



Executive Summary

Final evaluation of the Guinea-Belgium
cooperation programme 2019-2023

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Executive summary

1.1 Presentation of the evaluation

The Belgian government's bilateral cooperation programme with Guinea is a commitment to sustainable and inclusive economic growth, planned for a period of five years with a substantial budget of 45 million euros. The objective of Enabel's bilateral cooperation programme in Guinea is to contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth, human development, and respect for fundamental human rights along the Conakry-Kindia-Mamou axis, in alignment with the priorities of the Guinean government. The programme aims to offer all targeted populations new opportunities for integration and socio-economic emancipation, while reducing inequalities.

The final evaluation covers the period from 2019-2023, marking the end of the cooperation programme and the start of the new programme, which retains, for the most part, the same strategic orientations and concerns the three areas of intervention (Entreprena, She Decides, Capacita). It essentially serves the purpose of strategic learning within Enabel and at the level of the Guinean partner, to improve development practices and cooperation policies. It aims to provide, on the one hand, a comprehensive understanding of the effects of the cooperation programme and to identify lessons at the strategic level to guide future development initiatives, and, on the other hand, to provide an in-depth analysis via the realisation of four case studies to answer specific questions useful for the implementation of the next programme.

The main users of the evaluation are those who are directly concerned by its results, such as the management teams of the Guinea-Belgium 2024-2027 portfolio, national partners such as the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation, as well as Enabel Brussels and the DGD. They will use the findings to adjust their approaches and strategies. Secondary users, such as other cooperation countries, local Enabel technical partners and research organisations, are interested in the evaluation results without being directly affected by them, and will use them to enrich their knowledge and future work.

The field phase of the review took place from 22 January to 5 February 2024, in Conakry, Mamou, and Kindia to meet the stakeholders, visit the achievements, collect data, establish findings, triangulate primary and secondary data, and proceed to an in-depth analysis of the programme. The findings made it possible to draw conclusions on the implementation and to formulate strategic and operational recommendations.

1.2 Findings

Presentation of scores by criteria (3 focused on) and by interventions

Interventions	Criteria		
	Effectiveness	Impact	Durability
Agricultural Entrepreneurship (Entreprenariat Agricole)	B	B	B
Women's Entrepreneurship (Entreprenariat Féminin)	B	B	B
Urban Entrepreneurship (Entreprenariat Urbain)	A	B	B
Green Economy (Economie Verte)	B	B	B
Capacita	A	B	B
She Decides	A	B	B

Program effectiveness

The Agricultural Entrepreneurship (EA) intervention was effective in improving access to technical advice and developing agroecology, enhancing the yields of the pineapple and potato sectors, and increasing the agricultural income of producers. However, significant delays in infrastructure impacted the intervention and generated risks for producers. Existing financial tools were strengthened, which helped to boost agricultural entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, the new financial tools did not meet expectations.

The Green Economy (VE) intervention developed a territorial approach that enabled good mobilisation and consultation of local stakeholders on environmental and green economy issues. The supported economic dynamics initiated processes, but the cluster approach was insufficient. It requires greater consultation among stakeholders to agree on technical and varietal characteristics, depending on the processed products, technological processes used, and targeted markets. The dynamics of the sector remain to be consolidated and clarified.

The Urban Entrepreneurship (EU) intervention was effective overall, with virtually all outcome indicators achieved. Its inclusive approach enabled the involvement of more than 40% women entrepreneurs and 30% rural entrepreneurs.

The Women's Entrepreneurship intervention was implemented to complement the EA and EU interventions. Most of the result indicators were achieved, but the mechanism for granting kits to entrepreneurs and the credit-backed subsidy experienced difficulties in implementation.

The She Decides intervention, despite difficult implementation conditions, succeeded in making strategic reorientations that enabled the achievement of the initially targeted results. Although some major achievements were made at the end of the project, the intervention managed to address the various challenges encountered.

The Capacita intervention demonstrated an ability to respond to the capacity-building needs of beneficiaries and partners of other programme interventions. Despite delays at start-up and hesitations during the initial implementation period, Capacita ultimately achieved a satisfactory level of performance in achieving results, and on time. However, the added value was limited in terms of contributions to other projects, with a weak transversal approach with the other programme interventions.

Program impact

The technical improvements made by EA have increased the income of the producers and entrepreneurs concerned, supported the development of agricultural production businesses, and induced an improvement in living standards with better access to health and education for children, and strengthened their self-esteem. However, the sector dynamics have been more limited with still reduced effects on the players in processing. The territorial dynamic has shown very positive effects for addressing environmental issues, with concrete actions to protect water sources, improved stoves, and more sustainable economic activities, but the economic benefits of these activities for local populations, particularly the benefits of tourism, are not yet visible.

EU has made a significant contribution to job creation in Guinea by supporting business growth and implementing pilot approaches to support the training and integration of young recruits. However, the effects could have been accelerated by improving the link between urban and rural contexts.

The process of supporting entrepreneurs undertaken by EF has created more self-confidence among entrepreneurs, better leadership, and instilled a spirit of entrepreneurship. However, the changes observed could have been more significant if the clusters established and the connections between producers and agro-food processing units had truly worked.

She Decides induced positive changes among targets by improving their level of knowledge on key subjects and strengthening their power to act. It also worked to improve the supply and quality of services in the areas of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The synergy between the different actors suggests positive changes in the quality of the response, particularly in the fight against certain types of GBV.

The support provided by Capacita has enabled the establishment of a dynamic for strengthening the individual skills of human resources, acquiring knowledge leading to changes in the methods of organising work within the reinforced structures, and improving the quality of services to their users.

Program sustainability

The programme allowed producers to experiment with innovations and exchange ideas, encouraging their adoption of sustainable techniques and the sustainability of changes. Partner organisations and technical services were involved and will be able to continue supporting producers. However, the announced and observed reduction in water resources due to climate change remains a threat. EV facilitated experimentation and exchanges between producers on agroecology and green economy initiatives, promoting the adoption of sustainable techniques and the sustainability of changes. The mobilisation of local private and public actors is also a guarantee of sustainability. However, the ongoing land conflict over the Ecolodge poses a risk to sustainability.

EU sustainability is supported through the involvement of government and local structures in the implementation and monitoring of activities. In addition, a structural transformation was carried out with the improvement of the business environment and the creation of a framework conducive to the development of entrepreneurship. EF has strengthened monitoring by technical committees and invested in the transfer of skills to institutional actors by enhancing their operational and managerial capacities, enabling them to fulfil their roles more effectively.

By involving national and local authorities from the sectors concerned by the intervention from the outset in the implementation and monitoring of activities, She Decides has laid the essential foundations for ownership and sustainability of the intervention. However, actions must be consolidated to sustainably incorporate the approaches and strategies developed into the practices of key stakeholders.

The implementation of Capacita laid good foundations for the sustainability of capacity-building actions through certification, institutional strengthening of affected structures, the co-construction approach with stakeholders, peer training, and training of local trainers. However, the capacity for autonomous replicability of actions remains a concern.

Complementarities and synergies

The search for synergies and complementarity arose with the dual requirement of seeking the overall performance of the programme and that of reciprocal reinforcement of the different interventions, in terms of added value specific to each pillar, as well as strategic orientation and specific thematic targeting of other donors' projects.

The constraints linked to the operationalisation of the various interventions, as well as the pressure put on the teams to achieve results, have significantly limited the time dedicated to strategic reflection, consultation, and internal collaboration between teams to establish the bases and define the different options and possibilities for synergies. The discussions carried out enabled better identification of possible synergies and complementarities, moving towards a more pragmatic approach to developing working relationships within operational teams and identifying practical convergence/axes/modalities.

This reflection notably strengthened collaborations between EF and She Decides, between EA, EF, and EU, and with the interventions of other donors.

Quality of the partnership

The programme governance structure was organised through a strategic level, via the Steering Committee, and an operational/local level, via the Regional Consultation Committee (Conakry, Kindia, Mamou), chaired by the Guinean partner. Despite the vagaries of the changing context, steering committees and technical committees were regularly organised. Beyond the formal steering and monitoring mechanisms and frameworks allowing regular exchanges on the progress of the programme by component, the governance of the intervention also involves political dialogue and partnership dynamics between Belgium and Guinea.

The programme was characterised by Enabel's stated desire to cultivate a quality partnership relationship with its Guinean counterpart, based on shared responsibility and continuous political dialogue within the programme's governance bodies. The operational teams also worked internally to promote a common vision and a feeling of belonging to Enabel's culture and values. Additionally, Enabel's teams were committed to getting their Guinean partners, both national and local, to adhere to this collective vision.

The evaluation noted the weakness of the Guinean side in the quality of the response and contribution to this necessary dialogue. This weakness reflects one of the dimensions of the country's fragility, but it is also marked by the lack of continuity and permanence of the interlocutors in certain ministries, as well as their difficulty in moving away from a "wait-and-see posture" regarding support. The level and quality of Belgian inter-institutional dialogue (Enabel and the Belgian Embassy in Guinea) could also be strengthened.

During discussions with Belgian stakeholders, the mission noted that the level and quality of inter-Belgian dialogue (Enabel and the Belgian Embassy in Guinea) would also benefit from strengthening. This dialogue should not only focus on strategic aspects to monitor, maintain the dialogue with the Guinean side but also focus on a more operational dimension (joint meetings, joint field missions, carrying out studies, etc.).

Capacity building approach

Strengthening the capacities of Guinean institutions and actors, given Guinea's fragile situation, has remained a constant concern due to its impact on programme implementation, particularly its inadequate consideration in practices. The need to enhance human resource capacities constitutes a major developmental issue in Guinea. Capacity building emerged as a cross-cutting dimension across all programme intervention areas, as well as a specific intervention area through the Capacita pillar.

The Capacita intervention addressed a genuine need for individual and institutional capacity building. Following efforts to implement recommendations from the mid-term review (MTR), Capacita gradually shifted from a passive "wait-and-see" approach based on beneficiary requests (demand-driven approach) towards a more proactive stance. This evolution was evident in the implementation team's initiative to proactively engage beneficiaries by offering support (supply-driven approach) rather than waiting for formulated requests that may not materialise.

Complementarity of third-party financing

The six interventions of the bilateral cooperation programme are complemented by actions carried out by Enabel with funding from the European Union (Sanita-Clean Cities and Integra). EF and Integra collaborated on infrastructure development, the organization of dyers' cooperatives, strengthening technical capacities of EF beneficiaries, and farmer field schools in Mamou, Dalaba, and Pita. The experience from Sanita-Clean Cities inspired EF's collaboration with municipalities and facilitated the establishment of a partnership agreement with the Manéah town hall. EA/EV and Sanita-Clean Cities collaborated to scale up compost production and distribution. EA and Integra worked together on involving young people supported by Integra in construction projects for EA. Capacita provided a sectoral expert who serves as the focal point for the Entreprena programme.

Transversal consideration of gender

Enabel has worked to align itself with national priorities and policies on women's rights and gender equality in Guinea, as well as with other programmes. Enabel's 2019-2023 gender strategy is based on an empowerment approach for women and the promotion of equality between women and men. These principles are complemented by a human rights approach closely linked to gender equality, guiding the organisation's actions.

Integration and consideration of the specificities and vulnerabilities of girls and women have been consistent priorities for Enabel within the programme framework. The programme has provided targeted responses, particularly through She Decides and entrepreneurship initiatives for women and young people.

Synergy between these interventions and others has aimed to create conditions conducive to maximising the participation and socio-economic inclusion of women and young people. This includes enhancing their

ability to exercise sexual and reproductive rights and fostering entrepreneurial initiatives, which are closely interconnected. However, the mere existence of these interventions does not guarantee sufficient attention to gender issues in the programme unless all interventions address the root causes of gender inequalities in Guinean society.

All interventions have integrated gender issues with notable results and impacts. She Decides, through information, education, and empowerment of women and young girls, has strengthened their ability to exercise sexual and reproductive rights and empowered them to speak out against violence. The intervention promotes gender equality and the right to a fulfilling and secure sexual and reproductive life. She Decides also targeted men through widespread awareness campaigns on gender-based violence and women's rights.

Capacita highlighted the importance of increasing female representation in training programmes. Entreprena also addressed gender issues by developing specific interventions (EF), focusing on activities and economic opportunities tailored to women's needs. This includes alleviating daily obstacles faced by women in rural and urban areas. Gender considerations were central to all EA implementing partners, ensuring activities were conducted with and for women producers and entrepreneurs. These efforts have resulted in significant and visible progress among intervention beneficiaries.

Transversal consideration of the environment

Entreprena integrated environmental concerns into its EA and EV interventions by developing agroecological activities to promote more sustainable and environmentally friendly agricultural practices. EA's implementation partners undertook various projects to assist producers in reducing their reliance on synthetic mineral fertilisers, increasing the use of organic fertilisation, and replacing pesticides with bio-insecticides. The adoption and dissemination of these sustainable practices are ongoing. Awareness-raising and training on Integrated Water Resources Management and Social Engineering with Water Users' Associations (AUE) addressed issues related to water resource protection in hydro-agricultural development (AHA). These efforts promoted responsible practices for efficient water use and combatting losses and waste in irrigated systems. Priority actions were identified for watershed protection against erosion, reforestation, source protection, perimeter protection with live barriers, and combating groundwater pollution.

Environmental considerations in the Entreprena component were bolstered by the introduction of the EV intervention. This facilitated consultations among stakeholders involved in the tourist areas of Mount Gangan, adopting a territorial approach to define a vision for sustainable development of the region. Non-financial support provided to entrepreneurs focused on business plan development and training that sometimes included environmental issues. However, Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs) did not directly integrate environmental considerations into their products and lacked "green finance" options. While Capacita did not implement specific national-level environmental actions, it supported the completion of several environmental protection studies. She Decides did not undertake specific actions related to environmental concerns or climate change.

1.3 Conclusions

Enabel's programme demonstrated a balanced approach, integrating both sectoral and territorial strategies. The formulation and planning of the programme were ambitious, especially considering the nascent partnership between Enabel and Guinea, the country's multidimensional fragility, the unpredictable institutional context, and the challenges with human resources. However, the programme effectively addressed identified needs shared by stakeholders, targeting promising sectors and ensuring coherence within the intervention areas. Alignment with the priorities of the Guinean government across various sectors was a key focus during formulation. The approach of co-building partnerships and support pathways with strategic and operational partners enabled tailored support that addressed real needs of target groups, enhancing business development, strengthening institutions, and fostering territorial dynamics.

Enabel invested significant effort in cultivating a shared vision and partnership with Guinean authorities through national and decentralized partner institutions. Despite initial challenges during formulation due to

insufficient discussion on programme management modalities with the Guinean partner, the partnership gradually matured, albeit with persistent challenges.

The quality of this partnership was crucial to programme performance, and initial signs of support from the Guinean side became evident towards the programme's conclusion. Enabel recognises the need to guide the Guinean partner through high-quality political dialogue based on shared reflection and a unified strategy on programme objectives.

Enabel placed considerable emphasis on the quality of its human resources, which significantly contributed to programme success. This commitment fostered a culture of continuous learning among operational teams, although the turnover of experienced staff towards the programme's end posed challenges, potentially leading to a loss of institutional memory and strategic foresight.

While the country's fragility was identified during formulation, its implications were not fully incorporated into the programme's result framework, ambitious interventions, and risk assessment. Enabel's efforts in proactive risk management were commendable but faced challenges due to unforeseen events. Paradoxically, this multidimensional fragility served as an opportunity, underscoring the programme's relevance and providing valuable lessons for Enabel's operations in other fragile contexts. In Guinea's context of fragility, capacity building initiated through the Capacita intervention gains heightened significance, addressing challenges specific to the country's actors and human resources.

1.4 Recommendations

Agroecology case study

#	Recommendations
1	Promotion of agroecology: Carry out communication campaigns to promote agroecological agriculture by demonstrating that it is modern, efficient, and beneficial for health and the environment, using various media and influencers. (Enabel - Strategic Priority A)
2	Youth awareness: Enhance youth awareness of environmental preservation, nutrition, and food security through educational activities in schools, including agroecological gardening projects and competitions to stimulate interest. (Enabel - Strategic Priority A)
3	Production of local biofertilizers: Support and encourage the local production of quality biofertilizers by analyzing and improving processes, while supporting POs (Producer Organizations) and entrepreneurs involved in this sector. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Strategic Priority A)
4	Sustainable management of water resources: Strengthen territorial consultation initiatives for sustainable water resource management by developing local standards and testing techniques for more economical water use. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Strategic Priority A)
5	Small-scale livestock development: Support the development of small-scale livestock and cattle breeding to provide animal manure for compost, financing adequate infrastructure, and improving feeding and grazing systems. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Strategic Priority B)
6	Post-harvest innovations: Support the development of technological innovations for post-harvest processes, including the use of renewable energies and adapted technologies, through training and support for young people and local artisans. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Strategic Priority B)
7	Organic sectors: Support the structuring of organic production and processing sectors with remunerative prices by facilitating contacts between buyers and producers, and establishing quality control and certification systems. (Enabel Guinea and operators – Operational – Priority A)
8	Promotion of agroecology: Continue promoting agroecology through experimental projects and the exchange of practices between producers to adapt innovations to their environments. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Strategic Priority A)
9	Sharing of learning: Strengthen mechanisms for sharing knowledge and co-constructing understanding on agroecology and sustainable resource management through exchange networks in Kindia and Mamou. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Operational – Priority B)
10	Involvement of women: Ensure active involvement of women in decision-making and prioritization of agroecological programs by financing projects that support their agroecological experiments and activities. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Strategic Priority A)
11	Involvement of institutional actors, research, and training: Enhance the participation of institutional actors, research, and training to support changes in agroecological practices. This includes strengthening the capacities of decentralized services, developing links with relay farmers, and increasing research involvement in on-site experiments measuring resilience alongside productivity. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Strategic Priority A)
12	Securing access to land: Gain a better understanding of the land situation to improve rural lease conditions and secure land access for tenant producers in the medium to long term. This involves conducting a study on agrarian situations, developing consultation actions with local stakeholders, and establishing or reinforcing land conflict management systems. (Enabel Guinea and operators - Strategic Priority B)
13	Promotion of agroecology in national policies: Strengthen political dialogue to promote agroecology in national policies, encourage the development of organic sectors, and integrate agroecology into municipal and intercommunity agendas. This includes enhancing advocacy capacities of farmer organizations and funding advocacy actions to support agroecological initiatives. (Enabel Guinea, Enabel Brussels, and operators - Strategic Priority A)

Entrepreneurship case study

#	Recommendations
1	Development of an inclusive procedure manual: Develop and finalize an inclusive procedure manual right from the initiation of financing mechanisms, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. (Enabel, operators - Operational – Priority B)
2	Renewal of the guarantee fund and negotiation of interest rates: Renew the guarantee fund over an extended period and assist the Fédération des Paysans du Fouta Djallon (FPFD) in negotiating interest rates for term deposits (DAT) and leveraging. (Enabel - Strategic-Priority B)
3	Strengthening the capacities of the FPFD: Strengthen the capacities of the FPFD for better identification of credit beneficiaries and improved debt recovery. (Enabel - Operational – Priority B)
4	Development of new credits linked to agricultural equipment: Renew the credit-backed subsidy mechanism for equipment such as motor pumps and tillers, in collaboration with MFIs, entrepreneurs, and equipment suppliers. (Enabel and partners - Strategic-Priority B)
5	Capacity building of GFECs: Strengthen the capacities of members of women's savings and credit groups (GFEC) in market gardening production practices, artisanal processing, and market research. (Enabel - Operational – Priority A)
6	Connecting women entrepreneurs from GFECs and MFIs: Facilitate initiatives to connect women entrepreneurs from GFECs with MFIs. (Enabel - Operational – Priority C)
7	Financial education training: Directly strengthen producer organizations and entrepreneurs in understanding banking conditions and financial negotiation, particularly those already engaged with financial institutions. (Enabel - Operational – Priority A)
8	Monitoring the application of financial products: Ensure follow-up with MFIs to ensure effective application of developed financial products and credit analysis tools, especially for CRG and Finadev. (Enabel and State - Operational – Priority A)
9	Directing subsidies towards agroecology and job creation: Direct subsidies towards improving product offerings, creating decent jobs, and adopting agroecological practices. (Enabel - Strategic-Priority C)
10	Experience sharing sessions: Establish experience-sharing sessions among operators to harmonize understanding of Enabel procedures and promote project operationalization. (Enabel - Operational – Priority A)

Case study Gender

#	Recommendations
1	Establishment of a referral system to care and support services: Establish a referral system to various care services, including psychological, social, legal, and judicial support. (Enabel, MPFEPV, Local GBV Coordination Platforms – Operational – Priority A)
2	Expansion of brainstorming themes and awareness-raising: Expand the themes of brainstorming sessions to include other sexual and reproductive health (SRH) topics and provide facilitators with awareness-raising tools such as image boxes and samples of contraceptive products. (Enabel - Operational – Priority B)
3	Promotion of Kouyé and Hello Ado digital tools: Promote Kouyé and Hello Ado digital tools during CT brainstorming sessions and strengthen links with other SRH/GBV activities within the intervention. (Enabel - Operational – Priority B)
4	Establishment of psychological regulation/debriefing sessions: Establish psychological regulation/debriefing sessions for the teams involved in the implementation of CT. (Enabel - Operational – Priority A)
5	Extension of Transformative Conversations sessions (CT) to other population categories: Extend CT sessions to other population categories and additional educational establishments to broaden Enabel's impact on SRH and GBV issues in Guinea. (Enabel, MPFEPV, and CSO partners - Operational – Priority B)
6	Training of national trainers and peer educators: Train national trainers from relevant administrations and peer educators from the community in the CT approach. (Enabel, MPFEPV, Partners, CSOs - Operational – Priority A)
7	Evaluation of the psychological effects of the CT program: Evaluate the psychological effects of the CT program among beneficiaries and publish a scientific article. (Enabel - Operational – Priority A)
8	Identification of suitable spaces for sessions: Identify suitable and accessible rooms or spaces prior to conducting sessions. (Enabel, Implementation Partners – Operational – Priority A)
9	Establishment of a robust monitoring-evaluation system: Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system for reporting reliable data. Ensure organizations contracting with Enabel sign a commitment to ensure the well-being of field teams. (Enabel, Implementation Partners – Operational – Priority A)

Infrastructure case study

#	Recommendations
1	Involve the Technical Office of Rural Engineering (BTGR) more in the choice of agricultural areas: Engage the BTGR in selecting agricultural areas for development to meet user needs. (Enabel Guinea & BTGR - Operational – Priority A)
2	Review contracts with execution companies: Review contracts with companies whose projects remain incomplete to finalize the work. Engage the BTGR and other technical services in monitoring and overseeing project execution. (Enabel Guinea & Companies & BTGR - Operational – Priority A)
3	Ease the conditions for awarding and executing works contracts: Simplify conditions for awarding and executing works contracts assigned to local companies or consider staggered payment terms to reduce delays. (Enabel Guinea – Strategic – Priority A)
4	Improve the involvement of beneficiaries in the choice of priorities: Enhance beneficiary participation in prioritizing irrigation schemes and other infrastructures. Transfer skills to beneficiaries for participatory community planning, infrastructure repair, and maintenance. (Enabel Guinea & Fatières – Strategic – Priority A)
5	Increase the literacy of women within POs: Enhance women's literacy to strengthen their influence within peasant organizations and communities. (FEPAF – BG, FPDF, UGAS – Operational – Priority D)
6	Strengthen awareness of the effects of climate change: Raise awareness among members of farmer organizations about the impacts of climate change. (FEPAF – BG, FPDF, UGAS – Operational – Priority A)
7	Encourage the use of trash cans and sorting garbage: Promote the use of trash cans and garbage sorting in work areas among farmer organizations. (Enabel & Fatières - Operational – Priority A)
8	Remove the garbage dump near the cold room: Clear the garbage dump near the PK 36 cold room to preserve the environment and user health. (Elected officials/local authorities of Manéah - Operational – Priority A)
9	Establish a site security process: Ensure that the process for making sites available and securing them is agreed upon and supported by legal documents. (Local authorities and elected officials - Operational – Priority A)
10	Grant an exemption to complete the projects of the 2019-2023 program: Secure an exemption for Enabel to complete projects initiated under the 2019-2023 program. (Donor – Strategic – Priority A)