

STRATEGIC REVIEW REPORT

JOINT MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE INDICATIVE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (ICP III 2017-2021) BETWEEN BURKINA FASO AND THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG

FINAL VERSION – 11 MAY 2021

In 2020, the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs commissioned a mid-term review of the Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) III between Luxembourg and Burkina Faso. The review was carried out by Artemis Information Management S.A. The Ministry has published below, the executive summary of the main results of this exercise.

The observations, assessments and recommendations expressed in this document represent the views of the evaluators and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Mid-Term Review (J-MTR) of the 3rd Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP III) between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Burkina Faso took place in two successive phases between October 2020 and May 2021. **The first phase consisted of three technical evaluations of ICP III projects and programmes** selected by the two partners for detailed examination. This phase ended in February 2021 with the production of three specific reports, the conclusions of which were presented and discussed with all stakeholders in Luxembourg and Burkina Faso. **The second phase** started in February 2021 and **consisted of a strategic review of the partnership between the two countries**, integrating the conclusions of the technical evaluations carried out previously and complementary analyses of the other components of ICP III, as well as other non-ICP interventions. The intermediate conclusions of the review work were discussed with all the actors in the partnership during a participatory meeting (24 March); the final report was circulated in mid-April and the final conclusions and recommendations were presented to all the actors during a feedback meeting held on 5 May in Ouagadougou.

The work was carried out by a multidisciplinary team of six experts mobilised by Artemis in Luxembourg (Thierry Paccoud, team leader; Virginie Kremer, deputy team leader; and Sandrine Beaujean, ICT leader for phase I, quality guarantor for phase II), in Burkina Faso (Dieneba Ouedraogo and Serge Sedogo, sociologists and gender and environment experts) and in Senegal (Mohamadou Sy, quality monitoring for phase I, education/training expert for phase II).

Cooperation between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Burkina Faso began in 1996, with the latter becoming a priority country for Luxembourg's cooperation in 1998. The partnership can therefore rely on a long common history, which has allowed strong relations and a real mutual trust to be built. Burkina Faso is thus one of the priority countries for Luxembourg's cooperation and the support it receives is comparable to, if not greater than, that provided to the other priority countries in the Sahel region (Mali, Niger and Senegal).

A first ICP was formulated between the two governments in 2003, followed by a series of programmes (ICP II and its extension) between 2008 and 2016. ICP III, the subject of this J-MTR was signed in November 2016 for a period of five years. Luxembourg's support funding has grown programme by programme, and the funds mobilised under ICP III amounted to 94 million euros.

ICP III is largely a continuation of interventions in sectors already covered in the previous programme, such as sustainable management of natural resources, education and vocational training, and support for information and communication technologies (ICT). These three sectors of intervention together mobilise almost two thirds of the financial envelope available. Luxembourg's cooperation is implemented through different modalities (direct execution, operational partnership agreement, common fund) and through different actors (the implementing agency LuxDev, the United Nations technical agencies – UNFPA and UNDP – and the Luxembourgish NGO, SOS-Faim). There is thus a diversity of approach which is a richness in Luxembourg's cooperation. There has been no overall geographical targeting of ICP III and the projects/programmes are developed according to their respective objectives and contexts. Generally speaking, the final beneficiaries of interventions are the most vulnerable populations, with particular emphasis on women and, to a lesser extent, young people. Emphasis is on capacity building of local partners (government services but also NGOs and local associations).

The review also analysed other interventions by Luxembourg deployed over the same period but outside of ICP III. They represent about one third of the ICP III allocation, bringing the overall envelope of Luxembourg's support to Burkina Faso to nearly 120 million euros. These non-ICP III interventions are very diverse both in terms of the themes/sectors they target (inclusive finance, digitalisation,

employment, health) and the partnerships they mobilise (regional cooperation, cooperation with NGOs, humanitarian action).

Overall, both partners are very satisfied with their cooperation as shown by the conclusions of the Partnership Commissions held annually at ministerial level. The day-to-day policy dialogue is monitored by the Embassy for Luxembourg and the DG COOP of the Ministry of Finance for Burkina Faso. The different programmes and projects are aligned with the sectoral strategies and policies they support and are integrated into the national budget/programme management process that was established in 2018.

Whether it is ICP III as a whole or each of its components, the analysis through the OECD DAC criteria is very similar. The relevance of interventions is high in a context where development needs are huge and varied; the fight against poverty remains one of the ultimate objectives of the country's development. Effectiveness and efficiency are limited by factors that relate both to the complexity of some of the intervention modalities and to the difficulties encountered in implementing the interventions. The monitoring and evaluation systems of the ICP components are performance-based and do not allow for impact measurement. Sustainability is questionable, particularly with regard to the effects of interventions on capacity building. Finally, the internal coherence of ICP III is weak because there is no exchange or coordination between the components to generate synergies. External coherence is also weak beyond the contribution to some multi-donor funds, in particular for interventions in the education and vocational training sectors.

The interviews and contacts conducted during the review led to identifying seven functions that would be fundamental to the ICP approach. These functions were analysed by the evaluation team. The first concerns the establishment of a **framework for dialogue** between the two partners. In this respect, the review concludes that the mechanisms and processes that drive this dialogue are too limited: a single Partnership Commission per year does not allow all strategic issues to be dealt with in depth; the limited availability of human resources at the Embassy does not allow for compensation on a daily basis. The second function concerns the ICP as a **framework for capacity building and transfer**. Although the ICP is basically oriented towards this theme, there is no system for monitoring the effects of the various interventions in this field to know whether they have a real impact and how it is being achieved. The ICP should also be **a programmatic instrument** that secures long-term funding for certain priority cooperation activities. This aspect does exist, but it potentially implies a certain rigidity that does not always allow for adaptation to changes to context, which can be rapid in a fragile country. The ICP should also be **an instrument of coherence** for all of Luxembourg's interventions in Burkina Faso. Today, almost 30% of Luxembourg's aid to Burkina Faso is deployed outside of the ICP and not necessarily in line with the priorities and orientations of the ICP. **Accountability** should be facilitated by an ICP approach because it should provide a framework for analysing and presenting the cooperation results. In the absence of a documentation and knowledge management system, it is not possible to build an argument that can be widely shared in Luxembourg and Burkina Faso. The **mobilisation of actors from different backgrounds** and working with different perspectives is a real asset of ICP III. Nevertheless, these partners have little opportunity to exchange and therefore to reflect on synergies; there is a wealth of intervention that is not fully exploited. Lastly, **innovation and reflection** should enable us to do better in a process of transformation and improvement of practices. It is clear that innovation takes place more outside the ICP than within it.

On the basis of these remarks, but also taking into account the conclusions of the participatory workshop on 24 March 2021, the evaluators proposed three blocks of recommendations: general recommendations concerning three themes that the review team considered essential for the partnership, recommendations for the finalisation of ICP III and, finally, recommendations concerning the preparation for programming the next Luxembourg aid to Burkina Faso.

Among the **essential recommendations**, it is suggested first of all that the ICP be given a more readable framework, which would allow a more direct link to be established with the national development benchmarks and a monitoring and evaluation system to allow progress to be assessed. This framework could be developed on the basis of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for which Burkina Faso has already worked, on prioritisation and on progress indicators. The review team proposes a logic diagram linking the national development frameworks (PNDES, programme budgets), the prioritised SDGs and the ICP III programmes/projects. From this diagram, a series of 14 indicators, some of which have already been calculated, can be extracted. This would thus make it possible to monitor progress made within the ICP framework from now until its completion.

The security situation in Burkina Faso is an element that jeopardises the deployment of any development intervention. It is essential to think quickly about approaches that can better link humanitarian emergency actions and development actions. Unfortunately, there are no miracle recipes in this field and it would be necessary to collect/compare/evaluate experiences and encourage the actors to think together in these two areas. The review team suggests giving priority to this theme through political dialogue between the two partners; it proposes that Luxembourg support the government in its efforts to mobilise partners, both locally and externally, in order to provide relevant and viable solutions on the ground.

The situation regarding the Covid-19 pandemic remains worrying, even though its health aspect remains under control for the moment. The problems arising today are more related to the consequences of the pandemic on the economic and social situation of the population's most vulnerable sections (including refugees). The review team suggests strengthening the income generation and employment mechanisms that already exist in the ICP III projects and programmes and, at the same time, to include Luxembourg's interventions in favour of the health system in a more formalised and global approach of the TFP coalition.

As part of the **recommendations for finalising ICP III**, the review team suggests investing in documenting and capitalising on the experiences gained throughout the interventions. This should primarily concern the problems encountered during the implementation of these interventions and the solutions found, but also comparing implementation methods. It should also encourage systematic exchange between stakeholders in innovative areas that meet the needs and demands of Burkina Faso, such as in the field of digitalisation. This would make it possible to identify pilot operations to be replicated and to enhance the know-how of organisations that have carried out these interventions. It is also suggested that particular attention be paid to past investments by Luxembourg in this field and the relationship between local actors in Burkina Faso and specialised actors in Luxembourg. Finally, it is suggested that the way in which DAC marking is carried out be reviewed, in order to make it a useful element in formulating, monitoring and evaluating interventions. Given the level of implementation (financial and physical) of the different ICP III components and the work proposed between now and its end, it is suggested that the duration of ICP III be extended to the end of 2022.

Finally, as part of the **recommendations for preparing the next programming period**, it is firstly suggested to strengthen the political dialogue between the two partners, to give more space to strategic issues related to cooperation in the specific context of Burkina Faso. This should be done not only through a revitalisation of the Partnership Commissions but also through capacity building at Embassy level (expertise mobilisation fund). In order to foster innovation and transformation, it is suggested that the organisations implementing the projects and programmes work together more. Thus, lessons should be learned from the collaborations established with UN agencies on the one hand, and with NGOs on the other. It would also be important to bring into the cooperation, technical organisations specialised in issues that are central to the partners' priorities, such as the UNCDF (capacity building) and ADA (inclusive microfinance). A complete picture should be taken regularly of all Luxembourg-funded interventions from which Burkina Faso benefits in order to identify successes

and added value. This observation would allow it to highlight know-how that could then be used in broader coalitions (*'Luxembourg Inside'*). ICP III has suffered greatly from delays in executing interventions at various stages of their identification, formulation and implementation. The causes of these various delays should be analysed in detail and it should be ensured that they do not occur again. Finally, the experiences in capacity building that have been made through the different components of the ICP should be subject to a global assessment in order to strengthen and measure their effects and impacts.