Recommendations of the EIF Taskforce

7 March 2025

Contents

List of acronyms

AfT	Aid for Trade
DF	donor facilitation
DG	Director-General
DPoA	Doha Programme of Action
DTIS	Diagnostic Trade Integration Strategy
ED	Executive Director
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
EOB	Executive Operational Board
ES	Executive Secretariat
HLAC	High-Level Advisory Committee
IF	Integrated Framework
LDC	Least Developed Country
LF	logframe
MC	Ministerial Conference
MEL	monitoring, evaluation and learning
MIS	management information system
NIA	National Implementation Arrangement
NIU	National Implementation Unit
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
TF	Taskforce
TFM	Trust Fund Manager
ToC	theory of change
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
VfM	value for money
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Introduction

The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Taskforce (TF) was established in September 2023 to make recommendations on the future of the EIF after the closure of Phase 2. It has considered the need for, and the design of, a future programme and made recommendations accordingly.[i] The key conclusion is that continued **trade-related productive and institutional capacity-building** support to least developed countries (LDCs) is needed; **there remains a role for, and added value from, a multilateral partnership**, and the aims and objectives of the EIF remain as relevant today as when the initiative began.

Within the broad landscape of Aid for Trade (AfT), the EIF remains the only dedicated multilateral fund for LDCs. It has LDC ownership and capacity-building at its core. It has served as a welcoming and easily accessible entry point for LDCs to navigate the complexities of securing trade-related LDC priorities.[ii] The EIF has always ensured strong ownership and an LDC-driven agenda, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – a point emphasised in the EIF Evaluation (2021).[iii]

The EIF has achieved many successes since its initial creation in 2006 (building on the Integrated Framework (IF)). It has secured trade mainstreaming across LDCs, with almost all established National Implementation Units (NIUs) now fully integrated within respective trade ministries. Phase 2 of the EIF is estimated to have secured more than $2 billion in resources to support LDCs' productive capacity development.[iv]

The EIF TF has considered the need for and design of a future programme to advance LDCs' sustainable development. Even though LDCs' share of world exports and commercial services has doubled over the past 30 years, collectively the group accounts for only around 1% of global trade.[v] This is despite accounting for almost 15% of the global population. The goal to double LDCs' share of world trade by 2020, agreed as part of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was not met.

There are currently 44 LDCs, of which 37 to date have become World Trade Organization (WTO) members and some are in the process of accession;[vi] 41 LDCs are participating in the EIF at present.[vii] More than 70% of LDCs are located within Africa, with a high degree of commodity dependency and extreme vulnerability to climate change.[viii] To address the trade and development challenges of LDCs, the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) (in addition to the SDGs) defines an agreed agenda for trade-related support. Strengthening LDC participation in global trade is a shared objective of the international community and one of the priority areas of the DPoA for LDCs for 2022–2031. The international community has also agreed to support the smooth transition of forthcoming LDC graduates.[ix] The EIF's graduation policy allows countries that graduate from LDC status to remain eligible to receive support for at least five years from graduation.[x]

The conclusion of the EIF TF is that a Phase 3 is needed to ensure continued support to LDCs and graduated LDCs, and that this should run concurrent to the DPoA (to 2031). The EIF Phase 2 strategic goals of strengthening institutions and policy mechanisms, reducing supply-side constraints, leveraging resources for LDCs' trade and promoting inclusive trade remain a challenge. The TF underscores the EIF's unrivalled strengths and its major successes, including: the development of National Implementation Arrangements (NIAs) that have enabled LDCs to access new and alternative sourcing of financing, and a cadre of LDC officials to determine their own trade priorities.[xi] However, improvements are needed, including the implementation of the EIF Evaluation (2021) recommendations. In addition to these, the following sections summarise the recommendations of the EIF TF: to enhance the overall effectiveness of the programme, to leverage the resources required to address LDCs' trade and investment priorities and to ensure greater accountability across the partnership towards this objective.

2. Summary of recommendations

1. Implementation of the EIF Evaluation (2021) recommendations. While the most recent EIF Evaluation (2021) was positive, it put forward strategic recommendations, including the following: (i) better tailor support; (ii) review and rejuvenate the partnership; (iii) rework the role of the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS); and (iv) achieve sustainability through alternative sources of finance. Through a consultative process and review of the evidence, the TF has validated these four strategic recommendations, which must be implemented in Phase 3. However, the TF has also reflected carefully and provided further detail on how the strategic recommendations can be effectively implemented (see Appendix 2).

1.1. The management of Phase 3 must define within a new Programme Framework Document how the EIF Evaluation (2021) recommendations and the TF recommendations in support of these, will be addressed and progress reviewed.[xii]

2. Alignment of Phase 3 with LDCs' trade-related development goals. The next phase of the EIF should begin as soon as possible to ensure minimal disruption in support to LDCs. While the TF agrees with the current objectives of the EIF, it recommends a more explicit reference to the global development goals – the SDGs and the DPoA – with the future EIF aiming to increase LDCs' integration into world trade and supply capacity so as to double their share of world exports by 2031. The new theory of change (ToC) put forward by the EIF TF aims to support this objective.

2.1. Phase 3 should run concurrently with the DPoA up until 2031. The new leadership must ensure key decisions are taken before 2031 (including if a Phase 4 is needed; this process will be supported by an evaluation undertaken by the end of 2029 – see also recommendations under 'Monitoring, evaluation and Learning').

3. Strengthening of the institutional anchor with the WTO and support to LDCs' engagement with the multilateral trading system. Within the new Phase 3 ToC, the links to the WTO are made more explicit and strengthened. The institutional anchoring of the EIF Executive Secretariat (ES) within the WTO is a key part of the EIF's added value, but the TF concurs that it must be strengthened. The WTO is unrivalled as a forum to support more effective donor coordination, with unparallelled capacity to convene and raise the profile of LDC issues and priorities across the WTO membership.

3.1. The EIF must feature more centrally as a key interlocuter with the multilateral development and trade ecosystem and WTO members: to enhance coordination and boost the level and type of trade-related productive capacity-building available for LDCs in support of their trade and investment priorities and development goals. The EIF is the only entity in the world with access to diagnostics and action matrices in almost every LDC. The high-level changes proposed to the EIF governance are intended to support this process.

4. New governance structures to ensure accountability and achieve Phase 3 objectives. Phase 3 must strengthen the unique value proposition of the EIF: country ownership and the partnership approach. It must build on the successes of past interventions and adapt approaches to respond more effectively to new priorities. To do so, the TF recommends a reformed and fit-for-purpose governance structure that enhances accountability across the partnership, raises the profile of LDCs' trade and investment issues across WTO members and leverages greater resources to address them.

4.1. The TF recommends the creation of an Executive Operational Board (EOB), supported by a High-Level Advisory Committee (HLAC). These changes are intended to ensure Phase 3 of the EIF is driven by LDCs but supported by the partnership and a strengthened relationship with the WTO: to raise the profile of LDC issues and priorities, not just across the membership, but across all other spheres of influence on global economic trade and investment issues and international development.

5. A reinvigorated EIF partnership to leverage collective resources. What sets the current EIF apart from all other trade support is LDC ownership, and the partnership approach to boost sustainable development through trade. This framework is the basis from which resources must be leveraged to maximum effect in support of LDCs' trade and investment priorities.

5.1. Renewed political commitment across all partners must be secured and new partners engaged to tackle new emerging issues. The proposed changes in ways of working and the governance structure of Phase 3 are intended to reinvigorate and strengthen the EIF's partnership approach.

6. Catalytic interventions that demonstrate the added value of the EIF. Phase 3 of the EIF must remain a trusted partner for LDCs, with leveraging and sustainability central to its operations. The ES will focus more on the coordination of stakeholders in building and leveraging the framework component of the initiative, with the aim of mobilising the resources needed to achieve the objectives set in relation to the new ToC and the related logframe (LF). In relation to projects to support the building of productive capacity, the more central focus on leveraging resources is intended to reinvigorate the partnership approach and ensure EIF added value.

6.1. The future ES will engage with new partners (e.g. on development and climate finance, technology), and the proposed improvements in overall EIF governance are intended to support this process. This restructure is intended to support the delivery of workable solutions and interventions where the added value of an EIF intervention is clear and can have the most catalytic effect.

7. New approaches to institutional capacity-building. The role of the Phase 3 EIF will be to build dynamic institutional capabilities. The central focus will be to support LDC officials in the process of identifying their country and region-specific priorities, understanding what different entities can offer and how, and then working to translate these into distinct activities that build LDCs' capabilities (including through project proposals). New ways of working with existing capabilities, existing strategic studies and assessments (that build on the DTIS) and other sectoral or issue-based studies will form the basis to assess and prioritise interventions. In other cases, LDCs' trade and investment priorities are already defined, including those related to WTO engagement, such as trade facilitation.

7.1. The objective of Phase 3 remains to ensure NIUs are fully sustainable, self-sustaining and integrated or linked to government structures to better support trade-related engagement and related benefits, where feasible, in line with national priorities. Integrated and fully sustainable NIUs, as part of the trade-related in-country ecosystem, including NIAs, are sought, unless exceptionally justified and approved by the new Phase 3 EOB (based on defined criteria and appropriate planning in conjunction with LDCs, and with consistent monitoring and review of relevant indicators). The TF recommends the Board review the current approaches to the monitoring of sustainability and integration of NIUs and the related targets, and whether new ones are needed for Phase 3.

8. New theory of change and logframe. A new ToC and LF must underpin Phase 3. Through the creation of a new ToC and LF, the TF has sought to better leverage the legitimacy and convening power of the WTO, amplified by the technical expertise of new and existing partners, to create a more catalytic programme of support, that develops new institutional capabilities and is more aligned with the SDGs and the DPoA.

8.1. Within Phase 3 of the EIF, the three-pronged approach will end. Funded catalytic projects from the EIF Phase 3 will still be linked to LDCs' priorities, even though there will be greater flexibility in terms of how the diagnostic and action matrix is defined. The inability of LDCs to create and sustain a NIU should not constrain their ability to access Phase 3 resources, and LDCs should have the choice to prioritise the different resource windows within Phase 3.

9. Improved value for money. The TF recommends that the future programme ensure a greater share of resources is channelled to LDCs and that total overheads and administrative costs are reduced. The TF recommends a reconsideration of the split between administrative and technical cooperation costs defined under Phase 2. The future overhead and administrative costs should be in line with best international practice delivering enhanced value for money (VfM) alongside improved efficiency and effectiveness. The EIF must grow in line with its resource endowment.

9.1. The TF has carefully weighed up the pros and cons of the split in management and fiduciary functions and concluded that the structure should remain with improvements made but reviewed further in Phase 3. Longer term, ahead of any potential fourth phase, the EOB will consider whether a new competitive tendering process for the TFM function, or merging the ES and the TFM into the same institution, can achieve better VfM.

9.2. The TF recommends that Phase 3 aim to be bigger than Phase 2 of the EIF (2016–2022). Reaffirming the ambition to double AfT to the LDCs based on 2018 levels, the TF aims to achieve an envelope of at least $200 million, in stages. These resources will need to be mobilised from a broader set of donors and innovative financing sources.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). A new MEL framework is needed. This must monitor performance in meeting Phase 3 objectives, e.g. leveraging resources, as well as the impact of specific activities undertaken.

10.1. The flow of information between LDCs and donors, and the wider EIF partnership, on progress against priorities must improve. The TF recommends changes in how the TFM reports to the ES. The TF recommends a new management information and financial reporting structure to increase the accessibility of information and the ability to monitor and manage performance, as well as to strengthen overall accountability and integrity.

10.2. An external evaluation of Phase 3 should be budgeted for and be available no later than the end of 2029. The new Board must agree on the need for a future EIF TF, or other mechanism, to inform decisions about a future phase, well in advance of the end of Phase 3 (and therefore before 2031).

3. Recommendations

3.1. Implement EIF Evaluation recommendations

The TF has consulted widely across stakeholders regarding the future focus and organisational structure of the EIF. **The TF has validated the four strategic recommendations of the 2021 Evaluation.** These are (i) better tailor support; (ii) review and rejuvenate the partnership; (iii) rework the role of the DTIS; and (iv) achieve sustainability through alternative sources of finance. Through its consultative processes and review of the evidence, the TF has validated these four strategic recommendations, which must be implemented in Phase 3. However, the TF has also reflected carefully and provided further detail on how each recommendation can be effectively implemented (see Appendix 2).

The TF therefore also provides additional recommendations related mainly to the initiation of a new structure of governance: to enhance overall accountability and to rejuvenate the partnership to ensure more effective leveraging of resources to address LDCs' trade and investment priorities.

The TF has been concerned by the absence of systematic consideration by all partners regarding the role of the EIF within broader AfT programming. These issues are explored at length in the EIF Evaluation (2021) and the Options Paper (2023), and the TF has also reflected on the findings of previous EIF evaluations (e.g. 2014) and previous TF reports, as part of the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the EIF.

The TF has reflected at length on what changes in governance are needed to secure the enhanced coordination needed to rejuvenate the partnership. The TF concurs that this necessitates a major reform in the current governance of the EIF, and a strengthening of the institutional anchoring to the WTO.

3.2. Institutional anchor

The TF has assessed at considerable length the different pros and cons, as well as the feasibility, of changing the institutional hosting arrangements. The TF has explored the possibility of combining the dual functions – the ES and the TFM – together inside the WTO. The deliberative process has included reflection on the findings of the EIF Evaluation (2021) and the Options Paper (2023) in relation to the different pros and cons. These issues were explored further through the consultative process undertaken during 2024 with EIF partner agencies and the current TFM, to assess the overall implications of combining the dual functions.

The views of all partners consulted in this process have been weighed up by the TF, which **concludes that, while there could be VfM and efficiency gains from bringing the dual functions together (within either the WTO or an alternative institution), the time taken and the disruption it would cause to explore those options further – including with the wider WTO membership – currently outweigh the perceived benefits.**

This is especially so given the urgent need for the next phase of the EIF to mobilise quickly to advance the global goals. However, the TF recommends that the new Board structure assesses the VfM and efficiency of the current split in functions well ahead of any potential Phase 4. Moreover, it recommends that key changes and improvements be implemented within the current structure, especially in relation to the reporting between the ES and the TFM, and the reporting of progress as part of improved management information systems (MIS).

3.2.1. Strengthening the relationship with the WTO

The unique value proposition of the future programme will be strengthened by aligning more closely with the WTO. This is in view of the unrivalled ability of the WTO to convene and to raise the profile of LDC issues and priorities, to avoid duplication with other WTO funds and to support enhanced coordination between capital- and Geneva-based LDC officials on their trade priorities. Beyond procedural benefits, close alignment is likely to improve programme outcomes for LDCs. This relationship will support LDCs' trade reform processes and help LDCs make use of existing WTO rules, and fully participate in the development of new ones.

The EIF is the only entity in the world with access to diagnostics and action matrices in almost every LDC. The ES must be positioned as a central resource on LDC trade and investment priorities – which underscores the need for a stronger institutional relationship with the WTO. It will be focused on leveraging resources, supporting LDCs' engagement with the WTO and acting as a knowledge hub/resource on LDC trade and investment issues and priorities.

3.2.2. Administrative arrangement with the WTO

Some changes and improvements can be implemented based on the current administrative arrangement with the WTO Secretariat. **While the TF has concluded that the dual structure should remain for the time being, it underscores the need for change.** The TFM must support the ES, with a clear reporting structure that enables the ability to track progress at the project level for each LDC. The TF appreciates that an independent TFM provides better fiduciary reassurance; however, the TF considers current reporting to be overly complex, with improvements needed to enhance the accessibility of information provided, and overall accountability of the Executive Director (ED).

The TF recommends a new management information and financial reporting structure (e.g. merging the EIF Knowledge Hub and the EIF MIS). A handbook or training guide should be provided. It also recommends a simplification of reporting (e.g. digital – online reporting system). There should be a shift towards lighter country reporting, with more central studies conducted to better link the cross-cutting aspects of the anticipated results. There could be a dedicated focal point within the TFM to support this process.

3.3. New governance

First, EIF Phase 3 must do more to raise the profile of LDC trade and investment-related priorities. Second, it must secure more effective resource mobilisation. Third, it must also strengthen accountability across the partnership, a challenge that has been consistently highlighted in previous evaluations and past TF reports. The TF recommends a reappraisal of the overall role of the Board, which includes the following changes to deliver the three objectives:

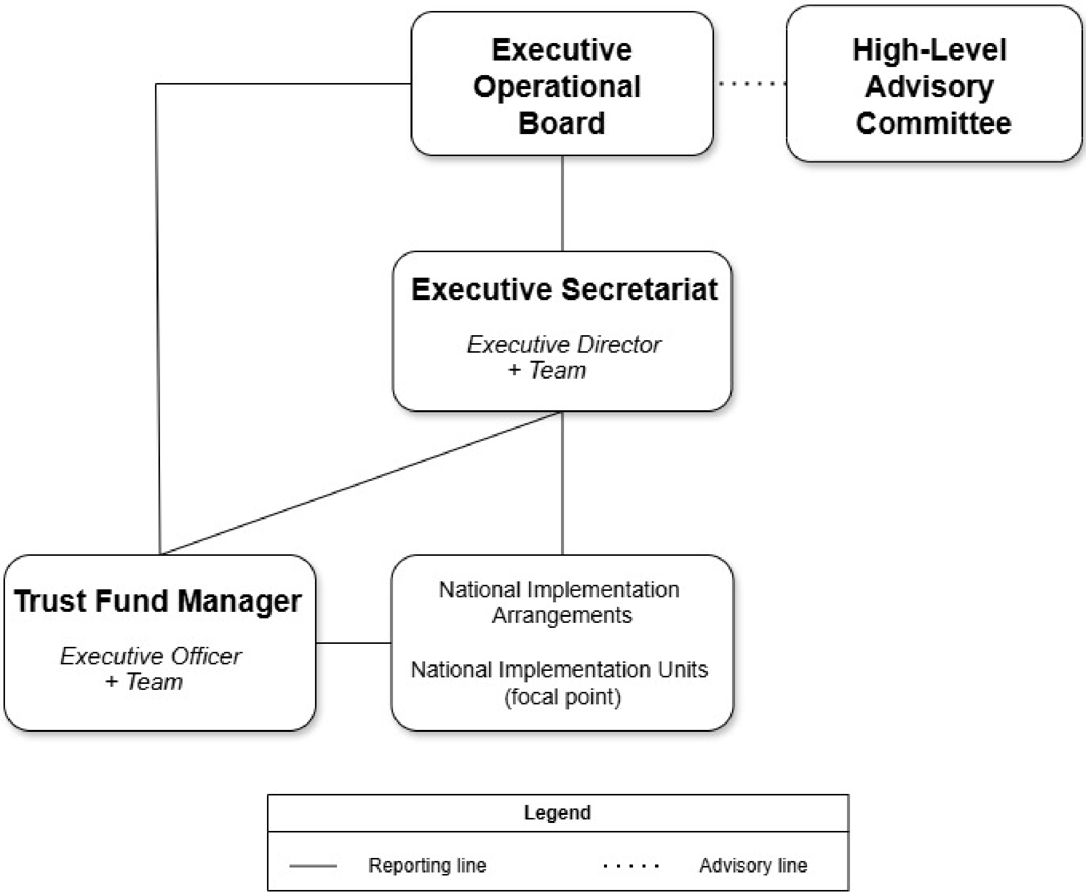
1. **High-Level Advisory Committee (HLAC):** A High-Level Advisory Committee co-chaired by a donor government representative and the WTO Director General (DG) and invited heads of partner agencies[xiii] with high-level representation from capital-based officials and Geneva-based officials within LDCs and donor countries.
    - Under normal circumstances, the HLAC will meet annually, though biennial meetings (one in person, one online) may be required at the beginning of Phase 3 and towards the end of 2031. For example, this could be on the sidelines of the

Global AfT Review (biennial) or other relevant events that intersect with EIF Phase 3 objectives – this includes WTO Ministerial Conferences (MCs).

- The Chair of the HLAC, in conjunction with other members, including heads of agencies and LDC and donor representatives, will review overall progress and coordination issues among partnership members.
- Strategic oversight, guidance and direction will be provided to the Chair of the Executive Operational Board (EOB) and the ED as needed, to support EIF Phase 3 objectives.

2. **Executive Operational Board (EOB):** A new EOB chaired by a LDC permanent representative or other LDC nomination, which comprises senior officials from LDC capitals and donor capitals, including Geneva-based officials in addition to the EIF ED and the TFM. There must be greater LDC representation, supported by the ES, with the composition to be determined as new Terms of Reference (ToRs) are developed.
   - This body will meet quarterly (including once a year in person, to coincide with the HLAC).
   - The ED will be accountable to the EOB.
   - The EOB will oversee the preparation of the strategic plan and the annual workplan.
   - The EOB will approve the overall strategic direction of the EIF and agree on the future phases of the EIF. It will approve the hiring of senior management, including the ED. It will also ensure scrutiny and provide oversight on MEL, evaluations and audits.
   - The TFM will report to the ES and ensure reporting is undertaken at the project level and within consolidated reporting structures to ensure more effective tracking of LDCs' trade and investment priorities and EIF support and interventions. However, the TFM will also report separately to the EOB in line with donors' fiduciary requirements and other best practice.

Figure 1: New EIF governance



3.4. Reinvigorating the EIF partnership

The EIF programme has always been seen as a partnership between the LDCs, the EIF Donors and the EIF Core Agencies. This was recognised and highlighted in the EIF Evaluation (2021), which recommended the partnership principle be further strengthened around a common mission and set of objectives to enable the LDCs, with their special needs, to integrate into the global trading system.[xiv] The TF has also taken note of the findings of previous EIF evaluations, which have similarly drawn attention to the **need to ensure more effective ways of working within the partnership, and to better define the roles of the partners.**

To achieve the desired success and ensure a demonstrable impact on LDCs' advancement of the trade-related SDGs and the DPoA, **Phase 3 EIF must maximise the expertise, skills and knowledge of current and new partner agencies.** The contribution of partner agencies includes the mobilisation of resources, and other specific added value attributes of agency participation to deliver and respond to LDCs' trade and investment priorities and to leverage resources to maximum effect.

The TF has concluded that the **partnership approach must adapt to strengthen coordination within an increasingly complex AfT landscape,** with a declining share of the proportion of grant-based assistance to LDCs.[xv] New partnerships must be sought with thematic and/or specialised financial institutions, as well as with regional and multilateral development banks, international organisations and foundations, to facilitate the LDCs' access to the resources and knowledge needed to address trade issues stemming from new challenges such as climate change, sustainability requirements, disruptive technology, trade finance and investment.

3.4.1. Partner and agency engagement

The proposed changes summarised in the new ToC and governance are intended to reinvigorate the EIF partnership within Phase 3. **Current and future partners will form part of a new HLAC, while the new EOB will comprise LDC and donor capital-based officials including Geneva-based officials.** The proposed changes are intended to ensure the partnership is leveraged to secure skills and expertise, and knowledge to assist and advise the new EIF Phase 3 – the ES and the new EOB. Partners will be needed to implement where necessary on the request of LDCs. They will also support resource mobilisation efforts. **The contribution of the agencies must support the ES, to mobilise the resources needed to address trade and investment priorities of LDCs, based on the unique value proposition of each agency.**

For example, country programmes and their progress in addressing new prioritised action matrices can be reviewed by the new EOB, and relevant issues (e.g. challenges to overcome, or thematic issues to prioritise) could be shared to the new HLAC (e.g. within new advisory relations between the HLAC and the EOB). To support this process, nodal focal points should be established in the agencies at the technical level to support the higher-level engagement within the new governance structure.

3.4.2. Improving coordination

The role of the EIF in Phase 3 to coordinate donors and agencies remains valid, but needs updating given the increasingly crowded landscape: there are more donors, more funds and more complex sources and types of funds than existed when the IF and even the EIF were created. The TF recommends a renewed commitment and buy-in from donors and agencies to support LDCs' trade and investment priorities and improvements in the coordination mechanisms.

The new approach to governance in Phase 3 of the EIF is intended to secure high-level engagement and commitment from across the partners. In particular, the EOB, supported by the HLAC, is intended to ensure Phase 3 of the EIF is driven by LDCs, supported by the partnership and strengthened by the relationship with the WTO. In so doing, it aims to overcome previous coordination failures. These have been explored at length in the EIF Evaluation (2021) and the Options Paper (2023), and include, for example, how the NIAs have not always been able to hold other partners to account regarding their in-country programming and the extent to which it aligns with defined LDC priorities; similarly, the resources channelled through the EIF in-country have often been considered too little to warrant much interest among donors; and, finally, not all donors have been aware of LDC-defined priorities within action matrices and the related DTIS or update.

The process of reviewing progress within Phase 3 of the EIF must therefore change, to ensure demonstrable links between the support provided and LDCs' defined priorities. These changes will support enhanced coordination across the partnership, with clearer accountability for actions (including resource mobilisation).

3.4.3. Donor engagement

In-country: The TF has reviewed in detail the shortcomings with the current approaches to donor facilitation (DF) in-country. **The TF recommends that the DF role be merged with existing in-country structures (e.g. the chair of whichever donor coordination mechanism exists in LDCs).** For example, if there is a sector working group or roundtable donor group, this would also comprise the DF role for the EIF. However, the TF also recognises the need for LDCs through their own NIAs to take the lead and play a more centrally coordinating role; the new approach to institutional capacity-building is intended to support this process. Coordination requires strong government commitment and leadership.

In Geneva: **More structured 'portfolio' discussions between the ES and donors in support of the EIF should take place once per year; these could be within the margins of the proposed HLAC meetings, or other relevant forums (e.g. the Global AfT Review).** These discussions should bring together core donor capital representatives, Geneva-based representatives and relevant donor facilitators from in-country. The proposed changes in Phase 3 governance are intended to engage more capital-based representation from across LDCs and donors. However, more structured engagement is needed to support learning through peer-to-peer engagement, which takes better account of the broader landscape of AfT provision.

3.5. New theory of change and logframe

Through the creation of a new ToC and LF, the TF has sought to better leverage the legitimacy and convening power of the WTO, amplified by the technical expertise of new and existing partners, to create a more catalytic programme of support, that develops new institutional capabilities and is more aligned with the SDGs and the DPoA. Appendix 3 summarises the new approach of EIF Phase 3 (Figure 1 Appendix 3) and summarises a new indicative LF (Figure 2 Appendix 3). Appendix 1 provides further detail and a description of the new proposed ways of working.

Within Phase 3 of the EIF, the three-pronged approach will end. This means the sequential approach to accessing support to building productive capacity will finish. Instead, new ways of working with existing capabilities, existing strategic studies and assessments (that build on the EIF DTIS and other sectoral or issue-based studies) will form the basis to assess and prioritise interventions[xvi] and develop an action plan (or action matrix) to achieve them. Support and guidance will be provided to develop project proposals to help LDCs access and leverage a wider range of funding beyond the EIF. **Funded catalytic projects from EIF Phase 3 will be more clearly tracked relative to LDCs' priorities, with greater flexibility in terms of how the diagnostic and action matrix is defined.**

The future leadership and new governance structure of the EIF within Phase 3 will need to agree on the new indicative ToC and LF. This can be detailed through further consultations among the partnership to refine the approach and assign indicators (including baseline data). However, it is recommended that EIF Phase 3 adopt the following principles: (i) continued agility and speed of demand-driven responses to LDCs; and (ii) independence – ability to support sensitive trade negotiations (as well as existing WTO agreements with provisions related to LDCs).

3.6. National Institutional Arrangements

The new approach to institutional development is intended to support the development of new skillsets and to shift the emphasis towards mobilising finance, accomplished by building enhanced capacity within existing NIAs. However, **NIAs must also be grounded in high-level commitments** and must reflect national priorities, to achieve smooth subsequent integration and sustainability. The guidelines for NIAs need to be updated and new ways of working considered, to ensure high-level political engagement and accountability across all partners. The new governance structure for Phase 3 and the ToC is intended to support this process. The future structure of support for institutional capacity-building must provide the right incentives for engagement or risk losing skilled staff and institutional knowledge.

The TF appreciates the starting point of Phase 3 – with substantial progress on the integration of NIUs into government structures and their sustainability. However, the TF underscores the consistent challenges in achieving the full sustainability of NIUs, despite this being a goal included within the Programme Framework Document (2015) for Phase 2 of the EIF (with targets set to phase out direct EIF support).[xvii] The objective remains to ensure full autonomy of NIUs, with staff and recurring costs managed by the governments, supported by the EIF in their resource mobilisation efforts. The mechanism to maintain EIF focal points and NIUs should remain in place, with the objective to move towards further integration within national structures and their sustainability. And there must be improved monitoring and reporting of NIU integration and sustainability criteria and indicators by the new Board and governance structure, and any reduction or phase-out in NIU support must be planned for in partnership with LDCs, to assist them in the process of taking on staffing and other recurring costs.

The objective of Phase 3 remains to ensure NIUs are fully sustainable, self-sustaining and integrated or linked to government structures to better support trade-related engagement and related benefits, where feasible, in line with national priorities. Integrated and fully sustainable NIUs, as part of the trade-related in-country ecosystem, including NIAs, are sought, unless exceptionally justified and approved by the new Phase 3 EOB (based on defined criteria and appropriate planning in conjunction with LDCs, and with consistent monitoring and review of relevant indicators).The TF recommends the Board review the current approaches to the monitoring of sustainability and integration of NIUs and the related targets, and whether new ones are needed for Phase 3.

The TF acknowledges how different models of NIAs have evolved over time, and that Phase 3 must provide sufficient flexibility, to ensure access to different types of support, especially for LDCs in conflict or post-conflict situations. The end of the three-pronged approach is intended to address some of these issues and increase the flexibility of Phase 3 EIF to enable access to catalytic project-level finance, to respond to emerging priorities and to ensure the EIF can remain a trusted partner. **The inability of LDCs to create and sustain a NIU should not constrain their ability to access Phase 3 resources, and LDCs should have the choice to prioritise the different resource windows within Phase 3,** e.g. Activity 1 and Activity 2, as summarised in the new ToC and LF (see Appendix 3).

3.7. Resources

The TF recommends that Phase 3 aim to be bigger than Phase 2 of the EIF (2016–2022), which secured an endowment of $131.4 million. The TF reaffirms the ambition of the DPoA, which sets out to double AfT to the LDCs based on 2018 levels.[xviii] To achieve an envelope of at least $200 million, resources will need to be mobilised in stages from a broader set of donors and new approaches that tap into innovative financing sources, expanding the depth (global, regional and national level) and breadth (public, private, philanthropic, thematic, impact investment and blended finance) of a resource mobilisation platform (in line with the new ToC) with specific targets set for achievement.

The TF recommends a resource mobilisation strategy be developed urgently to ensure Phase 3 begins and supports the new objectives. The EIF should explore new funding modalities – such as co-funding, or earmarking – to expand the donor base and increase the overall level of resources, including from sources such as climate finance, impact investment and blended finance. As well as an overall increase in resources for Phase 3 compared with Phase 2, the proportion of the resources channelled to LDCs must increase.

3.8. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

A new MEL framework is needed. This must reflect performance of the programme in terms of the overall objectives – i.e. on leveraging and coordination – as well as the impact of specific activities undertaken. There are different ways in which this could be undertaken (e.g. through an independent MEL function, or based on LDCs' own performance monitoring of the SDGs). Regular reviews by the EOB and HLAC of country programmes are expected, including learning hearings based on clear reports and data on how the framework operates**. An external evaluation of Phase 3 should be budgeted for and be available no later than the end of 2029**.

A periodic review of performance must be installed within the new programme design. Improving the flow of information between LDCs and donors, and the wider EIF partnership, regarding progress in addressing LDC trade and investment priorities must be a priority in Phase 3 – to support the communication of successes, but also to assist in overcoming challenges. **The monitoring of progress in Phase 3 must capture some of the core values of the partnership, such as leveraging of funds**.

For Phase 3, a clear plan of how to address each of the relevant Strategic Recommendations from the EIF Evaluation (2021) and the new recommendations from the EIF TF must be developed (see Appendix 2 Table 1). The new Board must also decide on the need for Phase 4 of the EIF (which could be based on the external evaluation of Phase 3 or other assessments). The new Board must agree on the need for a future EIF TF, or other mechanism, to inform decisions about a future phase, well in advance of the end of Phase 3 (and therefore before 2031).

3.9. Value for money

The TF recommends that the future programme ensure a greater share of resources are channelled to LDCs and that total overheads and administrative costs are reduced. The future overhead and administrative costs should be in line with best international practice delivering enhanced VfM alongside improved efficiency and effectiveness. The TF recommends a reconsideration of the split between administrative and technical cooperation costs. With a greater number of integrated NIUs and LDC ownership of project implementation, the thresholds of Phase 2 must be reviewed and overall administrative costs reduced. The definition of ES technical cooperation, what it entails and the related costs must be more clearly defined and monitored as part of overall performance management.

It is critical to ensure institutional memory and staff capacities are maintained, to support the effectiveness and efficiency of Phase 3. Looking ahead, further changes to staffing requirements should be implemented in line with the current oversight provided by the WTO on human resource management, as well as more general best practice, to support the objectives of EIF phase 3.

The TF recognises that in Phase 2 the staffing structure of the EIF was designed for a larger resource envelope than was secured.[xix] Phase 3 must avoid this. The EIF ES must grow in line with its resource endowment. Overall, the new staffing structure must be designed considering the likely size of the programme and its new focus (which requires new skillsets), with VfM in mind and appropriate comparisons made with other comparable organisations.

The TF underscores the importance of introducing changes in how the ES and TFM work together, including improving MIS and reporting processes between the ES and the TFM, as well as to the Board (and beneficiaries and other stakeholders). Improvements in VfM must be achieved. Longer term, ahead of any potential fourth phase, the EOB will consider whether a new competitive tendering process for the TFM function, or merging the ES and the TFM into the same institution, would achieve better value for money.

For Phase 3, the ES should indicate a calendar/timeline for the implementation of the new programme, to ensure minimal disruption between Phases 2 and 3. It should indicate the timeline of formation of a new Board, the first meeting of the Board, the continuation of or a call for expression of interest for Trust Fund management and a resource mobilisation strategy. Efforts are needed now to secure resources for Phase 3. The upcoming Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development 30 June–

3 July 2025 provides a key opportunity for the EIF to be visible and demonstrate how it can support the advancement of LDCs' specified trade-related objectives and engagement with the multilateral trading system.

Appendix 1: Taskforce deliberations and membership

The key stages in the deliberative process of the TF included:

- December 2023, Retreat: This was organised with TF members based on the major findings from the EIF Evaluation (2021) and the Options Paper (2023) (which includes a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of different institutional arrangements (e.g. combined management and fiduciary functions). This two-day workshop provided the opportunity for TF members to interact and discuss the findings of the two documents and to begin to provide recommendations on how to introduce the changes needed. Interventions were also delivered by external participants on key thematic issues.

- January–April 2024, Inception Report: Based on the findings garnered from the retreat, the TF identified several recommendations, clustered into thematic areas: more choice in support and greater flexibility; enhanced coordination across different levels and types of actors; building dynamic institutional capabilities; raising the profile of the diagnostics; embedding a catalytic approach to boost productive capacity; and improving overall governance and accountability. Implicitly, the TF deliberations substantiated many of the major recommendations of the EIF Evaluation (2021), as well as highlighting the need for the recommendations made in previous evaluations to be more effectively implemented.

- May 2024, consultative process: An external version of the Inception Report was used to obtain feedback and to explore the ways and means to operationalise the recommendations of the TF based on inputs received from stakeholders across the existing EIF partnership. This process validated many of the points raised by TF members, but also identified different ways to address them, including in relation to the current institutional arrangements and organisational structure.

- July–August 2024, future design: Based on the outcomes of the different consultative processes, the TF proceeded to articulate the Phase 3 EIF objectives and to design a new indicative ToC and LF. This process was undertaken through a series of workshops and sought to integrate the (validated) recommendations detailed in the Inception Report into an operational design structure. The TF considered in detail the different advantages and disadvantages of the current EIF institutional structure, including the split in management and fiduciary aspects. During August and into September, the TF reviewed the EIF MIS and financial reporting systems, with interventions delivered by staff members of the ES and TFM. The TF also received other inputs from the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) regarding the governance structure of other trust funds managed.

- September 2024, final consultations: This was used to obtain feedback on future objectives and design, as well as to address issues regarding governance, institutional anchoring and personnel. This final step in the TF's deliberations included the sharing of an external version of a draft design document with selected partners, who were invited to provide their feedback. This process was intended to secure assistance from the partnership to translate the vision of the TF into action and into an operational design. At that point, the TF had not yet reached consensus on several areas, including the future governance structure of the future programme and institutional arrangements (including the split in management and fiduciary functions), as well as resources required. The TF received detailed comments on the draft design document and further information from existing members of the partnership.

EIF Taskforce composition

The TF has comprised five representatives from the LDC constituency (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Nepal, Senegal) and three representatives from the donor constituency (Germany, Sweden, Switzerland), as well as the EIF Donor Coordinator (UK) and the LDC Group Coordinator (Djibouti) and LDC Focal Point (Togo). The TF has been chaired by two Co-Chairs, one from the LDC constituency (currently The Gambia, previously Djibouti) and the other from the donor constituency (currently Germany, previously Switzerland). The TF has met regularly (almost every week) since its start on 14 September 2023 to date. As of December 2024, a total of 40 meetings between TF members had been undertaken.

Co-Chairs

The Gambia (2023 to date) (Baturu Camara)
Germany (2024 to date) (Laura Saint Andre-von Arnim, Roland Guttack)
Switzerland (2023–2024) (Christina Pfenniger)
Djibouti (2023) (Oubah Moussa)

Members

Bangladesh (Ileas Miah)
Burkina Faso (Soulemane Sodre)
Djibouti (Oubah Moussa)
Nepal (Durgaprasad Bhusal)
Senegal (Ousmane Ka)
Sweden (Sven Olander)
Switzerland (Christina Pfenniger)
Togo (Edem Kossi)
United Kingdom (Oli Sharpe, John Ayre)

Appendix 2: EIF Evaluation (2021)

Table 1: EIF Evaluation (2021) Recommendations and TF conclusions

	Recommended changes in delivery (draft Evaluation, October 2021)	Recommendations of final Evaluation (December 2021)	TF Conclusions
1	Give further support to LDCs to bounce back from Covid-19 Continue institutional capacity support and more differentiated support (estimated $100 million for 5-year programme)	Strategic Recommendation 1: LDCs, including recently graduated countries, will require further support to bounce back from Covid -19 that is better tailored to the respective development paths of participating countries Moving towards better tailored support given the different characteristics of LDCs, e.g. front runners compared to less effective absorbers	Boost in resources in line with DPoA and mobilising resources for LDCs that surpass Phase 2, by expanding the depth (global, regional and national level) and breadth (public, private, philanthropic, thematic, impact investment and blended finance) of a resource mobilisation platform, as well as the modalities (co-funding, leveraging and (soft) earmarking) beyond trust fund contributions
3	Better tailor future support to LDCs' development path		Design of a new approach to assess country priorities and plans
3	Rework the role of the DTIS process	Strategic Recommendation 3: Rework the role of the DTIS process	New approach to ensuring the added value of EIF interventions New approach to the DTIS and greater use of existing LDC strategies and identified priorities; sectoral or issue-based studies Priorities within action matrices to be more limited and progress monitored and tracked (reflected in EIF reporting structures)
4	Rejuvenate the mission motivating the partnership	Strategic Recommendation 2: Review and rejuvenate the partnership based on joint values and a commitment to integrate LDCs into the global trading system,	New ways of working with the partnership High-level governance structure introduced (which includes representation from partners)

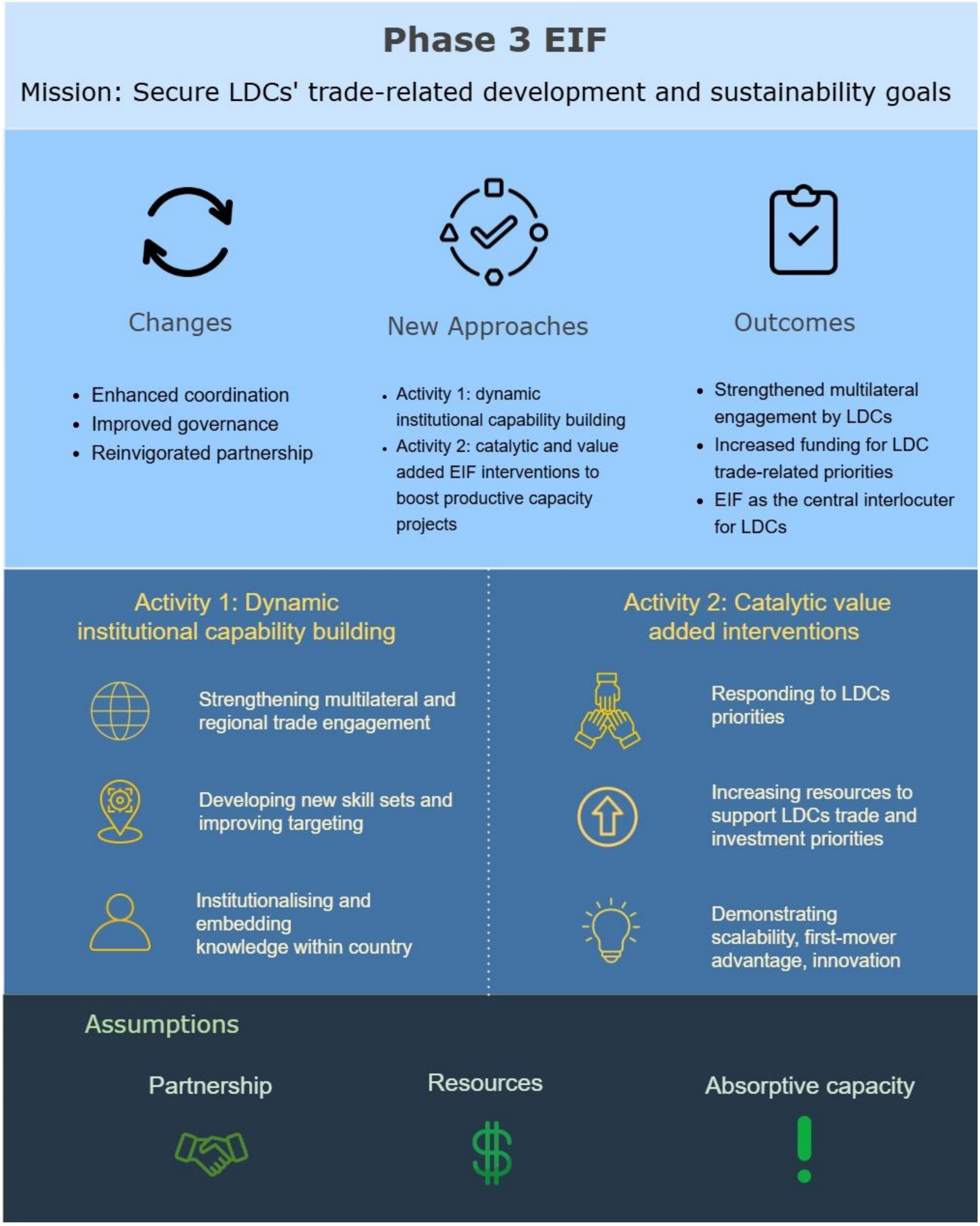
	Recommended changes in delivery (draft Evaluation, October 2021)	Recommendations of final Evaluation (December 2021)	TF Conclusions
		and strengthen their voice and stature in the strategic leadership of future trade-related productive capacity-building	
5	Empower the Board; refocus to delivering results Introduce professional Board members		New Board structure and composition: EOB chaired by LDC representative; HLAC co-chaired by a donor government representative and WTO DG
6	Organise to be even smarter, leaner and faster Combine the dual functions (fiduciary and management)		Improvements in MIS and reporting, including how the TFM reports to the ES and then subsequently to the new Board structures
7	Achieve sustainability through alternative sources of finance	Strategic Recommendation 4: Achieve sustainability through alternative sources of finance Secure a greater volume of predictable long-term finance based on LDCs' needs, including the readiness of local companies to absorb finance. Explore more innovative finance including blended finance or private sector finance	Positioning of future programme to leverage external resources (and surpass the achievements of Phase 2 EIF)

Note: Recommended changes are adapted from the draft 2021 Evaluation (October 2021); we refer only to those of relevance for the delivery of a future EIF (this means we exclude Strategic Recommendation 2: ES and TFM should develop a plan to maximise capturing results by 2023.

Source: Adapted from Options Paper (2023) and updated to reflect the final 2021 Evaluation (December 2021).

Appendix 3: EIF Phase 3

Figure 1: Overview of Phase 3 EIF



Description of new approach

Building dynamic institutional capabilities

The future ES will undertake new coordination functions, including engaging across existing and with new donors. This will be achieved through an overall repositioning of the future programme/Phase 3 as the focal point both for donors and for LDCs to identify expertise on LDCs' trade and investment priorities, as well as emerging issues (e.g. sustainability, digital). It must ensure greater interaction between LDC officials in country and Geneva-based missions, as well as boost peer-to-peer engagement and learning.

The central focus will be on supporting LDC officials in the process of identifying and prioritising LDC country- and region-specific priorities, and understanding what different entities can offer and how, and then working to translate these into distinct activities that build LDC capabilities and productive capacities (including through project proposals).

Supporting catalytic projects

To address LDCs' trade and investment priorities and meet the ambition of the SDGs and the DPoA, new innovative and flexible ways of working are required. Interventions directly supported by the EIF to boost productive capacity must meet criteria that ensure a value-added focus and greater potential catalytic effect. Criteria include scalability, a first-mover advantage, innovation and other aspects related to demonstrable added value and/or ability to leverage other resources, including through the partnership and building on the technical expertise available.

While 'leveraging resources' can sometimes be used in a way that implies attracting investment, it is not strictly the same thing; 'leveraging resources' generally means using existing assets or capabilities to their fullest potential to achieve a larger goal, which could include attracting investment as a means to further amplify those resources, but it also encompasses utilising them effectively without necessarily seeking external capital. The TF concurs that boosting the catalytic leveraging function of EIF will be at the heart of what the ES should support (e.g. it should seek to increase the resources available to meet the specified needs, with targets specified).

Different funding windows could be provided. Initial levels of support could be scaled up contingent on progress against key indicators. Every project must demonstrate its connection to a defined LDC trade and investment priority.

At the global level, the leveraging resources function will be led by the ED of the ES, supported by staff resources dedicated to reinvigorating the partnership approach. The stronger institutional relationship to the WTO through the new Board structure is intended to maximise the visibility of LDC trade and investment priorities across the WTO membership. At the regional and country levels, coordination and resource mobilisation activities will include liaising more closely and in a targeted way with relevant in-country partners and donors, as well as those with a regional scope.

The ES will play an active and supportive role, working with EIF beneficiaries to build a country-level pipeline of projects, anchored initially by EIF funds with the ambition to secure further resources. The type of projects and their potential to be catalytic will vary across LDC country and regions – e.g. EIF pilot projects that crowd in other sources of funding, including from local donors and partners; a seed funding approach, where pilot projects can be handed over entirely to another donor/agency once scaled up; or technical assistance to support the NIUs to access other financial resources to support their trade-related priorities.

Figure 2: Indicative logframe

Indicative logframe

Activity 1: Dynamic institutional capacity building

Outcome:

Strengthened human capabilities and institutional frameworks

- New approaches to identifying and prioritising needs
- New knowledge products to develop new skillsets
- New institutional frameworks

Output 1: Strategic assessments	New approaches to diagnostics and assessing priorities for the action matrix Sectoral and issue-based assessments, adapting to emerging priorities Support to LDCs to strengthen multilateral engagement to address trade and investment priorities
Output 2: Tailored knowledge products	Tools to support project management, impact investment, supported by new approaches to boost collective learning for LDC officials (including professional qualifications) Skill retention strategies and codified knowledge (e.g. manuals, guides, handbooks) Structured peer to peer engagement and new learning resources
Output 3: New domestic policy frameworks	Domestic policy reform and new frameworks to support bankable trade and investment projects In-country support for engagement with WTO related reform of domestic policy frameworks

Activity 2: Catalytic value-added, interventions to boost productive capacity

Outcome:

Strengthened trade and investment positions

Output 1: Catalytic projects funded based on LDC priorities	Responding to defined LDC priorities and ensuring EIF added value Demonstrating first-mover advantage, scalability, replicability Addressing existing gaps in relating to WTO commitments (e.g. trade facilitation)
Output 2: New frameworks to secure the leveraging of resources	Specific activities to support the leveraging function New approaches to engaging different types of donors, the private sector and finance New sources of investment attracted (across different types of actors) for LDCs priority projects
Output 3: Structured peer to peer private sector engagement	Knowledge products to support peer to peer engagement on private sector and value chain development Specific activities to engage and support the National business ecosystem Tailored outputs and activities to support regional and global engagement on value chain specific issues

Appendix 4: Example of Action Plan

Recommendation	Specific points	Action required
1. The EIF Evaluation (2021) recommendations must be implemented	1. Better tailored support; 2. Review and rejuvenate the partnership; 3. Rework the role of the DTIS; 4. Achieve sustainability through alternative sources of finance See also Appendix 2 in EIF TF Recommendations	The management of Phase 3 must have a clear plan, with deadlines and progress review points, for how to address each of the relevant Strategic Recommendations from the 2021 Evaluation ES to implement changes related to 1, 3 and 4 Board to implement changes related to 2 and 4 ES to develop resource mobilisation strategy to support 4 Board to agree new approach for 3
2. Phase 3 should run concurrently with the DPoA until 2031	Begin Phase 3 as soon as possible to ensure minimal disruption in support to LDCs Agree new ToC and LF and approach to identification of LDC priorities ES to ensure support is aligned with LDC priorities agreed within DPoA and SDGs, including in new reporting approach ES together with Board to ensure processes are established to review TFM function within two years; to ensure a future TF or other process is established to ensure a decision on Phase 4 is agreed well in advance of 2031	Communicate Phase 3 to WTO members (LDC Subcommittee) ES to develop new Programme Framework Document for Phase 3 ES to support current EIF Board to hand over to the new Board structure by June 2025 ES to develop resource mobilisation strategy Agree timelines and required actions to support decisions on future of EIF (e.g. Phase 4), merging dual functions or retaining the dual structure Communicate changes with EIF focal points, NIUs/NIAs

Recommendation	Specific points	Action required
3. Strengthened institutional anchor with WTO	Finalise and agree new ToC and LF Support LDCs' engagement with WTO Support LDCs' implementation of relevant WTO agreements, as requested; hone support to several WTO agreements that contain provisions on technical assistance to LDCs	ES to finalise and agree new ToC and LF for Phase 3 to be agreed by new Board by June 2025 ES to engage with WTO Secretariat to implement changes based on administrative arrangement ES to engage with current partnership and secure new high-level Board members
4. New governance structure	Agree and create new ToRs for agreed Board structure Create an EOB, supported by a HLAC; create new ToRs for ES Agree new ToRs for TFM that provides for smooth transition and supports resource mobilisation strategy to begin by June 2025 Ensure review of split in dual function is scheduled for two years from Phase 3 Implement required changes in MIS	ES with current Phase 2 Board and WTO Secretariat to initiate changes and develop new ToRs for HLAC, EOB and leadership for Phase 3 ES within Phase 2 to pilot and agree changes in reporting structures between ES and TFM and new systems for Phase 3 for new governance structure ES to ensure Board commits and undertakes review of TFM function
5. Rejuvenate the partnership approach	Secure renewed political commitment across all partners; this could take place at sidelines of MC14 Introduce changes in ways of working with partners (e.g. nodal focal points) and engagement in governance structure of Phase 3 Framework for partnership engagement between EIF Core Agencies, LDCs and ES in terms of roles and responsibilities, in line with	ES in conjunction with Board to initiative changes Nodal points within agencies to support EIF engagement identified Prepare high-level launch of Phase 3 at MC14

Recommendation	Specific points	Action required
	objectives and new ToC of future programme Framework for thematic partnership engagement including with new partners (e.g. climate, digital, investment, technology, etc.).	
6. Catalytic interventions and EIF added value	Implement new approach, guidelines and criteria to support added value of EIF interventions Guidelines related to project identification, formulation, submission, review, approval, implementation New resource windows and potential earmarking	ES to develop new guidelines for ES focal points and engagement with agency nodal points ES will engage with new partners (e.g. on development and climate finance, technology ES to develop resource mobilisation strategy at country level through new role in Phase 3
7. Institutional capacity-building	Implement new approaches to supporting LDC officials based on skillsets and capabilities Use of existing strategic studies and other assessments, or new sectoral or issue-based studies	Prioritised action matrix based on ES and NIAs' engagement and expertise from EIF partnership Incorporation of existing needs, e.g. trade facilitation Progress reports to Board must be linked to the new action matrices; no projects approved unless a direct link to action matrices
8. New theory of change and logframe	Three-pronged approach will end Funded catalytic projects from EIF Phase 3 linked to LDC priorities but greater flexibility in terms of how diagnostic and action matrix is defined	ES to agree and finalise new ToC and LF New tracking system established in reporting structures, including to Board, e.g. digital dashboard
9. Improved value for money	Ensure a greater share of total resources are channelled to LDCs	ES to develop new benchmarks to guide Phase 3

Recommendation	Specific points	Action required
	Reduce total overheads and administrative costs Reconsider split between administrative and technical cooperation costs (previously agreed by Phase 2 Board 30/70 split)	All partners to reflect on how overall costs and overheads can be reduced in Phase 3 New approach to ES technical cooperation through repositioning as central coordinator and role to secure resources and provide catalytic funding
10. Monitoring, evaluating and learning	New MEL framework and approach to monitoring Phase 3 progress Greater focus on capturing data regarding leveraging resources Improved flow of information between LDCs and donors, and wider EIF partnership on progress External evaluation of Phase 3 available no later than end of 2029	ES to develop new MEL framework and reporting to Board and wider partnership

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Endnotes

i Appendix 1 summarises the process of the deliberations undertaken by the EIF TF and outlines its composition.
ii The Options Paper (2023) described the broad context of AfT provision and notes that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization used to provide a guide to trade-related technical assistance, but this ceased in 2017. The Inception Report (2024) also provided further context on the history of the EIF and the IF.
iii See https://web-archive.oecd.org/temp/2021-08-02/73869-parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm
iv See Annual Report (2023).
v The 100th session of the Subcommittee on the LDCs at the World Trade Organization (WTO) recently reviewed progress and reaffirmed members' commitment to addressing the challenges faced by LDCs (WTO, 2024a).
vi Ethiopia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan are currently in accession to the WTO.
vii Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sudan and Yemen do not have active projects owing to ongoing conflict.
viii Extreme economic and environmental vulnerability and related indicators define LDCs and are reviewed periodically by the United Nations Committee for Development Policy, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2023) underscores the extreme dependency on a limited number of exports (for example, 74% of LDCs depended on oil, copper and cotton for at least 60% of total merchandise export earnings between 2019 and 2021). 17 out of the most 20 climate-vulnerable and least climate-prepared countries were LDCs (UNCTAD, 2023).
ix Bangladesh, Lao PDR and Nepal are scheduled for graduation by 2026, followed by Solomon Islands in 2027 and Cambodia and Senegal by 2029. For more information on the timelines of countries' graduation from the LDC category see www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category/ldc-graduation.html
x See https://www.un.org/ldcportal/content/enhanced-integrated-framework-eif-0#
xi See Annual Report (2023).
xii See Appendix 4.
xiii For example, observer status membership for selected agencies will be determined by the Board Chairs and the EIF ED based on operational relevance, capacity and financial considerations. It should include current partners (e.g. the International Trade Centre, UNCTAD, the United Nations Development Programme, etc.), but also consider new partners, for example the African Development Bank or others relevant to the needs and priorities of EIF Phase 3.
xiv Table 1 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the EIF Evaluation (2021) recommendations.
xv See OECD and WTO (2024) 'Financing Aid for Trade Priorities'.
xvi This approach is in line with the recommendations of the EIF Evaluation (2021) as indicated by Table 1 Appendix 2.
xvii See paragraphs 33–37 of Programme Framework Document (2015).
xviii More specifically, para 173 (p.52) of the DPoA states: 'We aim to increase the proportion of total Aid for Trade going to least developed countries, provided according to development cooperation effectiveness principles, which is expected to double by 2031 from 2018 levels. We also call for increased support from multilateral development banks and the private sector to meet trade financing needs. We urge private and public sector actors to work together to address trade finance gaps, by enabling a rapid transition to paperless trading and addressing regulatory constraints that hinder trade finance' (www.un.org/ldc5/sites/www.un.org.ldc5/files/doha_booklet-web.pdf)
xix See Options Paper (2023).