

SUMMARY: EVALUATION OF SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1 OF THE EU ACTION RESICODI IMPLEMENTED BY GIZ (BACKUP INITIATIVE)

Specific Objective (SO1)	Digital solutions to improve the quality and continuation of education services are implemented
Region	Africa regional project (Botswana, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Zambia)
Commissioning Party	BMZ & EU
Value	6,100,000 EUR
Partner	African Ministries of Education (MoE), national civil society organizations (CSO), and regional networks
Project Term	November 2020 - October 2023

SO1 aimed to assist African partners in addressing COVID-19 pandemic challenges in basic education, with a focus on digital solutions. The SO1 was **overall evaluated as successful**, evident in its alignment with the five OECD-DAC criteria relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Not only was the SO1 **highly relevant** to international, European and national development agendas, but it also effectively addressed the needs of target groups and beneficiaries through MoE and CSOs. The project's success in relevance was due to its approach and successfully combining a fund to finance projects with the provision of technical and financial advice, and its adaptability. However, local synergies in partner countries through the partners could have been utilized more. Next, the project displayed **strong internal and external coherence**. The intra-agency coordination between GIZ and Enabel (responsible for TVET and Health, SO2 and 3) was characterized by the structure of separate spheres of interventions and complementarity of actions. There were no signs of duplication, but opportunity remains for further improvement in collaboration and coordination efforts between stakeholders, while added responsibility lies with the role of the Coordinating Agency.

Its strong strategic alignment and coherence also helped SO1 to be **highly successful in its goal achievement** as set out by surpassing almost all indicators. So far, SO1's support enabled the MoE and CSOs to reach **more than 3.5 million learners and education professionals** in Botswana, Burundi, DRC, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda and Zambia. SO1 demonstrated that high-quality implementation, effective and target-oriented management, and a good steering structure helped to achieve the above

contributions. In terms of cross-cutting topics, gender was mainstreamed, but not a focus of SO1.

The SO1's **impact is considered successful**. It enabled African partner countries to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in the area of basic education and to contribute to the digital transformation of the education sector. SO1's activities aimed to **encourage sustainability** at various levels and provided several safeguards to ensure sustainability. At the same time, the ambition level that can be expected from small-scale funds needs to be taken into account. Finally, the sustainable institutionalization of acquired capacities in partner structures is subject to limited (financial) capacities in the national structures and digital infrastructure.

CONCLUSION: The evaluation highlights that SO1 is a highly relevant, targeted, and rapid response to needs in the context of the COVID-19-pandemic. It enabled successful pilots, bridging financial gaps and building necessary capacities for digital education in times of crisis. The evaluation thus demonstrated both the plausible benefits of a small-scale and demand-based fund as well as limitations for future programming.

LESSONS LEARNED

Factors of Success:

- The BACKUP approach allowed for targeted and flexible support in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic with high quality of implementation.
- SO1's demand-orientation and advice fostered holistic capacity building for CSOs and MoEs.
- Team Europe Approach allows building on each agency's strengths, experiences and can support complementarity.

Opportunities & Recommendations:

For the current Action:

- Leveraging local synergies in partner countries through the partners (EU, BMZ, GIZ, Enabel).
- Advancing gender equality in digital education remains important.
- Investing in coordination role is essential for effective Team Europe Approach.

For conceptualizing future projects:

- To mitigate challenges of digital Infrastructure, put emphasis on cooperation agreements with the private sector.
- To mitigate limitations of small-scale funds, invest in sustainability, exit strategies as well as follow-up funding.