alongside the sugar programmes and roads facilitated movements for reasons beyond sugar transportation. Schools were supported as well.

"We have made donations to the nearby school and the police station through income generated from sugarcane development" (Farmer Nkambule- Nyakatfo Bambanani- 23 September 2021).

At a **national level**, the big water projects were implemented (LUSIP, KDDP), justifying the government investment. The area under cane increased, justifying the expansion programmes by the mills. More revenue was generated by the country through taxation and utilisation of commodities such as electricity fuel etc. Furthermore, at the national level poverty has been reduced in the communities

b. The changes that have taken place in household productivity and food security and nutrition

People are employed and are able to take care of their families. Food security has been improved. The household survey results indicated that generally the beneficiaries have food on a daily basis and about 80% have food 3-5 times a week. All (100%) surveyed households indicated that the food consumed include mealie meal, bean and veggies and meat which is reflective of a balanced meal for improved nutritional status.[67] However, it is disturbing to note that most of the households in the KDDP purchase their foodstuff and do not grow their own.

c. Observed changes in incomes, assets of the target group and social/human capital over the evaluation period

The household survey indicated that households in the KDDP and LUSIP had improved incomes compared to what they obtained before sugarcane. Before sugarcane the income obtained was between

[67] EU Sugar Sector Household Survey report 2021

E100 and 3000 while income received during the growing of sugarcane is between E3000 -60 000 per year. this income is generated through employment and dividends as well as board sitting allowances.

Observed are newly built modern houses and an influx of businesses in the area. There is an increase in the number of vehicles using the roads most of the cars belongs to the sugarcane scheme beneficiaries Through the significant EU support, the communities have transformed within the project development area. In the main town there are twenty-five new business buildings, mostly relating to servicing the vitalized rural sector, livestock are in better condition, public health facilities have been strengthened, and a major supermarket chain was opened. In an area where internet was unknown members of the farmer companies have Facebook accounts operated through smart phones and some businesses are operated and managed online.

An impact assessment survey confirmed the positives outcomes of LUSIP I which include the implementation of an efficient and supportive resettlement program; an increase in income generation within the PDA through the sugar cane schemes, with average household income increasing by over 30%; positive trends in indicators of poverty and wealth attributed to LUSIP; and an enhanced ability of beneficiaries to build improved dwelling infrastructures within their homesteads, and there is an increase in the type of durable assets owned by beneficiaries. The Project also resulted in positive functional relations at all levels in the communities, based on the consultative approach introduced and members of the communities participate effectively in development which enhanced sustainability.

d. Country strategy and programme contribution to reducing the environmental vulnerability and improving resilience

In adapting to climate change impacts such as drought some growers that were abstracting from the river were changed to abstract from the Lubovane Dam. Environmental trainings forms part of the yearly workshops for the sugarcane farmers as well as establishment of environmental committees. There is a room for improvement on this aspect as studies indicate that the country is projected to face extreme weather events with temperatures increasing by about 1.5^{o}C by 2050. The future trends project a warmer country. Unfortunately, the river basins, with the greatest warming of 1.5°C are the Komati and Usutu River Basins.[68]

v. Sustainability

a. Intervention plan and implementation arrangements consideration for sustainability

Sustainability is said to be average and was achieved through various means such building on local people to lead their development, and involvement of the government for maintenance of roads. The construction of farmer centres within the LUSIP area to bring extension support closer to the farmers was another sustainability consideration.

The engagement of other stakeholders, including the private sector and permanently placed institutions have greatly enhanced sustainability. Interventions were linked to sustainable institutions, for example gardens and other interventions to benefit the neighbourhood care points (NCP) that were part of the project were not implemented because there were no sustainable institutions to link these interventions.

In hindsight the exit strategies could have been better built into the projects as well as the utilisation of marginal soils which the implementing agent was advised against.

b. The extent that the benefits of the Intervention will continue after action ceases

The interventions implemented were mostly supported by sugarcane schemes whose existence and sustainability is key to Ubombo Sugar’s business. Ubombo has a department dedicated to assist growers

[68] DWA/ UNDP 2014

in their Sugarcane farming business to ensure profitability and sustainability of Growers. Government continues to assist with new cane development in LUSIP Phase II. The existence of schools' facilities will continue and is supported by the Ministry of education. The plan is not to entirely leave the farmers on their own as they are always in the eyes of various institutions established by the GoE.

c. Possibility of smallholder farmers continuing to function after project closure

Smallholder farmers are continuing however, some of the institutions are going through teething governance issues. They do engage through shareholders' meetings, and they actively participate in running the farms through elected board of directors, they have ownership of the farms even though they are in the Swazi Nation Land where one does not have full ownership of the land but only through the 99-year lease agreement with the chief.

The farmers will continue to function as there are big institutions that rely on the smallholder cane farming businesses such as banks who have dedicated employees that monitor farmer businesses and the entire sugar industry. In addition, the Government who invested in the infrastructure is also monitoring the business performance while the Eswatini Cane Growers Association (ECGA) looks after the interest of sugarcane growers.

The communities are hands on in their farming businesses they are mobilised to form and operate as a proper company, management committees (board of directors) is elected from community members, Some of the farmers diversify to businesses linked to sugar cane such as trucking businesses. A replanting fund was created to enable sustainability into the future and effective use of the aid, the activities funded will depend on the demand at that time.

The main are of improvement remains social issues support (improved governance) as well as business support needed in the area of reduction production costs and improving yields.

d. The long-term consequences of irrigation schemes on soils, water tables, water-borne diseases, etc.

The soils are depleted of nutrients due to continued ploughing; water tables are raised due to continued irrigation, and this is shown through development of wetlands in fields; water-borne diseases might increase due to water ponds formation; development of fishing I water reservoirs is seen at the present moment even though community members are discouraged from conducting this activity. Consistent sampling of soil & water for analysis to proactively apply mitigation and preservative measures is needed. Seeking for more innovative technologies and improvement through linkages of research findings and support to growers' business through effective extension services is critical.

e. Promotion of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient technologies and practices through EU -supported projects and results

Quite a number of sustainable technologies were implemented such as improved water use technologies in irrigation as well as adherence to environmental documents at project establishment e.g., irrigation scheduling, transplanting indigenous plants in nurseries.

Mitigation measures were set out in the comprehensive mitigation plans that were developed early in the life of the project. The project continued with several environmental management and awareness programmes to contribute to the environmental mitigations measures, including the impact of the project on land degradation due to increased stocking rates and soil erosion control. LUSIP had the benefit of an Environmental Panel that visited the project and reviewed and guided environmental standards. The project complied with the quarterly reporting requirements of the Environmental Compliance Certificate issued to LUSIP in 2001 by the Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA). Monitoring procedures for impacts derived from project development were in place and no adverse changes were noted.

The main limitation encountered with regards to introduction of technology is that growers are new in the cane farming businesses and since they prefer to manage their own businesses, the technology used in their farms should be user friendly and easy to understand, for example drip irrigation was never considered for its complexity to the small scale farmers The status of biodiversity, rangelands, soil conservation and water quality remain poor following decades of impacts from the pastoral, low-income, traditional lifestyle practised by the area communities.

vi. Coherence

a. Extent the intervention is coherent with the interventions supported by other actors in the country

The intervention is considered coherent to a large extent as there has been massive support from the sugar industry such as the ECGA, Eswatini Sugar Association (ESA), ESWADE, Micro-projects, Technoserve and financial institutions and the direct involvement and investment from the Millers in collaboration with the government. The EU interventions compliment Government's goal of alleviating poverty in poor regions of the kingdom, The sugar cane development assisted in the completion of LUSIP I which kick-started the planning of phase II LUSIP. From the KDDP and LUSIP I there were lots of lessons learnt that informed the conception of LUSIP II and the Smallholder Market Led Project (SMLP) and Climate Smart Agriculture for Resilient Livelihoods (CSARL).

b. The synergies and interlinkages between different elements of the EU intervention

The intervention brought many stakeholders to participate e.g. government, community leaders, growers, millers, industry regulators and many more. Synergies and interlinkages were noted in collaboration and information sharing which facilitated quick problem solving thus reducing unnecessary delays. Furthermore, partnerships were created with other beneficiaries that were previously EU beneficiaries and had experiences with grant funding . For example, the Maragra Illovo Company which started implementing EU projects earlier than Eswatini, shared lessons. Horticulture projects were established to make use of marginal soils that could not be utilised for sugarcane, and these crops reap benefits from the road infrastructure for transportation.

vii. EU-added value

a. The additional value resulting from the EU intervention(s)

The added value includes better sustainability/longevity of farmer businesses; improved project design and management skills, improved understanding of the EU guidelines; increased sugarcane and sugar produced; Improved livelihood and job creation in rural communities; contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

b. EU policies and interventions support and useful supplement of other policies pursued by Eswatini

To a large extent the EU policies and interventions are considered to be in support of and providing useful supplement of other policies pursued by Eswatini as evidenced in the projects implementation. These have included business approach to farming, use of local resources for poverty alleviation and the increase of GDP.

c. Fair distribution of different effects across the different stakeholders, and genders

Generally, the benefits were said to be fairly distributed and were inclusive of all stakeholders and genders as everyone is equally allowed to participate and share ideas and opinions on how best the programs can add value to every sector in the stakeholder forums created within the agriculture sector. Gender mainstreaming still needs some improvement in the sector and the national levels.

d. Inclusion of gender strategies designed in the Project Implementation Manuals and their adequacy to obtain the expected results

Gender mainstreaming strategies were included but the gender strategies could have been more explicit and more aggressive. The project structure for LUSIP projects emphasised on gender equality therefore there is a balanced number of males and females in the membership and women hold executive positions in the schemes.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall the EU interventions are considered very relevant, effective, efficient, with impact on the individual farmer, households, the communities and the country at large. There remains room for improvement with regards to increasing farm incomes from both sugarcane and the other crops. There are needs required towards reviewing electricity charges, taxation and fertiliser costs.

5. LITERATURE CITED

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ANNEX 9: DETAILED ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

MATRIX OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND DETAILED ANSWERS			
EVALUATION QUESTIONS	**DAC AND OTHER EVALUATION CRITERIA**	**JUDGMENT CRITERIA AND INDICATORS OR INFORMATION REQUIRED**	**DETAILED ANSWERS**
EQ1: To what extent has the programme been able to achieve benefits for final beneficiaries and target groups?	Relevance, EU-specific; mainstreaming, notably gender – notice the Financing Agreements emphasised SSGs enhanced profitability	Distribution, numbers and characteristics (e.g. gender) of beneficiaries and their levels of gain, especially in regard to enhanced yields and reduced costs as a result of the EU-sponsored transport	Several thousand people directly benefited and tens of thousands indirectly in the KDDP and LUSIP areas and their immediate surrounds (boundaries are difficult to exactly define in census terms, hence we avoid spurious precision here), There being more females than ales in such areas according to the Eswatini Census. Numerous studies indicate reduced costs of transport per ton as a result of the interventions.[69] Irrigation and management practices however also increased yields according to multiple sources.[70]
	OVERALL: STRONGLY POSITIVE		
EQ2: How efficient was programme delivery?	Efficiency, EU-specific (e.g. coherence)	Resources deployed compared to impacts (ratios) in comparative perspective, in that efficiency implies some version of a cost-benefit ratio.	Mid-term Review report covered operational efficiencies and returned positive verdict; follow-up interviews with Key Informants previously involved in implementation report that this was the most efficient programme they worked in. Comparisons of capital outlay to effects in other southern African

[69] For example Hulla Human Dynamics (2014)

[70] Hulla Human Dynamics (2014) and (2017)

			countries with similar interventions[71] suggest that the higher threshold of investment in Eswatini was necessary to make a strong positive impact (elsewhere barely measurable).
	OVERALL: STRONGLY POSITIVE		
EQ3: How much more competitive is the Eswatini sugar sector?	Effectiveness, EU-specific (e.g. EU value added)	Sector performances before and after ; comparatives within SADC (ratios). Especially relevant will be average yields per hectare per annum and average costs of transport per ton hauled	Yield and costs figures before and after interventions as may be also inferred from several surveys indicate significant improvements[72] . Fieldwork indicates cultivation, maintenance and irrigation at the highest standards in comparative southern African context. Documentation of growing output, and of Eswatini leadership in sugar exports even to relatively distant African markets all indicate strong competitiveness.
	OVERALL: STRONGLY POSITIVE		
EQ4: How well were the specific objectives of the programme and its projects met, and why?	Impact, EU-specific (e,g. gender, climate change mitigation, EU value-added)	Intervention's quarterly and annual progress reports, and technical reports; I&AP/field observations. Indicators of profitability, yield, costs, and of nature of beneficiaries	Identified infrastructural investments viewed during fieldwork were all of a very high standard and in good working ordre. Documentation pertaining to the same was helpful and reasonable in costs estimates and projected impacts[73]. Indicators of profitability, yield, costs, and of nature of

[71] Landell Mills (2012) *Final Evaluation of the Accompanying Measures for the Sugar Protocol countries – Zambia,* EUD, Zambia ;
And Landell Mills (2013) *END OF TERM EVALUATION OF THE ACCOMPANYING MEASURES FOR SUGAR 2007 IN MALAWI,* EUD, Malawi

[72] Hulla Human Dynamics (2014) and (2017)

[73] European Union Delegation to Eswatini (2007)

			beneficiaries were all recorded positively by several sources[74].
	OVERALL: STRONGLY POSITIVE		
EQ5: To what extent will the impacts and benefits be sustained over time, and why?	Sustainability, EU-specific, mainstreaming (e.g. climate change)	Critical criteria for assessing sustainability in the future. I&AP observations; projections based upon trends and causal analyses of factors underlying them.	Climate change is recorded as a sustainability challenge by several sources[75] and relates mainly to efforts at future irrigation efficiencies. Rising electricity costs to power irrigation systems is the main financial sustainability challenge, with suggested remedies being shifts to solar power alternatives. Land tenure and related management issues are a commonly-expressed though not necessarily critical challenge to future sustainability. Ongoing management training and shifts towards marketisation of share ownership in farms could mitigate this last challenge.
	OVERALL: POSITIVE WITH SOME CAUTIONARY NOTES		

[74] Hulla Human Dynamics (2014) and (2017)

[75] Mhlanga-Ndlovu & Nhamo (2016)