



EXTERNAL END-TERM EVALUATION AWOME–ENTREPRENHER PROGRAMME

Botswana, Namibia and South Africa

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation period: 2017– 2026

Programme phases covered: 2017–2026

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DE BEERS GROUP

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Full term	Acronym	Full term
AWOME	Accelerating Women-Owned Micro-Enterprises	LEA	Local Enterprise Authority
BDS	Business Development Services	MIS	Management Information System
BFW	Buy From Women Platform	MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
BWP	Botswana Pula	MGEPEWS	Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
CEDA	Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency	NDP	National Development Plan
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GYB	Generate Your Business Idea	SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	SEFA	Small Enterprise Finance Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization	SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
IYB	Improve Your Business	SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise
KII	Key Informant Interview	SYB	Start Your Business
LNOB	Leave No One Behind	ToC	Theory of Change
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group	WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment

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Executive Summary

The AWOME–EntreprenHER Programme was implemented by UN Women in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa with De Beers Group as the funding and strategic partner. Across three phases, the programme sought to strengthen the sustainability, profitability and growth of low-income women-owned micro-enterprises through business and life-skills training, mentoring, financial and grant-related support, market linkages, digital tools and institutional partnerships. This external end-term evaluation covers programme implementation and cumulative results from January 2018 to June 2026. Because Phase III implementation continued beyond the data-collection cut-off, the assessment reports progress at the evaluation point rather than final December 2026 totals.

The evaluation was designed for accountability and learning. Its primary users are UN Women, De Beers Group, partner governments, local authorities, implementing partners, mentors and women entrepreneurs. It assessed relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, while integrating gender equality, human rights and Leave No One Behind considerations. It also examined how the different country implementation models affected results and prospects for continuation.

A theory-based mixed-methods design combined a beneficiary survey, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, programme records and document review. The final Phase III analytic survey included 338 usable responses with country coding (Botswana 166, Namibia 118 and South Africa 54), alongside 44 KIIs and 8 FGDs. Contribution analysis was used because there was no counterfactual. Quantitative results were triangulated with qualitative and documentary evidence. Key limitations were incomplete programme-specific expenditure data, uneven survey response by country, reliance on self-reported business measures, variable completeness of routine monitoring data, and the inability to verify the quality dimension of “decent work”.

Overall, the programme delivered credible and useful results for women entrepreneurs, but its performance was stronger as a foundation-building and business-stabilisation intervention than as a full enterprise-acceleration model. It was highly relevant to the foundational business needs of the target group and broadly coherent with national priorities and women’s economic empowerment objectives. Effectiveness was strongest on business continuity and revenue improvement, and more moderate on employment creation. The programme’s main delivery weakness was the uneven transition from high-volume training into sustained mentoring, finance, productive assets, compliance support and market access. Sustainability prospects were stronger in Botswana and Namibia, where delivery was more embedded in government systems, than in South Africa, where implementation remained more directly dependent on UN Women and contracted support.

Criterion	Overall judgement	Core basis
Relevance & coherence	Strong	High fit with foundational business needs and national priorities; less differentiated for mature enterprises; ecosystem integration varied by country.
Effectiveness	Moderate to strong	1,296/1,500 Phase III reach; 89.3% active business rate; indicative revenue growth above target; job-creation target not clearly verified.
Efficiency	Moderate	Training reached scale, but sequencing into deeper support was uneven; actual expenditure data were insufficient for verified VfM or cost-per-beneficiary analysis.
Impact	Moderately positive / emerging	Clear effects on business practices, continuity, confidence and autonomy; wider employment and market transformation remained uneven; contribution rather than attribution.

Criterion	Overall judgement	Core basis
Sustainability	Moderate, country-differentiated	Government embedding strengthens continuity in Botswana/Namibia; South Africa has higher transition risk; grants and high-touch support remain resource dependent.
Gender & human rights	Meaningful contribution	Programme directly addressed women's economic exclusion and strengthened agency; evidence on disability and age differences was insufficient for firm subgroup judgements.

Key effectiveness results

Outcome	Evidence at evaluation point	Judgement
Phase III reach	1,296 women supported against a combined target of 1,500 (86.4%).	Substantial progress; final totals were not yet due at the June 2026 cut-off.
Business continuity	302 of 338 country-coded survey respondents reported businesses operating fully or partly (89.3%) against a 50% target.	Exceeded; strongest outcome, but continuity is not the same as profitability or growth.
Revenue growth	Among 155 respondents with paired revenue data, midpoint estimates indicated about 61% average growth; a respondent-level sensitivity check indicated about 74%, against a 20% target.	Exceeded on available paired data, but indicative because revenue was self-reported in bands.
Employment	33.4% of 334 respondents with paired employment data created at least one additional job; 224 gross positive jobs were reported in the paired sample. Indicative extrapolation gives about 433 entrepreneurs with one or more additional jobs.	Moderate; close to but does not verify the target of 500 women each creating at least one decent work opportunity; job quality was not measured.

Principal conclusions

- The core training package was well matched to foundational deficits in record keeping, pricing, costing, budgeting, marketing and business planning. Relevance declined as enterprises matured and required sector-specific, capital, compliance and market support.
- Results were strongest where training was layered with sustained mentoring, practical problem-solving, finance preparation, productive assets and market opportunities. The programme design was therefore plausible, but implementation was more training-heavy than the intended results pathway.
- Business survival was the clearest outcome. Revenue results were also positive, but their precision is limited by banded self-reported data. Employment creation was real but more modest, and the “decent work” quality dimension could not be verified.
- Country implementation architecture mattered. Botswana and Namibia benefited from stronger ministry embedding; South Africa achieved the highest Phase III reach relative to target but had weaker institutional absorption and the lowest active-business rate in the smaller survey sample.
- The programme made a meaningful contribution to women's economic agency and confidence. Disability and youth were not systematically tracked or analysed, so the evaluation cannot make robust claims about differential results for these groups.

Priority recommendations

- Move to a two-track model: broad foundational support for large cohorts and an intensive catalytic-growth pathway for smaller, readiness-screened cohorts.
- Sequence support by enterprise readiness: profiling and baseline, training, diagnostic, tailored mentoring, finance/asset readiness, market/compliance linkage and post-investment follow-up.

- Redesign the grant/asset window around transparent eligibility, business-readiness assessment, milestone-based support and mandatory follow-up; distinguish EntreprenHER-financed support from complementary external financing.
- Build a sector-specific mentor pipeline and protect sufficient caseload, travel and follow-up time; use digital/group approaches as complements rather than substitutes where hands-on support is needed.
- Strengthen market-making partnerships, compliance support and buyer linkages, and institutionalise country-specific sustainability plans especially a stronger enterprise-ecosystem anchor in South Africa.

1. Evaluation Object and Context

1.1 Programme overview and implementation status

EntreprenHER, formerly the Accelerating Women-Owned Micro-Enterprises (AWOME) Programme, was implemented across Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to strengthen the sustainability, profitability and growth of low-income women-owned micro-enterprises, particularly those operating in informal settings. Programme support combined business and life-skills training with mentoring, finance and grant-related support, market linkages, digital tools and partnerships. The evaluation covered results achieved from January 2018 to June 2026 across a programme phasing structure that began in 2017. Phase III remained under implementation at the evaluation cut-off, so its coverage and outcome figures should be read as progress-to-date rather than final end-of-phase totals.

The programme evolved through three phases. Phase I established the approach and initial delivery arrangements; Phase II consolidated the model and operated through the disruption created by COVID-19; and Phase III placed greater emphasis on scale, digital tools, market access, financial inclusion and productive support. Each phase had a planned budget of US\$3.0 million, giving a planned programme commitment of US\$9.0 million across the three-country portfolio.

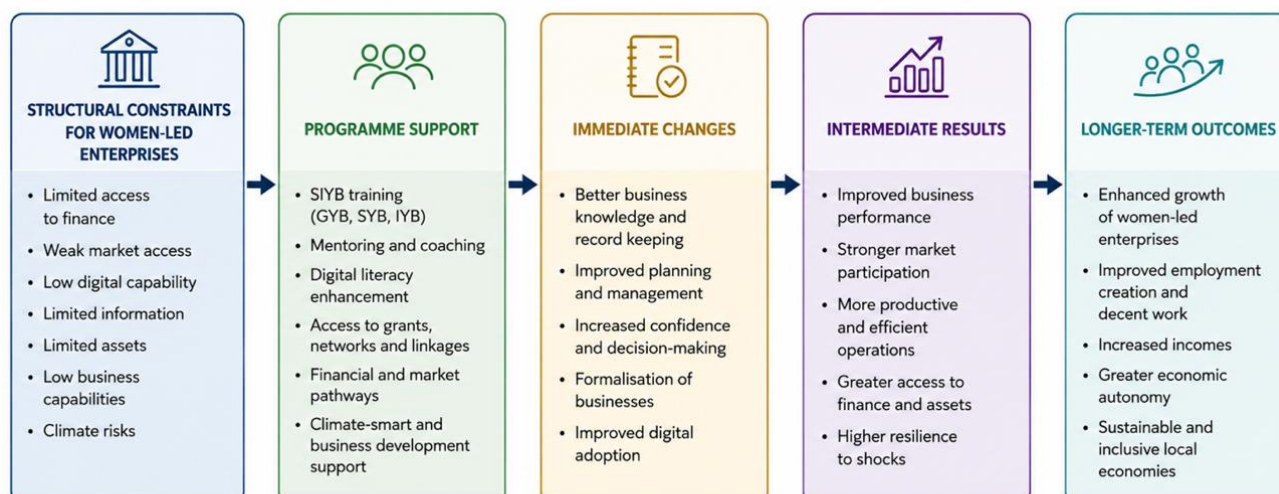
The programme combined broad-based capability development with a more demanding enterprise-growth pathway. The foundation was the Generate Your Business Idea, Start Your Business and Improve Your Business training package, supported by life-skills content. Mentoring, finance and grant-related assistance, market access, digital tools and partnerships were expected to help women apply those capabilities in their enterprises. The distinction between these two layers is important to the evaluation: training could be delivered to relatively large cohorts, while growth-stage support required more tailored inputs and closer follow-up.

Implementation arrangements were not identical across the three countries. Botswana and Namibia increasingly worked through government structures and public-sector trainers and mentors. South Africa retained a more directly managed UN Women model supported by contracted service providers and municipalities. These differences affected local ownership, the intensity of follow-up, the use of partnerships and the prospects for continuation after donor funding.

Table 1. Programme phases, geographic focus and planned budgets

Phase	Period	Geographic focus / emphasis	Planned budget
I	2017–2019	Botswana, Namibia and South Africa; pilot rollout and capacity set-up	US\$3.0m
II	2020–2023	Three-country consolidation, adaptation and COVID-19 response	US\$3.0m
III	2024–2026	Scale, digital tools, market access and complementary finance/asset pathways; target 1,500	US\$3.0m
Total	2017–2026	Regional programme	US\$9.0m

Figure 1: AWOME–EntreprenHER Programme Theory of Change



Source: AWOME–EntreprenHER Programme Theory of Change (Phase III, 2024–2026)

Figure 1. Reconstructed AWOME–EntreprenHER reconstructed theory of change

Source: AWOME–EntreprenHER programme documents, Phase III (2024–2026).

The reconstructed Theory of Change indicates that women entrepreneurs facing constraints in business capability, finance, productive assets, markets, information and resilience would receive sequenced and complementary support. This support was expected to improve business practices, confidence, decision-making and readiness for formalisation. These intermediate changes were, in turn, expected to contribute to improved enterprise performance, resilience, income, market participation and employment.

The pathway depended on several assumptions: that the different forms of support would be delivered in an appropriate sequence; that mentoring and follow-up would be sufficiently intensive; that women would be able to access finance and markets; and that public and private partners would provide complementary services. It also assumed that women would have sufficient time, mobility and household support to apply the knowledge and opportunities provided. The evaluation tested this logic as a contribution pathway rather than assuming that the programme alone caused the observed changes.

1.2 Contextual elements that affected implementation

Women entrepreneurs across the three countries operated in contexts characterised by high levels of informality, unequal access to finance and productive assets, limited market connections and uneven access to social protection. These constraints affected women's ability to register and expand their enterprises, invest in equipment, enter formal supply chains and absorb economic shocks.

Economic barriers interacted with unequal gender roles and relations. Women continued to carry a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic and care work, contributing to time poverty and limiting their availability for training, networking, market development and business expansion. Unequal influence over household resources, restricted asset ownership and gendered expectations concerning appropriate economic activities also affected women's ability to make and implement independent business decisions. These conditions engaged broader human-rights concerns relating to non-discrimination, economic participation, decent work and equitable access to productive resources.

Although these barriers were present across the three countries, their expression and the institutional capacity available to address them differed. Botswana and Namibia increasingly used ministry and subnational government structures to deliver training, mentoring and referrals. South Africa operated through a more directly managed UN Women model involving contracted service providers and municipal facilitation. Differences in institutional mandates, geographical coverage, public-service capacity and the availability of enterprise-development and financial partners affected the intensity, consistency and potential sustainability of support.

COVID-19 represented the most significant external disruption during the programme period. Restrictions interrupted face-to-face delivery and adversely affected the small businesses supported by the programme. Many women entrepreneurs experienced reduced trading, loss of working capital and increased household pressures. The programme consequently introduced remote communication, resilience-oriented support and, during the recovery period, greater attention to financial inclusion and productive support.

Digitalisation also increased the importance of digital skills for communication, marketing, financial transactions and programme follow-up. However, unequal access to devices, connectivity and digital literacy meant that digital delivery could not fully replace hands-on mentoring for many participants. Climate-related pressures similarly increased the relevance of climate-smart support, particularly for women engaged in agriculture. Sector-specific adaptation was more developed in agriculture than in several other sectors represented in the beneficiary portfolio.

These contextual conditions shaped both programme implementation and the interpretation of results. Improvements in knowledge or confidence did not automatically translate into enterprise growth where women continued to lack capital, equipment, market access, time or sustained mentoring. The evaluation therefore examined not only whether women completed training, but also whether the wider support environment enabled them to apply their learning and strengthen their enterprises.

Table 2. Key contextual changes and programme adaptations

Contextual change / issue	Programme response recorded in the evidence	Evaluation implication
COVID-19 disruption	Shifted elements of delivery towards remote/digital communication, resilience support and later recovery-oriented assistance.	Changed delivery intensity and baseline assumptions; contribution analysis is more appropriate than simple pre/post attribution.
Persistent finance constraints	Financial-inclusion and grant-readiness support became more prominent; grant modalities evolved and, in some cases, shifted towards equipment/assets.	Assess not only grant disbursement but readiness, communication, productive use and complementary finance pathways.
Climate and sector pressures	Climate-smart agriculture and related technical content were introduced for relevant beneficiaries.	Shows adaptive relevance, but similar depth of sector-specific support was less visible outside agriculture.
Digitalisation	Digital literacy and some remote follow-ups were added; MIS tools were strengthened.	Digital support offered efficiency potential but did not replace the need for hands-on mentoring for many micro-enterprises.
Country institutional differences	Botswana and Namibia increasingly embedded delivery in ministry structures; South Africa retained stronger direct UN Women/contracted delivery.	Country model is a central explanatory factor for efficiency and sustainability.

1.3 Stakeholders and country implementation models

The programme operated through a multi-stakeholder structure involving UN Women, De Beers Group, national and subnational government institutions, implementing partners, trainers and mentors, private-sector and financial actors, and participating women entrepreneurs.

UN Women provided strategic leadership, programme management, technical oversight, quality assurance and partnership coordination. Its operational role differed across countries: in Botswana and Namibia, it increasingly supported delivery through government structures, while in South Africa it retained substantial responsibility for direct management and contracted implementation.

De Beers Group was the principal funding and strategic partner and contributed to overall programme direction and enterprise-development alignment. National ministries provided policy and institutional anchoring and, particularly in Botswana and Namibia, supported implementation through public officials, trainers, mentors and regional or district structures. Municipalities and local authorities facilitated community access, participant mobilisation, venues, referrals and connections with local services.

Contracted implementing partners, trainers and business advisers delivered technical training, mentoring and specialised enterprise support. Financial institutions and private-sector actors contributed to varying degrees through financial literacy, grant-readiness activities, referrals, market connections and supply-chain opportunities. Women micro-entrepreneurs were the programme's primary rights-holders and contributed through participation, application of business practices, peer learning and feedback on the relevance and accessibility of support.

Implementation arrangements varied substantially across the three countries.

Table 3. Comparative country implementation models

Country	Principal delivery model	Main roles and characteristics	Institutional implication
Botswana	Government-embedded delivery	Ministry and district structures supported mobilisation, training and mentoring, with participation from enterprise-development and financial actors in selected activities	Stronger platform for local ownership and referrals, although post-training support needed to keep pace with expanded delivery
Namibia	Ministry-led national and regional delivery	Ministry personnel, trainers and mentors supported outreach, business training, mentoring and monitoring through regional structures	Strong basis for institutional continuation of the training and mentoring functions, while finance and capital-intensive support remained less secure
South Africa	UN Women-led and contracted delivery	UN Women retained direct operational responsibility and contracted service providers, advisers and trainers; municipalities mainly supported mobilisation, venues and local access	Greater central programme control but weaker institutional absorption and a higher post-programme transition risk

The variation in delivery models influenced programme reach, follow-up, partnership development, cost structures, local ownership and sustainability. It was therefore treated as an important explanatory factor in the comparative analysis of effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. **A more detailed stakeholder mapping is provided in Annex 1.**

1.4 Programme adaptations and implications for the evaluation

The programme made several adaptations in response to external shocks, differences between country systems and lessons emerging during implementation. The principal changes concerned delivery methods, financial-support modalities, institutional ownership, curriculum content and the differentiation of country implementation models.

Table 4. Principal programme adaptations and implications for the evaluation

Earlier design or implementation	Adaptation during implementation	Principal reason	Implication for the evaluation
Predominantly face-to-face	Increased use of remote communication, digital support, resilience	COVID-19 restrictions and disruption of	Participant exposure and delivery intensity varied across phases and

Earlier design or implementation	Adaptation during implementation	Principal reason	Implication for the evaluation
training and mentoring	guidance and subsequent recovery assistance	women-owned enterprises	cohorts; results cannot be interpreted through a simple pre/post comparison
Planned direct financial grants to participating enterprises	Increased use of equipment or productive assets and grant-readiness or financial-inclusion support	Administrative and fiduciary requirements, differences between national systems and practical constraints affecting cash transfers	Assessment must consider eligibility, communication, timing, productive use and complementary finance pathways, rather than grant disbursement alone
A broadly common regional programme model	Increasingly differentiated country delivery arrangements	Differences in institutional mandates, delivery capacity and programme learning	Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability need to be examined separately by country and delivery model
Strong UN Women coordination and direct delivery	Increased ministry embedding in Botswana and Namibia, while South Africa retained direct and contracted delivery	Efforts to strengthen national ownership and use existing public-service structures	Prospects for institutional continuity vary significantly across countries
Initial emphasis on foundational business-management training	Addition or expansion of life skills, digital literacy, climate-smart content, financial inclusion, market connections and productive support	Changing enterprise needs, external pressures and implementation learning	Results should be analysed in relation to the combinations and sequencing of support received, rather than attributing change to training alone
AWOME identity and initial focus on accelerating micro-enterprises	Rebranding as EntreprenHER and greater emphasis on enterprise growth, formalisation readiness and market participation	Evolution of programme ambition and learning across phases	The evaluation must distinguish between broad training reach and the more intensive support required for enterprise growth

Source: AWOME–EntreprenHER programme documentation and evaluation evidence.

These changes had several consequences for the evaluation. First, COVID-19 and other external economic factors altered the assumptions under which the programme had originally been designed. The evaluation therefore applied contribution analysis and did not attempt to attribute all observed enterprise changes exclusively to EntreprenHER.

Second, differences between ministry-embedded delivery in Botswana and Namibia and more directly managed implementation in South Africa required country-specific analysis. Aggregate regional results could otherwise conceal important variation in delivery quality, institutional ownership, follow-up and sustainability.

Third, the evolution from anticipated cash grants towards a mixture of productive assets, grant-readiness and financial-inclusion support required the evaluation to examine the complete support pathway. This included the clarity of communication, participant selection, timing of assistance, mentoring and the extent to which women could use the support productively.

Finally, because Phase III remained active at the June 2026 evidence cut-off, results associated with recently delivered equipment, market connections and enterprise-growth support had not necessarily had sufficient time to materialise. Phase III findings are consequently interpreted as interim evidence of progress and emerging outcomes rather than final programme performance.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Scope

2.1 Purpose, objectives, intended users and uses

UN Women commissioned this independent, utilisation-focused evaluation to assess the cumulative performance of the AWOME–EntreprenHER Programme across Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. The evaluation served both accountability and learning purposes. It assessed the results achieved and the factors influencing performance, while generating evidence to inform the design, delivery, monitoring, partnerships and sustainability arrangements of future women's economic empowerment programming.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. Assess the programme's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability in accordance with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and UN Women evaluation standards.
2. Examine the programme's contribution to enterprise continuity, improved business practices, revenue, employment, resilience and women's economic agency.
3. Identify the programme components, delivery arrangements and contextual factors that enabled or constrained results across the three countries.
4. Assess the extent to which programme benefits and delivery functions were likely to continue beyond the programme period.
5. Generate actionable lessons and recommendations for future programme design, implementation, monitoring, partnerships and potential scaling.

Gender equality, human rights and Leave No One Behind considerations were treated as cross-cutting dimensions throughout the evaluation rather than as separate considerations limited to the profile of programme participants.

Table 5. Intended users and uses of the evaluation

Primary user	Intended use
UN Women regional and country teams	Inform future programme design and country operating models; strengthen the results framework and MIS; improve targeting, sequencing and monitoring; and guide partnership and sustainability decisions
De Beers Group	Support strategic accountability and inform decisions concerning future financing and the balance between foundational business training and more intensive enterprise-growth support
Partner governments and local authorities	Identify functions that could be institutionalised; strengthen referral pathways; and inform policy and local enterprise-support arrangements
Implementing partners, trainers and mentors	Improve training and mentoring sequences, follow-up intensity, participant targeting, grant readiness, market support and compliance assistance
Financial institutions and private-sector partners	Identify opportunities to strengthen financial inclusion, procurement, supply-chain participation and market connections for women-owned enterprises
Women entrepreneurs and beneficiary networks	Improve transparency concerning selection and support pathways and strengthen peer, referral and market networks

2.2 Evaluation scope and exclusions

The geographic scope covered Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. The temporal scope encompassed programme implementation and cumulative results documented between January 2018 and June 2026, with contextual reference to the establishment of Phase I in 2017. Phase III implementation continuing after the June 2026 evidence cut-off was outside the evaluation window.

Consequently, Phase III coverage and results are presented as progress to date rather than final end-of-phase achievements.

Programmatically, the evaluation covered the programme's principal areas of support: business and life-skills training; mentoring and follow-up; financial inclusion, grant-readiness and productive-asset support; digital tools; market connections; and institutional partnerships. It examined programme reach and delivery as well as changes in business practices, enterprise continuity, revenue, employment, resilience, confidence, decision-making and economic agency. It also assessed the institutional and partnership conditions affecting efficiency and sustainability.

The evaluation covered all six OECD-DAC criteria. It examined relevance to the needs of women micro-entrepreneurs; coherence with national systems and other actors; achievement of expected outputs and outcomes; the use of financial, human and partnership resources; evidence of intended and unintended changes; and the likelihood that benefits and delivery arrangements would continue.

The document review covered the available programme documentation for Phases I–III, programme and MIS records, approved budgets, policy documents, partnership information and the UN Women Country Portfolio Evaluation for 2017–2023, where relevant. The Country Portfolio Evaluation was used to provide institutional and contextual evidence and to avoid unnecessary duplication. It did not replace programme-specific primary and documentary evidence.

The following boundaries were established to distinguish matters outside the commissioned scope from methodological limitations encountered during the evaluation.

Table 6. Explicit scope exclusions

Excluded area	Nature of the exclusion	Reason
Financial and fiduciary audit	The evaluation did not undertake transaction sampling, accounting verification or express an audit opinion.	A financial audit was not included in the Terms of Reference.
Experimental or quasi-experimental impact assessment	No non-participant counterfactual or comparison group was commissioned.	The evaluation was designed as a theory-based contribution assessment.
Implementation after June 2026	Activities and results arising after the evidence cut-off were not assessed.	Phase III remained under implementation when data collection concluded.
Formal verification of decent-work conditions	The evaluation did not audit employment contracts, statutory benefits, occupational safety or other formal decent-work standards.	These variables were not systematically captured in programme or survey records.
Standalone youth and disability analysis	Youth and disability were not separate evaluation questions, and differential outcomes could not be assessed robustly.	Routine records and survey data did not contain sufficiently complete age- and disability-disaggregated information.

Incomplete expenditure records, reliance on self-reported business data, unequal country survey response and gaps in demographic variables are treated as methodological limitations in Section 3.6 rather than as exclusions from the evaluation mandate.

2.3 Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation applied the six OECD-DAC criteria, adapted to the programme's Theory of Change and UN Women's gender equality and human-rights mandate. The principal questions guiding the analysis are summarised below.

Table 7. Evaluation criteria and principal questions

Criterion	Principal evaluation questions
Relevance	To what extent was the programme design and Theory of Change responsive to the needs, priorities and structural constraints of women micro-entrepreneurs? How realistic were the assumptions concerning training, mentoring, finance, assets and market access?
Coherence	To what extent was the programme aligned with relevant national policies and institutional systems? How effectively did it complement government, private-sector, financial and other enterprise-support initiatives?
Effectiveness	To what extent were planned outputs and outcomes achieved? Which programme components and combinations of support contributed most to results, and how did performance differ across countries?
Efficiency	How effectively were financial, human and partnership resources used? How did management, delivery arrangements, monitoring systems and adaptive management affect implementation and results?
Impact	What intended and unintended changes were evident in enterprise continuity, revenue, employment, resilience, confidence, decision-making and economic autonomy? What contribution did the programme make to these changes?
Sustainability	To what extent were enterprise benefits and programme delivery functions likely to continue? What institutional, financial, partnership and policy conditions would be required to sustain or scale effective approaches?

The complete evaluation matrix, including the evaluation questions, indicators, data sources, collection methods and analytical approaches, is provided in Annex 7.

3. Methodology

3.1 Evaluation design and rationale

The evaluation adopted a theory-based, convergent mixed-methods design combining quantitative survey analysis, qualitative consultation, documentary review, programme and MIS data, and selected field observation. Following approval of the inception report in April 2026, primary data collection was completed by June 2026.

A mixed-methods approach was selected because no single source could answer the evaluation questions adequately. Programme documents and MIS records were required to assess the intended design, reported reach and delivery. The beneficiary survey provided structured information on programme exposure and business-related outcomes. KIIs helped explain institutional arrangements, partnerships, delivery differences and implementation bottlenecks. FGDs captured shared and divergent experiences among women entrepreneurs, while field observation provided contextual evidence concerning selected enterprises and support pathways.

The reconstructed Theory of Change served as the principal analytical framework. Evidence was examined against the expected sequence from business and life-skills development to improved business practices, resilience and commercial performance, and ultimately to stronger income, employment and economic agency. Where the expected progression was weak or interrupted, the analysis examined whether this reflected programme delivery, the intensity or sequencing of support, enterprise maturity, household and gender-related constraints, or wider market and economic conditions.

Quantitative, qualitative and documentary evidence were analysed concurrently and brought together during interpretation. This enabled the evaluation to identify areas of convergence, explain variation and retain contradictory evidence where it affected the evaluative judgement.

3.2 Data sources and collection

Primary data collection consisted of a beneficiary survey, KIIs, FGDs and selected field observation. These sources were supplemented by programme documentation, monitoring information, approved budgets, policy documents and relevant UN Women portfolio evidence.

Table 8. Planned and actual primary data collection

Method	Inception plan	Actual evidence used in the final analysis	Comment
Beneficiary survey	350 respondents as the principal sample target	338 Phase III respondents with usable country coding: Botswana 166, Namibia 118 and South Africa 54	Achieved 96.6 per cent of the stated target. Unequal country response requires caution in pooled and country comparisons
Key informant interviews	Approximately 30 stakeholder KIIs, with additional regional and donor interviews	44 KIIs: Botswana 14, Namibia 12, South Africa 12 and programme/regional level 6	Exceeded the planned coverage and included policy, funding, management, implementation, training, financial and private-sector perspectives
Focus group discussions	Approximately two FGDs per country, or six in total	Eight FGDs: Botswana 3, Namibia 3 and South Africa 2	Used to examine shared beneficiary experiences and divergent perspectives
Documentary and routine-data review	Programme documents, results frameworks, monitoring and financial records, national policy documents and related evaluations	Phase I–III programme documents; Phase III MIS and survey data; approved budgets; policy documents; partnership information; and relevant UN Women portfolio evidence	Used to reconstruct the programme design, assess delivery and test the consistency of survey and qualitative evidence
Field observation	Selected site and enterprise observation	Direct observation of selected enterprises and implementation contexts across the three countries	Used for contextual and illustrative purposes; observations were not treated as representative of all participating enterprises

The beneficiary survey collected information on business profiles, programme exposure, current operating status, employment, revenue bands, business practices, finance and market needs, decision-making and perceived sustainability. Survey administration differed by country in response to access conditions and beneficiary contact systems. Botswana used assisted digital administration and field enumeration. Namibia combined ministry-facilitated digital and field approaches. South Africa relied more heavily on an online survey link and municipal follow-up.

The final quantitative dataset contained 338 Phase III responses with usable country coding. Indicator-specific analysis was restricted to respondents with valid information for the relevant variables. This resulted in 334 paired employment cases and 155 paired revenue cases.

The 44 KIIs included UN Women personnel, De Beers Group, government counterparts, local authorities, implementing partners, trainers and mentors, financial and private-sector actors, and other stakeholders with relevant programme knowledge. The eight FGDs explored women entrepreneurs' experiences of training, mentoring, finance, grants and equipment, markets, business outcomes, economic agency, operational challenges and the likelihood that benefits would continue.

Semi-structured guides were tailored to different stakeholder groups while retaining common questions linked to the evaluation matrix. The survey and qualitative instruments are provided in Annex 8, and the wider evidence base and ethical procedures are summarised in Annex 2.

3.3 Sampling and stakeholder consultation

KIIs and FGDs used purposive sampling to obtain perspectives across policy, funding, management, implementation, training and mentoring, financial services and programme participation. Selection sought variation in country, institutional role, geography, enterprise sector and type of programme exposure. Beneficiary consultations included women working in agriculture, tailoring and clothing, food-related activities, retail, beauty services and other micro-enterprise sectors.

The beneficiary survey used a voluntary, multi-channel sample drawn from contact lists maintained by UN Women and programme partners. It was administered through assisted digital and field approaches in Botswana and Namibia and through an online link and municipal follow-up in South Africa. The survey was not a probability sample of all women reached during the programme's three phases and is therefore interpreted as a structured sample of programme participants rather than as statistically representative of the complete beneficiary population.

Contact-list quality, connectivity, beneficiary availability and voluntary participation affected response. Women who remained connected to programme or partner networks may have been easier to reach than women who had disengaged or whose businesses had closed. This potential selection effect is considered when interpreting high satisfaction, enterprise-continuity and sustainability responses.

Country-level results are presented separately where the sample permits, but differences in sample size should not be interpreted as differences in statistical representativeness. In particular, the smaller South African survey sample reduces the confidence attached to quantitative country comparisons. Country findings are therefore triangulated with qualitative, programme and documentary evidence.

Stakeholders contributed at several stages of the evaluation. During inception, UN Women and relevant partners supported refinement of the evaluation framework, identification of documentation and access to stakeholder groups. During data collection, programme actors and rights-holders contributed through the survey, KIIs, FGDs and field observation. During reporting and validation, selected stakeholders reviewed emerging findings and factual information. The evaluation team retained responsibility for the independent analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

The complete stakeholder mapping, including implementation roles and evaluation evidence routes, is provided in Annex 1.

3.4 Data management, analysis and triangulation

Survey records without consent were excluded from analysis. Country and programme-phase coding was reviewed before construction of the final analytical sample. Indicator-specific calculations used only records containing the variables required for the relevant analysis, and paired before-and-current comparisons were restricted to respondents with values for both periods.

Quantitative analysis used frequencies, percentages, country comparisons and paired analysis where appropriate. Revenue information was collected in bands rather than as exact audited values. The evaluation converted the bands to midpoint estimates to produce an indicative average change and applied a respondent-level percentage calculation as a sensitivity check. Revenue results are therefore interpreted as directional estimates rather than verified turnover.

Employment analysis used paired employee information. It distinguished between the proportion of respondents reporting at least one additional job and the gross number of positive jobs reported in

the paired sample. Because information on contracts, benefits, occupational safety and employment conditions was unavailable, reported job creation is presented separately from formal decent-work quality.

Qualitative evidence was organised by evaluation criterion, country and recurring explanatory mechanism. The analysis examined areas of convergence between women entrepreneurs, trainers, implementing partners, government counterparts and programme managers. Divergent and negative evidence was retained where it altered the interpretation. Individual enterprise cases were treated as illustrative unless corroborated by other sources.

Triangulation occurred across four dimensions:

- **Methods:** survey, KIIs, FGDs, documentary review, MIS analysis and field observation.
- **Sources:** women entrepreneurs, programme managers, funders, government officials, implementing partners, trainers, mentors and financial or private-sector actors.
- **Geography:** Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, including different local implementation settings.
- **Evidence types:** quantitative results, qualitative explanations, programme records and policy or institutional documentation.

Claims were considered stronger where several independent sources converged. Where evidence differed, the report presents the divergence and qualifies the corresponding judgement rather than selecting only the most favourable source.

Contribution analysis assessed whether observed changes were consistent with the reconstructed Theory of Change; whether participants and stakeholders described plausible programme mechanisms; whether different methods and sources supported the same interpretation; and whether alternative explanations could account for the observed change. These alternatives included market demand, inflation, sector conditions, household pressures, COVID-19 disruption and support received through other programmes. The evaluation therefore uses contribution language and does not claim strict causal attribution.

3.5 Gender equality, human rights, Leave No One Behind and ethics

The evaluation treated women micro-entrepreneurs as primary rights-holders rather than only as recipients of services. Gender equality was therefore examined through changes in economic agency as well as business performance. The analysis considered confidence, control over business decisions and income, continued economic participation, and participants' ability to apply programme support.

The evaluation also examined the structural constraints affecting women's enterprises, including access to finance, markets, productive assets and business services; informality and lack of social protection; and time pressures associated with unpaid domestic and care responsibilities. These dimensions were explored through the survey and qualitative consultations where supported by the available evidence.

Sampling sought diversity by country, geography, enterprise sector, institutional role and programme exposure. Rural, peri-urban and urban experiences were considered where available. However, routine programme and survey records did not contain sufficiently complete age and disability variables to support robust disaggregated outcome analysis. The report therefore does not infer results for young women or women with disabilities from isolated observations. This absence of evidence is treated as a monitoring, inclusion and programme-design gap.

Ethical procedures were operationalised throughout primary data collection in accordance with UNEG ethical principles. Participation in the survey, KIIs and FGDs required informed consent.

Participants were informed of the evaluation's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation and their right to decline questions or withdraw.

Personally identifying information was removed from analytical outputs, and qualitative evidence was attributed through anonymised stakeholder and country categories. Interview and FGD arrangements sought to minimise disruption to women's businesses. Discussions concerning household income, business failure, financial difficulties or household conflict were handled through gender-sensitive and do-no-harm practices. Findings were reported in a manner intended to avoid exposing individual participants or enterprises to foreseeable harm.

3.6 Limitations, mitigation and implications

The evaluation encountered several limitations affecting the precision, generalisability or attribution of results. The principal limitations, mitigation measures and implications are presented below.

Table 9. Evaluation limitations, mitigation and implications

Limitation	Mitigation	Implication for interpretation
Absence of a counterfactual	Applied a theory-based contribution approach, triangulated evidence and considered alternative explanations	The evaluation cannot make strict causal claims or isolate programme effects from market and contextual factors
Incomplete routine monitoring across the three phases	Combined Phase III MIS and survey data with programme documents, KIIs and FGDs	Cumulative output information can be reported, but long-term progression across all phases cannot be independently reconstructed for every participant
Reliance on self-reported revenue and employment	Restricted analysis to valid paired cases; used revenue midpoint and sensitivity calculations; triangulated reported patterns qualitatively	Revenue and employment estimates are indicative and are not equivalent to audited business records
Voluntary, non-probability survey sample	Reported country samples separately and triangulated quantitative findings with qualitative and documentary evidence	Survey results should not be generalised mechanically to all women reached by the programme
Unequal survey response across countries	Used country-specific analysis where possible and qualified South African comparisons	Quantitative country comparisons carry different levels of confidence, particularly for South Africa
Possible participation and consultation bias	Sought divergent perspectives and retained evidence of delays, dissatisfaction and unmet needs	Participants who remained connected to programme networks may be overrepresented, potentially inflating positive satisfaction and continuity responses
Incomplete age and disability variables	Avoided unsupported subgroup claims and carried the evidence gap into findings and recommendations	The evaluation cannot determine differential outcomes for young women or women with disabilities
Incomplete programme-specific actual expenditure	Used approved budgets and available operational evidence and avoided unsupported cost-per-beneficiary or value-for-money calculations	The efficiency assessment focuses on delivery processes, resource constraints and comparative operating models rather than verified financial efficiency
Lack of decent-work quality variables	Separated reported job creation from the assessment of employment quality	The evaluation cannot confirm whether reported jobs met formal decent-work standards
Phase III remained under implementation	Treated late Phase III activities and results as progress to date and identified outcome-maturity constraints	Results associated with recently delivered equipment, market support or financial assistance may not yet have fully materialised

These limitations affect the certainty of particular findings rather than the evaluation's overall ability to assess programme performance. Confidence is strongest where several sources converge, including the relevance of foundational business training, the importance of mentoring and follow-up, business continuity and the different institutional sustainability profiles of the three country models.

Confidence is more qualified regarding exact revenue growth, programme-wide employment totals, decent-work quality, financial value for money and differential outcomes by age or disability. These distinctions are reflected in the language and strength of the evaluative judgements presented in the findings.

4. Findings

The findings are organised by evaluation criterion and draw on the beneficiary survey, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, programme documentation, MIS records and field observation. Each finding sets out the evaluative judgement and the evidence that supports it, with country differences highlighted where the evidence permits.

4.1 Relevance and Coherence

Finding F1. EntreprenHER was highly relevant to the foundational business needs of low-income women entrepreneurs across the three countries.

Women entrepreneurs across the three countries consistently described pre-programme gaps in record keeping, separation of household and business finances, costing and pricing, budgeting, marketing, business planning, formalisation knowledge and confidence. The GYB, SYB and IYB training package directly addressed these recurring deficits.

Beneficiaries linked participation to practical changes in the management of their enterprises. In Botswana, women described improvements in calculating costs, understanding profit and loss and setting prices that reflected materials and other inputs. Namibian participants associated the programme with better budgeting, cash-flow management, record keeping and customer relations. South African beneficiaries similarly reported improvements in costing, marketing and more systematic business practices. Trainers, implementing partners and government stakeholders corroborated the prevalence of these foundational capability gaps.

The practical orientation of the training strengthened its relevance. Women were encouraged to apply business concepts to pricing, stock management, customer relations, planning and the separation of household and business money. Although these practices are basic, they are central to the survival of micro-enterprises operating with limited capital, thin margins and little access to formal business-advisory services.

The programme was also relevant from a gender equality and human-rights perspective because it targeted women-owned micro-enterprises operating with restricted access to finance, productive assets, markets and formal business services. Beneficiaries associated improved business knowledge with greater confidence and more informed economic decision-making. The programme therefore addressed practical dimensions of women's economic exclusion and agency.

However, improvements in individual knowledge did not eliminate wider structural constraints. Women continued to encounter restricted access to capital and markets, informality, limited social protection and time pressures associated with unpaid domestic and care responsibilities. The programme was therefore most directly relevant to women's business capabilities and practical agency, while its ability to address the wider institutional and gender-related environment remained more limited.

Finding F2. Relevance declined as businesses matured because growth-stage needs were more differentiated by sector, business stage and binding constraint.

The programme's core logic was plausible: improvements in business and life skills, accompanied by mentoring and complementary support, were expected to strengthen enterprise practices, confidence, resilience and commercial performance. This logic was well matched to women requiring foundational business-management support and justified the use of a common core curriculum across the three countries.

The evidence nevertheless indicates that beneficiary needs changed as enterprises developed. Women who valued the foundational training also requested sector-specific technical advice, productive equipment, working capital, compliance assistance, procurement readiness, stronger market connections and longer-duration mentoring. The programme's relevance consequently varied according to the stage of the enterprise and its principal binding constraint.

A Botswana beneficiary characterised some of the general training as "business orientation 101 for beginners" and argued that participants should be profiled so that training and mentoring could be matched to their business level. The same respondent considered the climate-smart agriculture component more relevant because it was specific to her sector and requested access to a mentor with more advanced experience from whom she could learn (BWA_KII_Beneficiary_02).

Table 10. Sector profile and implication for relevance

Sector	Survey count	Share	Relevance implication
Agriculture / farming / agro-processing	106	27.5%	Largest sector; demand for technical, production-oriented and climate-smart support.
Food processing / catering / baking	68	17.6%	Costing and stock control remain relevant; practical upgrading and market support also needed.
Services	48	12.4%	Business basics relevant; less evidence of sector-specific support.
Manufacturing / production	47	12.2%	Equipment, standards, production and procurement advice become important.
Textiles / clothing / crafts	34	8.8%	Pricing and record keeping improved; advanced production and equipment can be binding constraints.
Retail / trading	33	8.5%	Generic business package well matched to bookkeeping and stock-control needs.
Beauty / wellness	23	6.0%	Evidence points to the value of more differentiated support.

Source note: Beneficiary survey sector-classification dataset.

The listed sector categories account for 93.0% of respondents in the source table; the remaining 7.0% were classified as other/unspecified.

The common curriculum was therefore suitable for foundation-building across sectors, but less sufficient where growth depended on technical expertise, machinery, quality standards, certification, product development, procurement or entry into formal supply chains. Climate-smart agriculture provided an example of how the programme became more relevant when general entrepreneurship support was complemented by sector-specific content.

Mentoring was intended to help bridge the gap between general training and enterprise-specific needs, but its relevance was affected by the intensity and organisation of delivery. In South Africa, one implementing stakeholder reported that there was insufficient time to provide the level of coaching required (SA_KII_Implementer_02). Evidence indicated that some mentors were

expected to engage approximately 30 entrepreneurs within a three-day period, despite travel distances and the time required to understand and respond to individual business challenges.

Under these conditions, mentoring risked becoming focused on coverage and reporting rather than sustained problem-solving. A South African beneficiary emphasised that new entrepreneurs needed someone they could continue to approach for guidance after training (SA_KII_Beneficiary_03). Similar demands for longer, more tailored mentoring were identified in the other countries.

The programme's broad reach was appropriate for foundational training because basic capability needs were widespread. The relevance gap emerged when the same broad delivery architecture was expected to support enterprise upgrading and growth. The evidence therefore distinguishes between strong relevance for foundational capability-building and more moderate relevance for enterprises requiring intensive, specialised or capital-related support.

Finding F3. The programme was broadly coherent with national women's economic empowerment and enterprise priorities and adapted to context, but institutional and ecosystem integration differed substantially by country.

In South Africa the programme's enterprise, employment, skills and poverty-reduction focus is consistent with the National Development Plan 2030. In Botswana it aligns with Vision 2036, NDP 11 and the National Entrepreneurship Policy (2019). In Namibia it aligns with Vision 2030, NDP5 and the National MSME policy framework cited in programme documentation. Programme and stakeholder evidence also shows alignment with De Beers Group's livelihoods, supplier-development and inclusive participation interests.

The programme also demonstrated adaptive relevance. COVID-19 changed both delivery conditions and beneficiary needs. Stakeholders in Namibia described a shift towards financial inclusion as women-owned micro-enterprises sought to restart and rebuild capital. Climate-smart agriculture and digital literacy were introduced in response to sector and market changes, and these additions made the offer more context-sensitive than a static entrepreneurship curriculum.

Botswana provides the clearest example of operational complementarity. Banks, including Stanbic in the evidence reviewed, participated in financial literacy and grant-application training. The evaluator observed one such session, where beneficiaries received practical guidance on what lenders and funders look for in applications. Stakeholders also referred to CEDA as part of the wider enterprise-support environment. These linkages created a credible bridge from training towards future financing, even though it was too early to determine how much finance would ultimately be accessed.

The South African ecosystem was less consistently connected to comparable enterprise-support institutions. Municipalities assisted with local access, mobilisation and venues, but the programme evidence did not show the same degree of embedded linkage to enterprise-finance and development agencies. This difference matters for coherence because training is more likely to lead to sustained business progression where referrals, finance, market access and compliance support are available beyond the programme itself.

Coherence was strongest where the programme used existing delivery and referral systems rather than operating in parallel. Botswana and Namibia used ministry structures, local authorities, trainers and other partners. Botswana also shows examples of engagement with enterprise and financial actors, including CEDA and banking support for financial literacy and grant readiness. South Africa relied more on UN Women and contracted service providers, with municipalities mainly supporting mobilisation and venues; links to the broader enterprise-support ecosystem were less consistently embedded.

Table 11. National and programme coherence

Country	Policy / programme alignment	Operational coherence judgement
Botswana	Alignment with Vision 2036, National Development Plan 11 and the National Entrepreneurship Policy; ministry and district delivery with engagement of financial and enterprise-development actors	Strongest evidence of complementarity between government delivery, financial literacy, grant readiness and wider enterprise-support institutions.
Namibia	Alignment with Vision 2030, National Development Plan 5 and the national MSME policy framework; ministry-led regional delivery	Strong institutional coherence and potential for continuation of training and mentoring; finance and productive-asset pathways remained less mature
South Africa	Alignment with the National Development Plan 2030; municipal support for mobilisation, venues and local access	Strong policy alignment, but less consistent integration with enterprise-finance, market and government delivery institutions

Sources: *National Planning Commission, South Africa, National Development Plan 2030 (2012); Government of Botswana, Vision 2036 (2016), National Development Plan 11 (2017), National Entrepreneurship Policy (2019); Government of Namibia, Vision 2030 (2004), NDP5 (2017), and National MSME policy (2016).*

4.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness is assessed against two overarching questions: the extent to which intended outputs and outcomes were achieved, and which programme components contributed most to results and to differences across Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. Particular attention is given to Phase III reach, business continuity, revenue, employment, mentoring, grants and productive-asset pathways.

Finding F4. Phase III implementation achieved substantial reach by the evaluation cut-off, but country reach and business continuity did not follow the same pattern.

Phase III MIS/evaluation records showed 1,296 women supported against a combined target of 1,500 (86.4%) by the evaluation point. South Africa was closest to its country target at 93.2%, followed by Namibia at 85.2% and Botswana at 80.8%. However, among the 338 country-coded survey respondents, Botswana had the highest active-business rate (92.8%), followed by Namibia (87.3%) and South Africa (83.3%).

The 86.4% overall reach at the evaluation cut-off represents substantial implementation progress, particularly because Phase III was still underway. It should nevertheless be read as an output measure. The central outcome question is what happened to women's businesses after support and whether the programme moved them from training into stronger business performance.

The country pattern illustrates this distinction more succinctly. South Africa recorded the highest progress against its Phase III country reach target, yet Botswana recorded the strongest business continuity among surveyed beneficiaries. Namibia occupied an intermediate position on both measures. The data therefore do not support a simple assumption that the country reaching the largest share of its training target necessarily generated the strongest business outcomes.

Table 12. Phase III country reach and business continuity

Country	Phase III supported	Progress vs 500 target	Survey n	Active business rate
Botswana	404	80.8%	166	92.8% (154/166)
Namibia	426	85.2%	118	87.3% (103/118)
South Africa	466	93.2%	54	83.3% (45/54)

Country	Phase III supported	Progress vs 500 target	Survey n	Active business rate
Total	1,296	86.4% of combined target of 1,500	338	89.3% (302/338)

Source: Phase III MIS/evaluation records for programme reach and beneficiary survey for operating status. Survey-based operating rates should not be interpreted as verified survival rates for the complete MIS caseload.

The pattern demonstrates that programme reach and enterprise outcomes are related but not equivalent. It should also be interpreted cautiously because the beneficiary survey was voluntary and non-probability based, and the South African survey sample was substantially smaller than those of Botswana and Namibia.

The programme's three principal Phase III outcome indicators show different levels of achievement and evidential certainty.

Table 13. Outcome indicator assessment

Outcome	Programme target	Method / analytic sample	Result at evaluation point	Judgement
Employment creation	500 women entrepreneurs create at least one decent work opportunity by 2026.	Paired employee data, n=334; share creating 1+ job; gross positive jobs.	33.4% reported at least one additional job; 224 gross positive jobs in paired sample. Indicative application to 1,296 gives ~433 women with 1+ job.	Moderate. Employment effects evident, but target not clearly verified; decent-work quality not measured.
Revenue growth	20% average increase in business revenue for supported Phase III enterprises.	Paired revenue data, n=155; revenue-band midpoint estimate plus respondent-level sensitivity check.	~61% estimated average increase; sensitivity estimate ~74%.	Exceeded on available paired data, but indicative because revenue was self-reported in bands.
Business sustainability	50% of Phase III entrepreneurs sustain their businesses.	Country-coded Phase III survey, n=338; operating fully or partly = active.	302 active businesses; 89.3%.	Exceeded. Strongest outcome; does not imply all firms are profitable, expanding or creating jobs.

Finding F5. Business continuity was the programme's strongest verified outcome.

Of the 338 country-coded Phase III survey respondents, 302 reported that their businesses were operating either fully or partly. The resulting active-business rate of 89.3 per cent was substantially above the programme target of 50 per cent.

Business continuity is significant for the programme's target group because many of the supported enterprises operated with limited working capital, volatile demand and little formal protection against economic or household shocks. Continued operation therefore represents an important result, particularly in the context of COVID-19 disruption and the wider fragility of informal micro-enterprises.

The qualitative evidence provides a plausible programme contribution. Beneficiaries consistently described improvements in pricing, costing, record keeping, stock management, separation of household and business finances, customer relations and reinvestment decisions. These practices can reduce avoidable losses and improve day-to-day enterprise management. Trainers and mentors similarly identified practical application of these skills as an important mechanism supporting business stability.

The active-business rates were high across all three country samples. Botswana recorded the highest rate, although country differences should not be over-interpreted because survey administration, sample size and participant selection differed. The most defensible conclusion is that business continuity was strong across the available country samples and constituted the clearest evidence of programme effectiveness.

The finding should nevertheless remain qualified. Some businesses were operating only part-time, seasonally or at a vulnerable level. Continued operation does not demonstrate that the enterprise was profitable, expanding or generating employment. The result is therefore best understood as evidence of stabilisation and survival, providing a necessary but not sufficient foundation for subsequent enterprise growth.

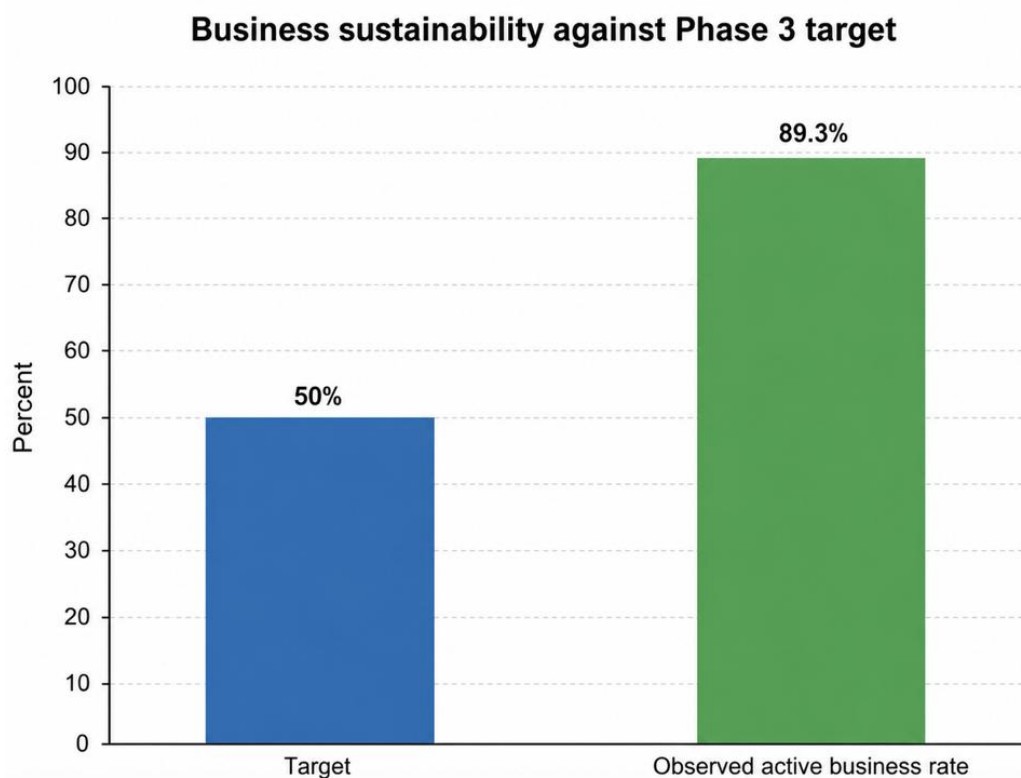


Figure 2. Business sustainability against Phase III target

Source: Beneficiary survey, Phase III country-coded analytic sample (n=338).

Finding F6. Revenue growth among respondents with paired data was positive and substantially above the programme target, although measurement precision is limited.

Among 155 respondents with both pre-support and current revenue information, converting self-reported revenue bands to midpoint values produced an estimated average increase of approximately 61 per cent. A respondent-level percentage sensitivity calculation produced an estimate of approximately 74 per cent. Both estimates were substantially above the programme target of 20 per cent.

The result is consistent with the business practices most frequently associated with programme participation. Better costing can prevent women from pricing below the true cost of production. Record keeping can make cash leakage and expenditure patterns more visible. Stock control can reduce waste, while marketing, branding and customer-management practices can strengthen sales and repeat business.

Qualitative evidence supports these mechanisms. A Namibian tailoring entrepreneur explained that before participating she did not record sales and placed business income directly into her pocket.

Following the training, she began recording income and costs, including materials, electricity and equipment, allowing her to assess whether the business was earning or losing money. Other beneficiaries connected improved sales with branding, customer communication, social-media marketing and more systematic pricing.

Revenue change was not uniform. Some respondents experienced strong growth, others remained relatively stable and some reported limited recovery or decline. Access to customers, working capital, productive equipment, sector conditions and the maturity of the enterprise continued to influence whether women could convert improved business practices into higher sales.

The result also requires methodological caution. Revenue was self-reported and collected in bands rather than verified through accounts. Midpoint conversion provides a reasonable indication of direction and order of magnitude, while the sensitivity analysis confirms that the positive conclusion does not depend on a single calculation method. Neither approach, however, produces an audited programme-wide revenue result.

The evaluation therefore judges that the programme contributed to a positive revenue shift among respondents with paired data. The exact percentage should remain indicative and should not be generalised automatically to all Phase III participants.

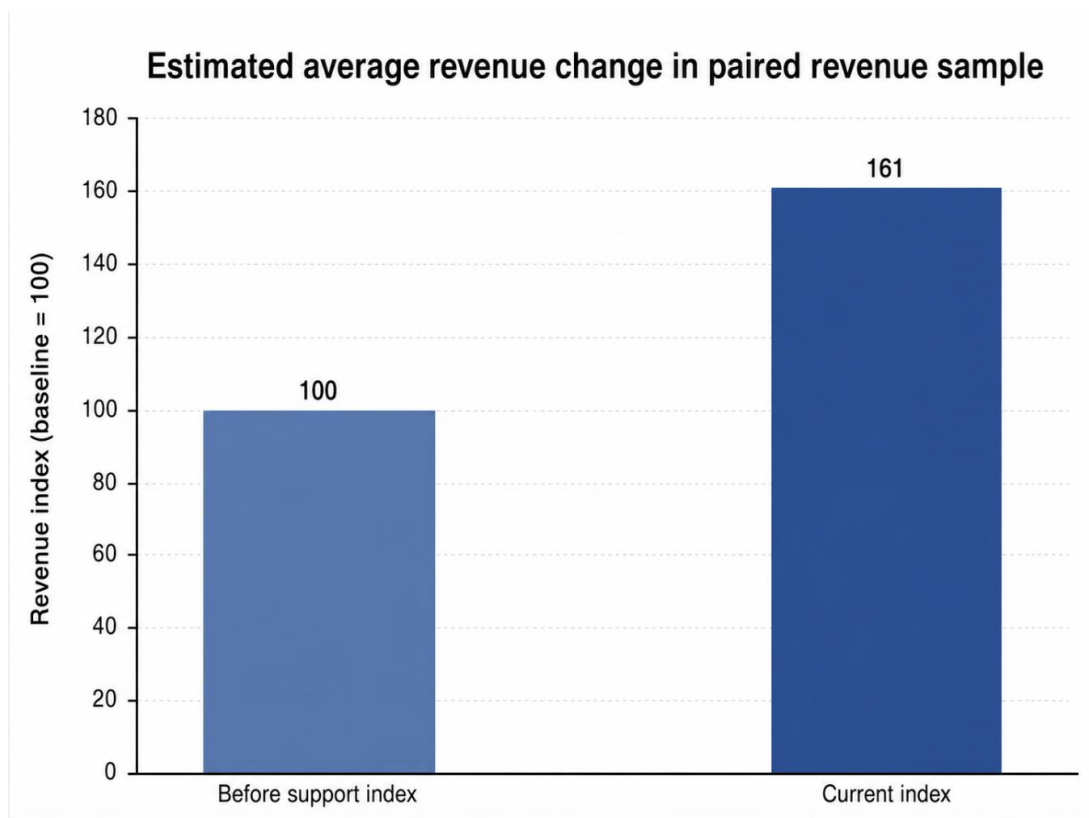


Figure 3. Estimated average revenue change in the paired revenue sample

Source: Beneficiary survey; midpoint estimate, paired revenue cases n=155.

Finding F7. Employment creation was meaningful but less widespread than business survival and revenue growth, and the formal “decent work” target cannot be verified.

Among 334 respondents with paired employee data, 33.4% reported creating at least one additional job and 224 gross positive jobs were recorded in the paired sample. Applying the 33.4% share indicatively to the Phase III caseload of 1,296 gives about 433 women entrepreneurs with one or more additional jobs close to, but below and not a verification of, the target of 500.

Employment is a later-stage outcome than improved business practice or continuity. A micro-enterprise generally needs stable orders, sufficient margins and confidence that labour costs can be sustained before it hires. For many women in the programme, the first gains were therefore stronger self-employment and improved owner income rather than immediate labour absorption.

The survey result that roughly one-third of respondents with paired employment data created at least one additional job is meaningful, but the programme target is more demanding. The target refers to women entrepreneurs each creating at least one decent work opportunity. The available data can show changes in employee numbers, but not whether those jobs met standards related to regularity, pay, safety, written terms or social protection.

Qualitative evidence indicates that jobs were more likely where businesses had moved beyond survival into early expansion. Stable demand, access to markets, productive equipment, working capital and compliance capacity were repeatedly identified as conditions that allowed women to take on more work and, in some cases, employ others. This reinforces the conclusion that the employment target depends on the quality of the later stages of the support pathway.

The evidence also does not permit the jobs to be classified against decent-work criteria such as regularity, pay, safety, written terms or social protection. Employment growth depended on demand stability, working capital, equipment, compliance and market access. This explains why employment lagged behind business continuity and revenue improvement.

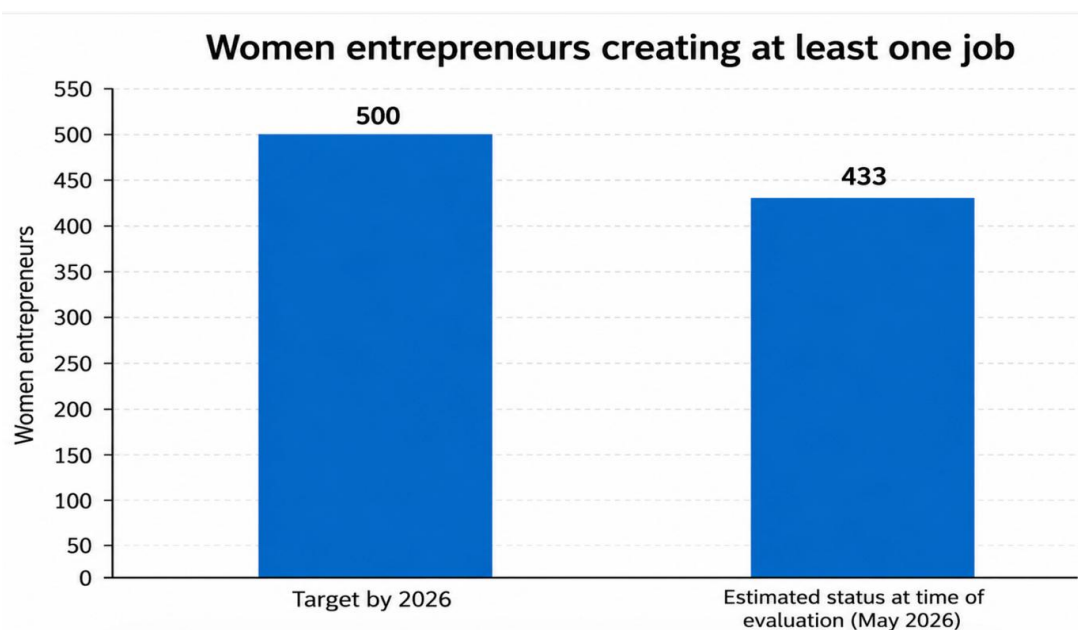


Figure 4. Women entrepreneurs creating at least one job: indicative status at the evaluation point

Source: Beneficiary survey paired employee data (n=334) and Phase III caseload (1,296); projection is indicative, not a programme count.

Finding F8. Results were strongest where training was followed by sustained mentoring and other practical growth support; training alone was not a sufficient pathway to catalytic enterprise growth.

Training created a common foundation, but beneficiaries and implementers consistently emphasised the importance of follow-up. Mentoring helped women apply business concepts to real problems, while finance preparation, productive assets and market opportunities addressed constraints that training could not resolve. In South Africa, implementers reported that mentor time, travel distances and short assignments limited the depth of support; virtual follow-up helped but was not viewed as a full substitute for hands-on support where businesses needed intensive problem-solving.

South African implementation evidence illustrates the challenge of delivering that later-stage support at sufficient intensity. One implementer stated that “there isn’t enough time to mentor and to coach the entrepreneurs” (SA_KII_Implementer_02). A related account described mentors being expected to engage approximately 30 entrepreneurs within a three-day period while travel distances and the time required for meaningful business support made only a small number of substantive visits possible each day.

The same evidence shows why mentoring cannot be treated simply as another attendance-based output. Women sought business-specific troubleshooting, follow-up and someone they could return to when implementation problems arose. One South African beneficiary emphasised that new entrepreneurs “need somebody they can refer to, that can guide them” (SA_KII_Beneficiary_03). Where mentor caseloads or travel arrangements reduce contact to brief or infrequent engagements, the programme risks preserving coverage while losing the depth that makes mentoring valuable.

Virtual and group support can reduce cost and travel time and are useful for refreshers, referrals and peer communication. However, stakeholders did not regard them as complete substitutes for face-to-face support where an enterprise needed diagnostic advice, production troubleshooting or help with a specific market or compliance problem. A blended model is therefore more consistent with the evidence than either fully individual or fully virtual mentoring.

The contribution pathway is therefore not “training causes growth”. It is a sequence in which foundational capability must be converted into better decisions and then supported by the capital, market, compliance and technical inputs relevant to each enterprise.

Finding F9. Grant and productive-asset pathways were potentially catalytic but were still evolving, and unclear expectations reduced trust and effectiveness.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders in Botswana and Namibia described an expectations gap around the size, timing and form of grant support. Some women expected sizeable cash grants capable of transforming production, while programme stakeholders referred to smaller amounts, grant-readiness processes and the possibility of providing equipment rather than cash.

In Botswana, FGD participants identified tractors, laundry machines, digital equipment and embroidery machines as examples of assets that could alter production capacity. Some discussed support in the range of approximately P150,000 to P200,000, depending on the business. Government stakeholders, by contrast, referred to possible grants closer to P20,000 to P30,000 and indicated that the process had not been fully implemented at the time of consultation. The difference illustrates a substantial communication and expectation gap.

Namibian beneficiaries similarly referred to applications and expectations that support could be provided through productive equipment where cash was unavailable. The central concern was not simply whether support would be provided in cash or in kind. It was whether women understood what was available, how participants would be selected, when decisions would be made and how the support related to their business plans.

Asset-based support is not inherently less effective than cash. Where an enterprise has verified demand and a specific equipment bottleneck, an appropriate productive asset can increase capacity, retain value within the business and enable access to higher-value orders. However, equipment is unlikely to be catalytic where demand, operating capacity, maintenance arrangements and market pathways have not been established.

The tailoring enterprise observed during fieldwork illustrates this economic logic while also demonstrating the importance of attribution boundaries. The embroidery machine shown in the report was acquired through a separate grant initiative, not through EntreprenHER. Once the business acquired an asset matched to existing demand, it was able to retain higher-value uniform work within

the enterprise and employ other women in production. The case demonstrates how productive assets can contribute to growth when an enterprise is ready to use them; it is not evidence that EntreprenHER financed the machine or caused the subsequent expansion.



Figure 5. EntreprenHER beneficiary operating an embroidery machine acquired through a separate funding initiative

Source: Evaluation team field visit, Botswana, 2026.



Figure 6. Women employed in an EntreprenHER beneficiary's tailoring enterprise producing school uniforms following business expansion; the embroidery machine was acquired through a separate grant initiative

Source: Evaluation team field visit, Botswana, 2026.

The evidence indicates that the effectiveness of grant or asset support depends on business diagnosis, demonstrated demand, the participant's ability to use and maintain the asset and appropriate follow-up after acquisition. Unclear communication concerning selection, timing and

support value created uncertainty and, in some cases, weakened beneficiary trust in the support pathway.

Table 14. Programme components, contribution pathways and principal constraints

Component or mechanism	Evidence of contribution	Principal constraint
Foundational business and life-skills training	Consistently associated with better record keeping, costing, pricing, budgeting, planning and confidence	Strong for broad capability-building but insufficient on its own for many growth-stage constraints
Mentoring and coaching	Supported practical application, troubleshooting and accountability and was repeatedly identified as important by beneficiaries	Depth and consistency were constrained in some locations by caseload, travel, time and sector fit
Finance and grant readiness	Helped entrepreneurs understand financing requirements and prepare business cases	Access to actual finance remained limited, and grant expectations were not always clear
Productive assets	Could remove a specific production bottleneck where demand and enterprise readiness were demonstrated	Required careful diagnosis, transparent selection and post-acquisition mentoring; external grants must not be attributed to EntreprenHER
Market and compliance support	Provided a potential bridge from improved capability to sales, procurement and employment	Coverage and integration with enterprise-support ecosystems were uneven
Government and partner embedding	Strengthened reach, legitimacy, referrals and potential continuity, particularly in Botswana and Namibia	Institutional depth differed by country, with South Africa remaining more dependent on direct UN Women and contracted delivery

Overall, the evidence indicates that EntreprenHER was most effective in reaching women entrepreneurs, strengthening foundational business practices and supporting enterprise continuity. Positive revenue change was evident among respondents with paired data, while employment creation was more moderate and could not be assessed against decent-work standards. The strongest results occurred where training was converted into practice through sustained mentoring and complemented by finance preparation, productive assets, market access and institutional support. These later stages of the pathway were less consistently implemented and remained central to whether stabilised enterprises could progress towards sustained growth and employment.

4.3 Efficiency

Efficiency was assessed in relation to the use of financial, human and partnership resources; the timeliness and sequencing of programme components; the suitability of delivery arrangements across dispersed geographies; and the capacity of monitoring systems to support management decisions. Because programme-specific actual expenditure was not consistently available at the required level of disaggregation, the evaluation distinguishes between operational efficiency, which could be assessed from implementation evidence, and verified financial efficiency or value for money, which could not be established.

Finding F10. The programme was efficient in achieving broad training coverage but less efficient in moving beneficiaries through the full sequence of post-training support.

The programme was designed as a layered support package combining business and life-skills training, mentoring, finance or grants, productive assets, market connections and digital tools. In implementation, the front end of this pathway was substantially stronger than the later stages. Training could be delivered at scale through group-based approaches, trainers and existing local structures, while mentoring, finance preparation, grants, equipment and market linkages required more intensive coordination, specialised expertise and individual follow-up.

This imbalance created a conversion bottleneck between improved business capability and enterprise growth. Where participants completed training but did not receive sufficient mentoring or practical growth support, the programme incurred the cost of building foundational capability without consistently protecting the additional investment required to translate that capability into increased production, sales or employment.

The timing of Phase III implementation is important. Several finance, grant and productive-asset activities were still developing at the evaluation cut-off. Their more limited reach cannot therefore be interpreted only as non-delivery. Nevertheless, delays and uneven sequencing reduced the time available for participants to use these forms of support and for related outcomes to materialise within the evaluation period.

Mentoring illustrates the operational trade-off. Meaningful enterprise coaching required time to understand each business, identify its principal constraint and support the entrepreneur to apply the training. In geographically dispersed areas, travel time, transport arrangements, poor roads, short assignments and large caseloads reduced the number and depth of visits that could realistically be completed.

In South Africa, business advisers reported using their own vehicles for mentoring visits in areas including Musina and Blouberg, where difficult rural roads increased the logistical burden. As discussed under effectiveness, some mentors were expected to engage approximately 30 entrepreneurs within three days. These arrangements may have supported reporting against coverage expectations, but they limited the time available for enterprise-specific diagnosis and problem-solving.

Group-based and digital approaches offered potential efficiency gains by reducing travel and facilitating refresher training, referrals and peer communication. However, the evidence indicates that these approaches were most useful as complements to, rather than complete substitutes for, direct mentoring where women required production advice, financial troubleshooting, compliance assistance or support to address a specific market constraint.

The three country delivery models created different efficiency opportunities. Botswana and Namibia increasingly used ministry staff, trainers, regional or district structures and local mobilisation systems. This reduced the need to create entirely parallel delivery arrangements and supported broader local reach. South Africa retained greater direct UN Women management and reliance on contracted service providers, providing stronger central control but also creating greater dependence on contracting, travel arrangements and central coordination.

The evaluation cannot conclude that the government-embedded models were necessarily less costly, because comparable actual expenditure data were unavailable. The evidence does indicate, however, that existing government structures improved operational reach and potential continuity where public institutions genuinely co-owned delivery. Partnerships were less efficient where their role was limited to mobilisation and venues rather than extending to mentoring, referrals, finance, market access and follow-up.

Overall, the principal operational efficiency weakness was not excessive training coverage. It was the failure to move a sufficiently consistent proportion of participants from broad foundational training into the more resource-intensive support required for enterprise growth.

Finding F11. Verified financial efficiency and value for money could not be assessed because programme-specific actual expenditure was not consistently available by country, activity and support modality.

The Phase III programme ceiling was US\$3.0 million. Approved country allocations were approximately US\$1.108 million for South Africa, US\$0.995 million for Namibia and US\$0.897 million for Botswana.

Table 15. Approved Phase III country budgets

Country	Approved Phase III budget	Share of Phase III ceiling
South Africa	US\$1,108,393	36.9%
Namibia	US\$994,994	33.2%
Botswana	US\$896,613	29.9%
Total	US\$3,000,000	100.0%

Source: Approved Phase III country budgets and workplans available to the evaluation. Figures represent approved budgets, not verified actual expenditure.

The approved budgets demonstrate that substantial resources were planned for implementation across the three countries. They also provide information on the intended distribution of resources between programme activities, coordination and support functions. However, approved allocations cannot establish whether expenditure occurred as planned, whether activities were delivered within budget or whether one delivery model generated stronger results at a lower cost.

Actual expenditure was not consistently available at the level required to calculate:

- Budget variance by country or activity.
- Actual cost per participant.
- Cost per completed mentoring pathway.
- Cost per grant or productive asset delivered.
- Comparative unit costs across delivery models.
- Verified return on investment or value for money.

This is a significant management-information limitation rather than evidence, by itself, that programme resources were used inefficiently. Multi-country management, quality assurance, partnership coordination and implementation across dispersed geographic areas all generate legitimate transaction costs. The relevant efficiency question is whether these costs produced timely and sufficiently intensive support at enterprise level. Available implementation evidence indicates that this occurred more consistently for foundational training than for mentoring, finance, assets and market support.

The evaluation therefore does not present cost-per-beneficiary or return-on-investment estimates based solely on approved budgets. Such calculations would risk treating planned resources as actual expenditure and assuming uniform delivery across participants. The financial efficiency judgement is consequently limited to the adequacy of resource planning, the availability of financial information and the operational evidence concerning sequencing and delivery.

For future management and evaluation, the absence of readily traceable actual expenditure by country, activity and support modality also limits the programme's capacity to compare the relative costs and results of different forms of support. Decisions about expanding mentoring, productive assets, digital delivery or market support require reliable information on both outcomes and actual delivery costs.

Finding F12. The MIS supported output and participation tracking but was not sufficiently structured to follow individual enterprises through the support pathway or monitor repeated business outcomes.

The programme had monitoring systems capable of recording participation and the number of women reached. These systems supported reporting on training and overall Phase III implementation progress. They were less able to show how individual women progressed from training into mentoring, finance, grants or productive assets, market access and subsequent business outcomes.

The evaluation therefore had to reconstruct enterprise progression from several sources, including the Phase III MIS, beneficiary survey, programme documents, KIIs and FGDs. This process allowed

the evaluation to identify broad patterns but did not provide a complete longitudinal record for each participating enterprise.

The monitoring weakness was not simply an absence of data. It concerned the structure and connectivity of the available information. Participation records were not consistently linked to a stable set of follow-up indicators showing:

- The baseline situation of the enterprise.
- The combination and timing of support received.
- Mentoring contacts and issues addressed.
- Finance, grant or asset applications and decisions.
- Market and compliance support received.
- Business operating status over time.

Changes in revenue, employment and economic agency.

This reduced the usefulness of the MIS for adaptive management. Programme teams could identify how many women had been trained but had less systematic evidence showing where participants dropped out of the support pathway, which combinations of support produced stronger outcomes, whether grants or assets were used productively, or which sectors required more specialised assistance.

A progression-oriented monitoring system would allow efficiency and effectiveness to be managed together. It would help programme managers target scarce mentoring, financial and market-support resources towards women for whom these inputs addressed a demonstrated constraint. It would also make it possible to compare the costs and results of different country delivery models and support combinations.

Table 16. Summary of efficiency evidence and implications

Efficiency dimension	Evidence available	Evaluative implication
Resource planning	Approved country budgets and programme workplans	Shows the intended allocation of resources but not actual utilisation
Actual expenditure and value for money	Programme-specific expenditure was not consistently available at the required level of disaggregation	No verified budget variance, actual unit cost, return on investment or value-for-money calculation can be made
Implementation reach	Substantial Phase III reach and broad delivery of foundational training	Strong operational efficiency in reaching women and delivering common training content
Sequencing	Training was more consistently implemented than mentoring, finance, grants, productive assets and market support	Principal efficiency loss occurred in converting training reach into complete enterprise-growth pathways
Mentoring logistics	Travel distance, transport arrangements, short assignments and high caseloads constrained the depth of follow-up	Delivery arrangements did not always protect the intensity required for meaningful enterprise support
Digital and group support	Reduced some travel and facilitated communication and refresher support	Useful as a complement but insufficient as a complete substitute for enterprise-specific mentoring
Partnerships and country models	Government structures supported local reach and institutional ownership in Botswana and Namibia; South Africa relied more on direct and contracted delivery	Partnerships improved efficiency where they supported co-delivery, referrals and follow-up rather than mobilisation alone
Monitoring and MIS	Stronger for counting participation than for longitudinal progression and outcomes	Limited adaptive management, comparison of support packages and targeting of scarce resources

4.4 Impact and Unintended Effects

Impact was assessed through evidence of wider and potentially longer-term changes in women's enterprises, livelihoods, economic agency and relationships with markets and institutions. Given the absence of a counterfactual and the fact that Phase III remained under implementation, the evaluation examines the programme's contribution to these changes rather than claiming strict attribution. Detailed calculations concerning business continuity, revenue and employment are presented under effectiveness and are not repeated here.

Finding F13. The programme's clearest wider effects were improved business practice, confidence, agency and economic autonomy alongside business continuity; transformative effects on employment and market power were more selective.

The programme's strongest impact pathway began with practical business capability. Beneficiaries described moving from informal and intuitive business management towards more deliberate use of records, costing, pricing, budgeting, stock control, customer management and reinvestment. These changes improved women's ability to understand the performance of their enterprises and make decisions using business information.

This practical capability was closely connected to confidence and economic agency. Women described greater confidence in identifying themselves as business owners, communicating with customers, explaining their products, approaching institutions and making decisions about business income. These changes are important because the programme's intended outcome concerned not only jobs and income security but also women's economic autonomy.

Improved confidence was not simply a psychosocial effect detached from business performance. In several accounts, confidence enabled women to apply their knowledge, negotiate with customers, revise prices, market their products and engage more assertively with potential buyers or financial institutions. Better records and financial discipline similarly increased women's capacity to decide whether the business was earning or losing money and whether income should be reinvested.

The programme's impact should therefore not be assessed only through the number of additional employees. For women operating informal or semi-formal micro-enterprises, sustaining self-employment, increasing control over business income and improving the quality of economic decisions are meaningful changes. They can reduce vulnerability, preserve a source of household income and expand women's economic choices, even where the enterprise remains small.

Business continuity provided the clearest quantitative support for this resilience pathway. As reported under effectiveness, a high proportion of surveyed Phase III businesses remained fully or partly operational. Qualitative evidence indicates that improved pricing, record keeping, stock control and separation of household and business money plausibly contributed to this result. These practices helped women manage scarce resources more systematically and reduce avoidable business losses.

Positive revenue movement among respondents with paired data provides further evidence that improved capability translated into commercial results for some women. Beneficiaries linked stronger sales or revenue to changes in costing, branding, marketing, customer communication and financial management. However, the extent of change varied substantially and remained affected by working capital, productive assets, market demand and sector conditions.

More transformative impacts were selective. Some women described movement towards formal buyers, larger orders or the employment of others. These changes were most plausible where improved business capability was matched with equipment, finance, compliance support and access to viable markets. Where this bridge was absent, programme effects were more likely to remain at the level of improved practices, confidence and enterprise stabilisation.

The evidence therefore indicates a differentiated impact pathway:

- Foundational training contributed to knowledge, confidence and improved business discipline.
- Application of these practices supported enterprise resilience and, for some women, higher revenue.
- Growth in production, formal market participation and employment required additional finance, equipment, compliance and buyer access.
- Where these complementary inputs were unavailable or delayed, the transition from resilience to transformative enterprise growth remained incomplete.

The programme's contribution to market power was consequently more limited than its contribution to individual capability and agency. Women continued to face barriers associated with business informality, certification, documentation, procurement procedures, productive capacity and access to buyers. Improvements in personal capability could strengthen women's readiness to enter these systems but did not, by themselves, change the institutional conditions governing finance and market access.

The evaluation cannot isolate the programme's influence from market demand, inflation, sector conditions, household circumstances or assistance received through other initiatives. Nevertheless, the consistency between the changes described by women, the content of the programme and evidence from trainers and implementing stakeholders supports a credible contribution claim. The contribution is strongest for business practices, confidence, agency and resilience and more qualified for employment, formal market participation and enterprise transformation.

Finding F14. Positive unintended effects included peer learning, stronger enterprise identity and household resilience; negative effects centred on uneven access and frustration where expectations or follow-up were unclear.

Several wider effects emerged that were not always explicit in the programme's formal results framework. On the positive side, women described learning from other participants, exchanging practical business information and using stronger participants as informal reference points. These peer relationships extended the value of training beyond the scheduled sessions and provided a source of encouragement and informal troubleshooting where formal advisory services were limited.

Participation also strengthened women's identity as entrepreneurs. Some beneficiaries described seeing their activities as businesses requiring planning, records, investment and customer management rather than only as small income-generating activities. This change in identity reinforced confidence and willingness to engage with customers, institutions and other enterprises.

Improved management of enterprise income also had potential household-level effects. Where women maintained their businesses, managed income more deliberately or increased sales, they were better positioned to meet household needs and absorb economic shocks. The available evidence supports household resilience as a plausible effect, although the evaluation did not collect sufficiently systematic household-level data to quantify it.

The programme also generated demonstration effects. Women who improved their enterprises or accessed new opportunities could become examples for other entrepreneurs in their communities. These effects were most visible in beneficiary accounts and field observations and should be treated as illustrative rather than as evidence of community-wide change.

Negative unintended effects were primarily relational and institutional rather than direct economic harms. Delayed or unclear grant processes created frustration among women who believed financial or productive support would follow training. Differences between beneficiary expectations and the support modalities or values communicated by implementers weakened confidence in the programme pathway.

Some beneficiaries also perceived that access to exhibitions, market opportunities or specialised support was repeatedly concentrated among the same participants. Whether or not this reflected deliberate exclusion, the perception of unequal access affected trust and raised questions about the transparency of selection criteria.

Follow-up could also produce frustration where women believed it focused on reporting, photographs or programme visibility without addressing the constraints they continued to face. Beneficiaries valued continued contact when it provided advice, referrals or problem-solving. The same contact could be experienced as extractive when information was collected repeatedly without feedback or visible support.

Table 17. Unintended positive and negative effects

Unintended effect	Evidence and interpretation	Qualification
Peer learning and informal support	Participants exchanged business information, observed the progress of other women and used peers as informal sources of advice	Evidence was qualitative and the continuity of these networks was not systematically tracked
Stronger enterprise identity	Women increasingly understood their activities as businesses requiring records, planning, investment and active customer management	Closely connected to intended confidence outcomes but broader than the formal enterprise indicators
Demonstration effects	More established participants became informal examples or reference points for other entrepreneurs	Illustrative evidence; no basis for estimating community-level diffusion
Household resilience	Continued business activity and more deliberate income management helped some women meet household needs and manage shocks	Household income and wellbeing were not measured systematically
Frustration concerning grants or assets	Delays and differences between expected and communicated support reduced confidence in the programme pathway	Expectations varied, and Phase III grant and asset activities remained under implementation
Perceived unequal access to opportunities	Some beneficiaries believed exhibitions and specialised opportunities repeatedly reached the same women	The evaluation could document the perception but could not independently reconstruct every selection decision
Extractive or visibility-focused follow-up	Some follow-up was perceived as prioritising reporting or photographs over advice and resolution of business constraints	Not reported uniformly across countries or participants, but relevant to programme trust and reputation

These negative effects did not outweigh the programme's overall positive contribution, but they are significant from a gender-responsive and rights-based perspective. Transparent information, equitable access and meaningful feedback affect whether women experience the programme as empowering and accountable. Administrative processes are therefore part of the programme's impact pathway because they can either strengthen or weaken trust, agency and continued participation.

4.5 Sustainability

Finding F15. Sustainability of beneficiary-level results is moderate: women are likely to retain the knowledge, business-management practices and confidence developed through the programme, but the continuation and growth of their enterprises remain vulnerable to unresolved financial, equipment and market constraints.

The programme generated capabilities that women can continue applying without intensive external support. These include record keeping, costing and pricing, separation of household and business

finances, customer management, planning and more deliberate reinvestment. Qualitative evidence indicates that many participants had incorporated these practices into routine business decisions. Improvements in confidence, enterprise identity and economic autonomy are also likely to extend beyond the training period.

The Phase III survey provides an encouraging indication of continuity. As reported under effectiveness, 89.3 per cent of surveyed beneficiaries with usable business-status data were operating an active business at the time of data collection. Active-business rates were 92.8 per cent in Botswana, 87.3 per cent in Namibia and 83.3 per cent in South Africa. These results suggest that the programme contributed to enterprise stabilization and that most surveyed participants had continued trading during the implementation period.

Nevertheless, these figures describe business status at the time of the survey and do not constitute evidence of long-term survival after programme support ends. The voluntary, non-probability survey sample and the absence of longer-term post-exit tracking also limit the extent to which future continuity can be predicted. Continued trading should therefore not be interpreted as evidence that enterprises have become financially secure, resilient to shocks or capable of sustained growth.

The remaining constraints identified by beneficiaries reinforce this distinction. Finance, productive equipment and access to markets continued to be among the most frequently reported barriers. Mentoring and commercial follow-up were also uneven. Consequently, women may retain the knowledge acquired through the programme while remaining unable to make the investments, obtain the certifications or enter the markets required to stabilize and expand their businesses.

Productive assets and grants have the potential to generate longer-lasting benefits because equipment can improve productive capacity, product quality and business continuity. However, these components were introduced relatively late and had reached only a limited number of surveyed beneficiaries by the evaluation cut-off. There was insufficient evidence on the utilization, maintenance and longer-term commercial results of the assets provided. Their contribution to sustainability should therefore be regarded as promising but not yet demonstrated.

Overall, beneficiary-level sustainability is stronger for knowledge, confidence and basic business practices than for revenue growth, employment creation and market expansion. The programme established a foundation that women can continue using, but the durability of enterprise-level results will also depend on whether the wider financial and market environment enables them to convert those capabilities into viable commercial opportunities.

Finding F16. Institutional sustainability differs substantially across the three countries and is strongest where delivery functions have been embedded in government systems. Botswana and Namibia have more credible continuation pathways, while South Africa remains more dependent on UN Women and contracted providers.

In Botswana, implementation through ministry and district structures created institutional memory and a platform for continued mobilization, training, mentoring and referral. The programme is also aligned with national citizen economic empowerment priorities, giving it a domestic policy rationale beyond the donor-funded intervention. Engagement with private-sector and financial actors offers additional possibilities for referrals, supplier-development opportunities and complementary support.

These arrangements provide comparatively strong prospects for continuing the programme's foundational training functions. However, the wider enterprise-growth package is less secure. Intensive mentoring, grants, productive assets, finance facilitation and market development require recurrent resources and sustained partner commitments. The evaluation did not find evidence of a fully costed and ring-fenced domestic mechanism that would maintain all these components at the

same intensity after programme financing ends. Botswana's institutional sustainability is therefore stronger than the sustainability of its complete package of enterprise support.

Namibia also has a comparatively strong institutional foundation. The involvement of ministry trainers and mentors and the programme's broad regional footprint provide an established platform for continued mobilization, training and follow-up. The extension of delivery beyond a narrow pilot area indicates that core programme knowledge and functions have been incorporated into government structures to a greater degree than in a stand-alone project model.

As in Botswana, however, institutional reach does not guarantee the continuation of every component. Financial inclusion support, productive equipment, grants and intensive mentoring were less securely institutionalized than training and mobilization. Maintaining the quality and intensity of mentoring as coverage expands may also require resources that are not assured through existing public structures. Namibia consequently has strong prospects for sustaining the core training platform, but more moderate prospects for sustaining the full bundled support model.

South Africa has the least developed institutional continuation pathway. Municipalities facilitated participant mobilization, venues and local access, but core programme delivery remained more directly dependent on UN Women and contracted service providers. Local cooperation was important for implementation, but it did not consistently result in municipal or enterprise-support institutions assuming responsibility for mentoring, finance facilitation, market linkage and longer-term business follow-up.

This creates a more substantial transition risk when project resources decline. The programme's training materials, methodologies and accumulated experience can remain available, and beneficiaries may continue applying the knowledge acquired. However, there was limited evidence of a designated institution with the mandate, resources and operational arrangements needed to continue the model at comparable depth. Connections with the wider enterprise-development ecosystem were also not sufficiently embedded to provide a clear pathway for sustained referral and follow-up.

Table 18. Comparative assessment of institutional sustainability

Country	Institutional basis for continuation	Functions most likely to continue	Less-secure functions	Overall sustainability prospect
Botswana	Ministry- and district-based delivery, alignment with citizen economic empowerment priorities and engagement with private-sector and financial actors	Mobilization, foundational training, referrals and some mentoring	Grants, productive assets, intensive mentoring, finance facilitation and market development	Moderate to high , although the complete support package is not yet financially institutionalized
Namibia	Ministry trainers and mentors and a broad regional delivery footprint	Mobilization, training and elements of mentoring and follow-up	Grants, equipment, intensive mentoring and other resource-intensive support	Moderate to high for the institutional training platform and moderate for the broader package
South Africa	UN Women-led and contracted delivery, with municipalities mainly providing facilitation and access	Retention of training materials, methodologies and beneficiary-level knowledge	Institutional ownership, sustained mentoring, finance referrals, market linkage and long-term follow-up	Low to moderate , with comparatively high transition risk

Finding F17. Across all three countries, training and mobilization are more likely to continue than the resource-intensive services required for enterprise progression, and the absence of fully costing country-level transition arrangements limits confidence that the complete programme model can be sustained or scaled.

The programme components most easily absorbed into existing institutions are those that rely primarily on accumulated knowledge and staff capacity. Training materials, public-sector trainers, local mobilization systems and basic referral functions can continue where participating institutions retain personnel and incorporate these responsibilities into their normal operations.

By contrast, grants, productive assets, specialized mentoring, compliance support, market linkage and finance facilitation require recurrent expenditure, appropriate partner institutions and active coordination. These components were also those most closely connected with progression from enterprise stabilization to growth. Their uncertain continuation therefore affects not only institutional sustainability but also the likelihood that beneficiary-level gains will translate into stronger revenues, employment and market participation.

The evidence did not demonstrate that all major programme functions were covered by fully costing handover, financing and accountability arrangements. This gap is particularly significant in South Africa, but it is also relevant to the more government-embedded models in Botswana and Namibia. Institutionalizing training without securing the functions needed after training could preserve programme reach while reducing the depth and commercial value of support.

The programme's emphasis on the number of women trained further influences its sustainability prospects. Broad training coverage can be sustained more readily where trainers and delivery systems are situated within government, as in Botswana and Namibia. However, expansion in participant numbers without corresponding mentoring, finance, asset and market capacity risks producing a model that continues administratively but does not consistently support business progression. This risk is greater in South Africa because the institutional structure required to absorb and service large cohorts is less developed.

Finding F18. Cross-country synthesis

The cross-country evidence shows that programme performance varied by dimension rather than following a single country ranking. South Africa recorded the highest Phase III reach against its country target, while Botswana recorded the strongest business continuity among surveyed beneficiaries. Namibia combined relatively strong reach and continuity with a ministry-led delivery model that had already developed a broad national footprint. These differences are important because they show that implementation coverage, enterprise continuity and institutional sustainability did not move in exactly the same direction.

Table 19. Cross-country synthesis of reach, continuity and delivery architecture

Country	Phase III reach at evaluation point	Business continuity in survey	Delivery architecture and evaluative implication
Botswana	404 of 500 (80.8%)	154 of 166 active (92.8%)	Government-embedded delivery and stronger engagement with local and private-sector actors supported ownership and follow-up. The main remaining constraint was progression into finance, productive assets and larger markets.
Namibia	426 of 500 (85.2%)	103 of 118 active (87.3%)	Ministry-led delivery provided a wide national footprint and stronger prospects for continuity of the training and mentoring platform. Capital-intensive support, including grants and equipment, remained more dependent on programme financing.

Country	Phase III reach at evaluation point	Business continuity in survey	Delivery architecture and evaluative implication
South Africa	466 of 500 (93.2%)	45 of 54 active (83.3%)	Direct UN Women and contracted delivery supported high reach, but municipal involvement was concentrated mainly on mobilisation, venues and local access. This created comparatively greater transition risk for sustained mentoring, market linkage and locally anchored support.

The comparison reinforces the finding that delivery architecture was part of the programme's effectiveness and sustainability pathway, rather than an administrative detail. In Botswana and Namibia, ministry-based delivery created institutional memory, local legitimacy and a stronger prospect that training and some mentoring functions could continue after donor funding. At the same time, government embedding did not remove the need for finance, equipment, compliance support and market access. Those growth-oriented components remained less institutionalised than the core training function.

South Africa illustrates a different trade-off. Direct implementation provided UN Women with greater operational control and the country was closest to its Phase III reach target at the evaluation point. However, the model depended more heavily on UN Women, contracted providers and facilitative municipal support. The evidence therefore points to a need for stronger co-ownership by enterprise-development and market-making institutions if post-training support is to continue at similar intensity beyond the programme cycle.

A common pattern nevertheless cuts across all three countries: foundational training was delivered more consistently than the deeper support required to convert improved business practice into sustained growth and employment. Mentoring intensity, finance and asset access, compliance readiness and market linkage remained important constraints. The implication is that a common regional theory of change can be retained, but country operating models and beneficiary support pathways should be differentiated according to institutional capacity, enterprise stage and the specific constraints faced by each business.

4.6. Cross-cutting

Finding F19. Leave No One Behind and intersectionality were insufficiently operationalized in programme monitoring and evaluation, preventing robust assessment of whether women of different ages, women with disabilities and women in different geographic settings participated and benefited equitably.

The programme reached women across rural, peri-urban and urban settings and included enterprises from agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, textiles, retail, beauty and other services. This diversity indicates that implementation was not confined to a single geographic or enterprise profile. Fieldwork also incorporated participants with different types and levels of programme exposure.

However, beneficiary records and outcome data did not consistently capture age, disability, accessibility requirements or other characteristics needed for intersectional analysis. Geography and sector were more visible in the evidence, but outcome data were not sufficiently structured to determine systematically whether women in rural locations, younger or older women, or women with disabilities experienced different levels of access, support or results.

Disability and youth were not established as standalone evaluation questions in the Terms of Reference. This constrained the depth of analysis, but it does not remove the underlying programme-level evidence gap. The evaluation cannot conclude that women with disabilities or particular age groups were excluded, nor can it conclude that they participated and benefited equitably. The

absence of disaggregated evidence must therefore be interpreted as an inability to assess performance rather than evidence of either achievement or non-achievement.

The limited disability evidence was especially significant from a human-rights perspective. Without systematic information on disability status and accessibility requirements, the evaluation could not assess whether outreach, training venues, communications, digital tools, mentoring arrangements and business-support services were accessible to women with different impairments. Similarly, the absence of consistent age-disaggregated analysis prevented assessment of whether younger entrepreneurs required different combinations of start-up, digital, financial or asset support.

EntreprenHER's focus on women micro-entrepreneurs gave the programme a clear equality and economic-rights orientation. Women were treated as primary rights-holders, and their experiences formed an important basis for adapting and assessing programme support. Nevertheless, a fully operational human-rights-based approach requires more than targeting women. It also requires systematic attention to non-discrimination, accessibility, meaningful participation and differential results among groups of women. The available evidence indicates that these elements were only partially reflected in programme data and results analysis.

Table 20. Gender equality, human rights and inclusion assessment

Dimension	Evaluative judgement	Evidence and limitations
Women's economic empowerment	Meaningful contribution	Beneficiaries reported increased confidence, improved business practices and greater control over enterprise decisions. Evidence of wider transformation in household and market power relations was limited.
Structural economic barriers	Partially addressed	Training and mentoring strengthened women's capabilities, but finance, productive assets, markets, compliance costs and informality remained major barriers.
Unpaid care and time poverty	Insufficiently assessed	Household and time pressures were identified in the programme context and qualitative evidence, but changes in care responsibilities and time use were not systematically measured.
Rural and geographic inclusion	Participation evident; comparative results unclear	Rural, peri-urban and urban perspectives were represented, but outcome data did not consistently allow comparison by location.
Youth and age	Insufficient evidence	Youth appeared in programme framing and mobilization, but age-disaggregated participation and outcome analysis were not systematic.
Disability inclusion	Insufficient evidence	Available data did not permit conclusions regarding participation, accessibility or differential outcomes for women with disabilities.
Informal women entrepreneurs	Strong targeting relevance; incomplete progression	The programme reached women commonly excluded from formal enterprise support, but finance, certification, compliance and procurement barriers continued to limit transition into formal and higher-value markets.
Human-rights-based approach	Partial	The programme advanced women's practical economic agency and centred women entrepreneurs as rights-holders, but non-discrimination, accessibility and intersectional results were not systematically tracked.

5. Conclusions

The conclusions synthesize the evidence presented in the Findings and respond directly to the evaluation criteria and questions. They reflect the convergence of beneficiary survey results, programme monitoring data, documentary evidence, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and field observations. Stakeholders broadly agreed that the programme's training and mentoring strengthened women's business capabilities and confidence. Perspectives were less consistent regarding the sufficiency of post-training support, the effectiveness and timing of grants and productive assets, and the extent to which delivery functions had been institutionally absorbed in each country.

Conclusion C1. Overall, AWOME–EntreprenHER produced credible and useful results for low-income women entrepreneurs, but it functioned more successfully as a foundation-building and business-stabilization programme than as a comprehensive enterprise-acceleration model.

The programme addressed important deficits in business knowledge, practices and confidence and helped many women remain economically active. Its strongest contribution was to establish the capabilities and routines required for enterprise survival and stabilization. The evidence is less consistent regarding the subsequent transition from improved capability to sustained market expansion, employment creation and business growth.

This difference reflects the intensity and sequencing of support rather than a failure of the underlying programme rationale. Foundational training can be standardized and delivered to relatively large cohorts. Enterprise acceleration requires more individualized diagnostics, sector expertise, mentoring, finance or productive assets, compliance assistance and access to buyers. Although the programme's theory of change incorporated several of these elements, their delivery was less consistent than the foundational training component.

The central strategic conclusion is therefore that the programme does not need to choose between inclusion and enterprise growth. It needs to distinguish them more clearly. Broad-access foundational support can continue serving large numbers of women, while a more selective and intensive pathway can support enterprises ready to make productive use of higher-cost inputs.

Conclusion C2. The programme was strongly relevant and broadly coherent with national and women's economic empowerment priorities, but its relevance declined as businesses matured and required more differentiated support.

EntreprenHER responded directly to recurring constraints among low-income women entrepreneurs, including weak record keeping, costing and pricing, limited separation of household and business finances, inadequate marketing and business planning, low confidence and restricted access to formal business-development services. Its focus was also aligned with national enterprise-development and women's economic empowerment priorities in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa and with the strategic interests of UN Women and De Beers Group.

The programme's relevance was strongest at the foundational level. As enterprises progressed, their needs became increasingly differentiated by sector, maturity and commercial opportunity. Women required more specialized assistance with equipment, working capital, standards, certification, procurement, digital commerce and access to buyers. A largely common training package could not respond equally well to businesses ranging from survival-stage retail activities to more established agriculture, manufacturing and service enterprises.

Institutional coherence also varied by country. Botswana and Namibia benefited from stronger ministry involvement and closer integration with public delivery structures. South Africa achieved substantial reach but remained more dependent on UN Women and contracted providers. The

evidence therefore supports retaining a common regional theory of change while adapting delivery arrangements and enterprise-support pathways to each country's institutional and market context.

Conclusion C3. The programme was moderately to strongly effective, with stronger performance on reach, business continuity and revenue improvement than on employment creation and progression into higher-value markets.

At the evaluation cut-off, Phase III had supported 1,296 women against a combined target of 1,500, equivalent to 86.4 per cent, while implementation was still ongoing. Among the 338 survey respondents with usable country and business-status data, 89.3 per cent reported that their businesses were operating fully or partially. Business continuity was therefore the programme's strongest verified outcome.

Paired revenue data also indicated substantial positive movement and performance above the programme target, although the estimates remain indicative because revenue was self-reported in bands. Employment results were more modest: 33.4 per cent of respondents with paired employment data reported creating at least one additional job. The evidence does not verify that the aggregate target for decent-work opportunities was fully achieved, and job quality was not systematically measured.

These results are consistent with the typical progression of micro-enterprises. Women first improve business discipline, reduce losses, stabilize operations and rebuild sales before hiring additional workers. The programme was therefore effective in establishing important preconditions for growth, but less consistently effective in completing the pathway from training to mentoring, investment, market access and employment.

Conclusion C4. Efficiency was moderate: the programme achieved broad training coverage through partnerships and existing delivery structures, but it was less efficient in moving women through the complete support pathway, and available financial information was insufficient for a verified value-for-money assessment.

Government and local structures in Botswana and Namibia supported mobilization, training and geographic reach. Direct and contracted delivery in South Africa also enabled the programme to approach its country-level reach target. These arrangements demonstrate operational efficiency in reaching substantial numbers of women across diverse locations.

Efficiency weakened after the training stage. Mentoring intensity, finance and asset support, compliance assistance and market linkage did not consistently match the scale of the training cohorts. This created an imbalance between the number of women entering the programme and the capacity available to support their subsequent progression.

The evaluation could not calculate reliable cost per beneficiary or compare value for money across countries and support modalities because programme-specific actual expenditure was not consistently available at the required level of disaggregation. This does not demonstrate that resources were used inefficiently; it means that efficiency could not be verified with the required precision. The output orientation of the MIS further limited the programme's ability to identify where participants stopped progressing and where additional resources would have generated the greatest value.

Conclusion C5. The programme generated moderately positive and still-emerging impact, principally through business continuity, improved management practices, stronger confidence and greater economic agency; broader effects on employment, market power and structural inequality remained more selective.

Women's accounts indicate meaningful changes in how they managed and experienced their enterprises. Improved financial discipline, pricing, record keeping, customer management and reinvestment decisions reduced avoidable business losses and strengthened enterprise resilience.

Increased confidence and control over business decisions expanded women's practical economic agency.

These effects are significant for women operating informal or semi-formal enterprises with limited financial buffers and restricted access to formal employment and social protection. Sustaining self-employment and improving control over income can reduce household vulnerability even when a business has not yet expanded sufficiently to employ additional workers.

The evidence of transformative market impact was less consistent. Entry into procurement systems, higher-value markets, formal finance and sustained job creation occurred for some participants but was not widespread. The programme's economic impact was therefore strongest at the level of stabilization, resilience and agency, while acceleration and market transformation remained concentrated among a smaller group of enterprises.

Positive unintended effects included peer learning, informal support networks, stronger enterprise identity and demonstration effects among entrepreneurs. Negative effects included frustration and reduced trust where grant expectations, selection processes, timing or follow-up were unclear. These unintended effects demonstrate that communication and the perceived fairness of access to programme opportunities are part of programme effectiveness and not merely administrative considerations.

Conclusion C6. Sustainability is moderate and differs by result type and country: beneficiary knowledge and business practices are more likely to continue than the complete enterprise-support system, while institutional prospects are stronger in Botswana and Namibia than in South Africa.

Women are likely to retain knowledge relating to record keeping, planning, pricing, customer management and business decision-making. The high proportion of active businesses at the evaluation cut-off is encouraging. However, continued trading does not demonstrate that enterprises have become financially resilient or capable of sustained growth. Many women continued to require finance, equipment, mentoring, compliance support and access to markets.

Botswana and Namibia have comparatively credible pathways for maintaining training, mobilization and some mentoring functions because delivery was more closely embedded in ministry structures. South Africa has a higher transition risk because municipalities largely supported mobilization, venues and access, while core delivery remained more dependent on UN Women and contracted providers.

Across all three countries, training is more securely institutionalized than grants, productive assets, intensive mentoring and market-making functions. The sustainability of the programme's foundational benefits is therefore stronger than the sustainability of the ecosystem required to support enterprise acceleration.

Conclusion C7. EntreprenHER made a meaningful but partial contribution to gender equality by strengthening women's practical economic agency; it had less influence over the structural and intersectional barriers affecting women's economic participation.

The programme directly addressed women's exclusion from business knowledge, services and economic opportunities. Beneficiaries reported greater confidence, stronger enterprise identity and more control over business decisions. These are legitimate women's economic empowerment results and should be recognized alongside revenue and employment outcomes.

However, the programme did not systematically measure changes in household decision-making, unpaid-care responsibilities or time poverty. It also had limited influence over structural barriers such as unequal access to capital, productive assets, formal procurement, certification and higher-value

markets. Its contribution is therefore best understood as strengthening women's capacity to navigate existing systems rather than transforming those systems comprehensively.

Age, disability and accessibility were not consistently captured in programme records or outcome analysis. Consequently, the evaluation cannot determine whether different groups of women participated and benefited equitably. Targeting women gave the programme a clear equality orientation, but it did not by itself constitute a fully intersectional or operationalized human-rights-based approach.

6. Lessons Learned

The following lessons extend beyond EntreprenHER and are potentially applicable to other women's economic empowerment and micro-enterprise programmes. They are derived from patterns observed across three countries rather than isolated examples. Their application should nevertheless be adapted to the institutional capacity, market conditions, enterprise composition and available resources in each setting.

Table 21. Lessons learned

Lesson	Linked findings	Transferable lesson	Application
L1	F1–F2	Foundational entrepreneurship training can create a common capability floor, but enterprise-growth support becomes more effective when it is segmented by business stage, sector and binding constraint.	Use broad foundational training to promote access, followed by diagnostics that differentiate subsequent support according to enterprise needs and readiness.
L2	F8, F10	Mentoring is a delivery modality in its own right, rather than a minor addition to training. Its effectiveness depends on manageable caseloads, sector fit, adequate travel and contact time, and sustained follow-up.	Budget and manage mentoring intensity explicitly. Use group and digital modalities to extend coverage without replacing the hands-on support required by some enterprises.
L3	F5–F7	Micro-enterprise employment generally follows business stabilization and revenue recovery rather than preceding them.	Establish realistic outcome pathways and time horizons in which business continuity and revenue improvement are recognized as intermediate conditions for employment creation.
L4	F9, F14	Small grants create substantial expectations unless eligibility, ceilings, timing, selection processes and support modalities are communicated transparently. Productive assets are most catalytic when linked to a verified constraint, market demand and enterprise readiness.	Distinguish stabilization assistance from catalytic enterprise investment and communicate grant or asset-selection criteria from the beginning.
L5	F3, F16–F18	Embedding delivery in public systems improves sustainability only when institutions co-deliver and absorb programme functions, rather than merely providing venues, participant mobilization or administrative support.	Distinguish logistical participation, co-delivery and institutional absorption when defining ownership and developing sustainability plans.
L6	F2, F6–F8, F14	Market and compliance support form the critical bridge between improved business capability and sustained enterprise growth.	Integrate buyer relationships, standards, certification, procurement readiness and compliance assistance into enterprise-support programmes rather than treating them as optional additions.
L7	F10, F12	Monitoring systems need to follow beneficiary and enterprise progression	Track repeated outcomes and movement between support stages so that programme teams can identify drop-

Lesson	Linked findings	Transferable lesson	Application
		rather than only count participation and completed activities.	off, compare support pathways and direct resources adaptively.
L8	F19	A programme can specifically target women while still lacking sufficient intersectional evidence to determine whether different groups of women participated and benefited equitably.	Incorporate age, disability, geographic location and accessibility requirements into profiling, delivery, monitoring and evaluation from the beginning.

7. Recommendations

7.1 How the recommendations were developed

The recommendations follow directly from the evaluation findings and conclusions and reflect issues raised during consultations with programme stakeholders and subsequent review discussions with UN Women. They prioritise actions that can strengthen the progression from foundational training to business growth, while recognising the different institutional arrangements in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.

7.2 Prioritised recommendation matrix

Table 22. Prioritized recommendation matrix

No.	Recommendation and evidence link	Lead and supporting actors	Timing	Priority	Feasibility and resource considerations
R1	Adopt a two-track results and delivery model. Retain broad foundational training and group support for low-income women entrepreneurs while establishing a smaller catalytic-growth pathway for enterprises selected through transparent need- and readiness-based criteria. Define separate outcomes and budgets for the two tracks. Linked to: C1–C3; F1–F2, F5–F10; L1–L3.	Lead: UN Women regional and country teams. Support: Responsible ministries, implementing partners and De Beers Group.	Immediate	High	This can begin as a limited pilot rather than a full programme-wide restructuring. It requires reallocating part of the existing support budget towards deeper assistance and establishing transparent selection criteria.
R2	Sequence support according to enterprise needs and readiness. Establish a pathway comprising intake and baseline profiling, foundational training, enterprise diagnostic and action plan, tailored mentoring, assessment for finance or productive assets, market and compliance linkage, and post-investment follow-up. Progression should depend on evidence of need and readiness rather than training completion alone. Linked to: C2–C4; F2, F8–F10, F12; L2–L4.	Lead: UN Women country teams, ministries and implementing partners. Support: Trainers, mentors and enterprise-support institutions.	Immediate –short term	High	Start with a short diagnostic and a limited number of progression stages to avoid creating an administratively burdensome system. Staff and mentor responsibilities must be agreed before intake targets are finalized.
R3	Redesign grants and productive-asset support as a transparent enterprise-investment window. Publish	Lead: UN Women country teams. Support:	Short term	High	The window should be scaled to the available budget and fiduciary capacity. Productive

No.	Recommendation and evidence link	Lead and supporting actors	Timing	Priority	Feasibility and resource considerations
	eligibility criteria, indicative ceilings, modalities, timelines and selection responsibilities. Link support to a documented business case, verified market opportunity, implementation milestones and mandatory post-investment mentoring. Distinguish EntreprenHER-funded support clearly from complementary external grants. Linked to: C3–C5; F9, F14; L4.	Ministries, De Beers Group, financial institutions and private-sector partners.			assets or supplier payments may be used where appropriate, but the modality should be communicated before applications are invited.
R4	Establish a structured and adequately resourced mentoring system. Define mentor profiles, expected contact frequency, caseloads, follow-up responsibilities and quality standards. Combine general business coaches with sector, market, finance and compliance specialists. Use group and digital approaches to extend coverage without eliminating hands-on support where required. Linked to: C1, C3–C4; F8, F10, F16–F18; L2.	Lead: UN Women country teams and responsible ministries. Support: Sector bodies, experienced entrepreneurs, business associations and private-sector partners.	Short–medium term	High	A full specialist network may not be feasible in every location. Countries can begin with mentor directories, referral arrangements and sector clinics for the most common enterprise sectors.
R5	Reorient partnerships towards commercial progression. Prioritize a manageable number of partnerships that can provide buyer access, procurement opportunities, standards and certification support, finance preparation, supplier development, digital sales channels or productive technology. Define concrete services, referral targets and follow-up responsibilities in partnership agreements. Linked to: C2–C5; F3, F7–F10, F14; L5.	Lead: UN Women country teams and partner ministries. Support: Buyers, financial institutions, chambers, sector bodies, enterprise agencies and entrepreneur networks.	Short–medium term	High	Focus on a limited number of partners capable of opening identifiable opportunities. Avoid relying on broad memoranda of understanding without services, targets or assigned responsibilities.
R6	Approve country-specific institutionalization and transition plans. In Botswana and Namibia, deepen the absorption of training, mentoring, referral and reporting functions within government systems and clarify domestic financing for resource-intensive components. In South Africa, establish a co-owned delivery model with enterprise-	Lead: UN Women country offices and responsible government ministries. Support: Municipalities, enterprise-development agencies, De Beers Group and	Immediate and ongoing	High	Plans should distinguish functions that can realistically be financed domestically from those requiring catalytic donor or private-sector support. South Africa will require early agreement on an institutional anchor

No.	Recommendation and evidence link	Lead and supporting actors	Timing	Priority	Feasibility and resource considerations
	development and market institutions beyond municipal mobilization and venue support. Each plan should identify functions, responsible institutions, resources and milestones. Linked to: C2, C4 and C6; F3, F10–F12, F16–F18; L7.	implementing partners.			before expanding delivery.
R7	Strengthen the MIS and financial information needed for adaptive management and value-for-money analysis. Assign each enterprise a unique identifier; record baseline characteristics and the support received; and conduct proportionate follow-up at approximately 6, 12 and 24 months. Track business status, revenue or sales band, employment, market access, finance or asset use and selected empowerment outcomes. Record actual expenditure by country and major support modality. Linked to: C3–C5; F4–F7 and F10–F12; L7.	Lead: UN Women programme, M&E and finance teams. Support: Country offices, ministries and implementing partners.	Immediate–medium term	High	Keep the outcome panel small and stable to reduce reporting burden. Financial coding should use existing systems where possible and focus first on country and major modality rather than highly granular activity costing.
R8	Operationalize gender-transformative and LNOB commitments in programme design and monitoring. Include age, disability, geographic location and accessibility requirements in beneficiary profiling and outcome analysis. Establish minimum accessibility requirements for outreach, venues, communication and digital delivery. Track selected measures of economic agency, control over business decisions and, where feasible, unpaid-care or time constraints. Linked to: C7; F19; L8.	Lead: UN Women programme and M&E teams. Support: Ministries, implementing partners and organizations of persons with disabilities.	Next design cycle and ongoing	Medium–high	Introduce only variables that can be collected ethically and used for programme decisions. Accessibility requirements should be budgeted during design rather than addressed retrospectively.

7.3 Implementation priorities for the next phase

A two-track support model

A practical next phase would retain broad-access foundational training while creating a smaller catalytic-growth track for enterprises that demonstrate readiness for more intensive support. The foundation track would continue to provide core SIYB-based training, group coaching, digital basics, referrals and peer support. The growth track would add business diagnosis, sector-specific

mentoring, milestone-based grants or productive assets, compliance and procurement support, and structured buyer or market linkage.

This approach addresses the principal design tension identified by the evaluation. Large numbers of women need basic business capability, but not all businesses are at the same stage or can use the same high-cost inputs productively. Segmentation allows the programme to remain inclusive while protecting mentor time, grants and market-development resources for enterprises that can translate them into measurable progression.

Readiness-based sequencing and capital support

Support should follow the maturity of the enterprise rather than a uniform project calendar. A stronger pathway would begin with intake and baseline profiling, followed by foundational training, a short business diagnostic, tailored mentoring, assessment for finance or asset support, market and compliance assistance, and post-investment follow-up. Movement between stages should be based on evidence of need and readiness rather than on completion of training alone.

The grant window should operate with clear eligibility rules, ceilings, timelines and decision criteria. Where productive assets are supported, the business case should demonstrate demand, the expected use of the asset, maintenance and operating capacity, and how the investment is expected to affect sales, margins or employment. Follow-up mentoring should continue after the asset is acquired so that the investment is integrated into the enterprise rather than treated as a one-off transfer.

Mentoring and sector expertise

Mentoring requires clearer caseload standards and different profiles of expertise. General business coaches remain important for pricing, cash flow, record keeping and planning, but growth-stage enterprises may also require sector specialists, market mentors and compliance or finance advisers. The programme should define expected contact time, frequency and follow-up responsibilities so that mentoring quality is not displaced by coverage targets.

Partnerships for markets and finance

Partnerships should increasingly be judged by the opportunities they open for women entrepreneurs. Government, financial institutions, lead firms, sector bodies, chambers, incubators and local enterprise-support organisations can provide referrals, procurement opportunities, supplier development, standards advice, finance preparation and market access. Botswana's engagement with government and financial actors provides a useful foundation; Namibia's national footprint creates opportunities for regional value-chain links; and South Africa requires stronger institutional partners to compensate for weaker local programme ownership.

Progression-oriented monitoring

The MIS should follow each enterprise over time using a unique identifier and a small, stable outcome panel. At minimum, the system should record baseline characteristics, support received, follow-up dates, business operating status, revenue or sales band, employment, market access, finance or grant use, formalisation/compliance milestones and selected empowerment indicators. Follow-up at six, 12 and 24 months would allow programme teams to identify both sustained results and drop-off.

Country-level sustainability arrangements

Each country should have a sustainability and handover plan that identifies which functions will be institutionalised, by whom and with what resources. Botswana should deepen the integration of training, mentoring and reporting within government while expanding private-sector and finance

linkages. Namibia should protect the quality of mentorship as its national footprint grows and clarify how capital-intensive components will be financed. South Africa should establish a co-owned delivery model with stronger enterprise-development and market institutions so that post-training support does not remain dependent on direct UN Women coordination.

7.4 Country-specific emphasis

Botswana should consolidate government ownership while strengthening finance, productive-asset and market pathways through public and private partners. Namibia should protect the advantages of its ministry-led footprint while ensuring that mentoring intensity and capital-intensive components remain viable at scale. South Africa requires the most deliberate institutional redesign: the next phase should identify government and enterprise-support actors able to co-own mentoring, referrals, finance, market access and follow-up rather than relying primarily on central programme delivery. These distinctions implement the same regional theory of change through country-appropriate operating models.

Across the three countries, the regional programme should retain a common theory of change, core outcome indicators and minimum delivery standards. Country adaptation should focus on how those outcomes are achieved: the institutional host, mentor arrangements, finance and market partners, geographic delivery model and the mix between broad training and intensive enterprise support.

The sequence of implementation should also reflect the evaluation cut-off. Phase III was still underway in June 2026, and several grant and asset activities were emerging rather than mature. The next phase should therefore begin with a documented close-out of Phase III results and a clear baseline for the new design so that later evaluations can distinguish new outcomes from progress already achieved.

Annexes

Annex 1. Stakeholder Mapping

Annex Table A1. Stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder group	Role in programme / evaluation relevance	Consultation/evidence route
UN Women leadership / programme / M&E	Strategic oversight, management, quality assurance, MIS and delivery; direct operational role especially in South Africa.	KIIs; document review; inception/report review.
De Beers Group	Funding and strategic partnership; corporate livelihoods and enterprise-development perspective.	Strategic KIIs; document review.
National ministries and local authorities	Policy integration, ministry delivery in Botswana/Namibia, mobilisation/local access, sustainability.	KIIs across countries; document review.
Implementing partners, trainers and mentors	Training, coaching, specialist technical support, operational delivery and beneficiary follow-up.	KIIs; field observation.
Private-sector / financial actors	Financial literacy, enterprise referrals, market and supply-chain opportunities where engaged.	KIIs and programme evidence where available.
Women micro-entrepreneurs	Primary rights-holders and beneficiaries; lived experience of relevance, delivery, outcomes, constraints and sustainability.	338 Phase III country-coded survey; 8 FGDs; beneficiary KIIs and field observation.

Annex 2. Evidence Base, Data Collection Instruments and Ethics

Annex Table A2. Evaluation evidence base and instruments

Evidence / instrument	Coverage / purpose	Where detailed
Beneficiary survey	Business profile; programme exposure; business status; revenue bands; employment; business practices; finance/market needs; empowerment and sustainability questions.	Approved inception report, Annex A; final analysis uses validated variable-specific samples.
KII guides	Separate guides for UN Women/donor, government, implementing partners, financial institutions, trainers/TVET and other relevant stakeholders.	Approved inception report, Annex B.
FGD guide	Beneficiary experience of relevance, training, mentoring, grants, market access, business outcomes, empowerment, challenges and sustainability.	Approved inception report, Annex B.
Programme documents	Phase design/RRFs, progress reports, MIS information, approved budgets, training/curriculum and partnership information available to the evaluation.	Evaluation document set.
Policy documents	National development and enterprise-policy sources cited in Section 3.1.	Evaluation document set.
Ethical process	Informed consent; voluntary participation; confidentiality/anonymisation; right to withdraw; do-no-harm and business-sensitive scheduling.	Applied during survey, KII and FGD fieldwork; consent materials in inception report.

Annex 3. Phase III Indicator Calculations

Annex Table A3. Phase III indicator calculations

Calculation item	Value
Total beneficiary survey records reviewed in source calculation appendix	407
Survey records excluded for no consent	29
Consented records retained in source calculation appendix	378
Phase III survey records identified	340
Phase III survey records with usable country coding	338
Phase III paired employee records	334
Phase III paired revenue records	155
Phase III MIS enrolments used for support-to-date estimate	1,296
Share of paired employee respondents creating at least one job	33.4%
Approximate paired-sample count creating 1+ job	112
Gross positive jobs in paired sample	224
Indicative projected women with 1+ job: $1,296 \times 33.4\%$	about 433
Estimated average revenue increase using grouped mean midpoints	about 61%
Revenue sensitivity estimate: mean respondent-level change	about 74%
Active businesses among country-coded Phase III survey respondents	$302/338 = 89.3\%$

Note: Projections are explicitly indicative and are not programme-wide verified counts. Revenue estimates use self-reported bands and are not audited turnover. The employment target refers to “decent work”; job quality could not be verified from the available survey/MIS variables.

Annex 4. Terms of Reference and Supporting Documents

[Terms of reference](#)

Annex 5. Documentary Evidence Cited in the Report

- AWOME–EntreprenHER programme documents and Phase I–III results/resources frameworks available to the evaluation.
- Phase III Management Information System/evaluation dataset used for support-to-date and beneficiary outcome analysis.
- Approved Phase III country budgets and programme workplans available to the evaluation.
- UN Women South Africa Multi-Country Office / Country Portfolio Evaluation (2017–2023), used where relevant to contextualise programme findings.
- National Planning Commission, South Africa. National Development Plan 2030 (2012).
- Government of Botswana. Vision 2036 (2016); National Development Plan 11 (2017); National Entrepreneurship Policy (2019).
- Government of Namibia. Vision 2030 (2004); National Development Plan 5 (2017); National MSME Policy (2016).
- Approved Inception Report for the External Evaluation of the AWOME–EntreprenHER Programme (April 2026).
- Final Terms of Reference for the External Evaluation of AWOME–EntreprenHER Programme.

Annex 6. Detailed Evaluation Matrix

The detailed matrix below reflects the evaluation questions, indicators, data sources, methods and illustrative questions used to guide data collection and analysis.

Relevance

Element	Detail
Evaluation focus	To what extent was the programme responsive to women entrepreneurs' needs and priorities, and were assumptions on skills, finance and markets realistic?
Indicators	Needs assessment; curriculum coverage; reported relevance of training and mentoring; unmet business needs.
Sources	Programme documents and ToR; needs/baseline material where available; beneficiary survey; KIIs; FGDs.
Methods	Document review; descriptive survey analysis; thematic coding and triangulation.
Illustrative KII questions	How were participant needs identified? Were trainings tailored to local business contexts?
Illustrative beneficiary questions	Did the training or mentoring address your main business challenges? What needs remain unmet?

Coherence

Element	Detail
Evaluation focus	How coherent was the programme with national policies and other interventions, and how effectively did it complement government, private-sector and finance actors?
Indicators	Joint activities and partnerships; references in national or sector plans; stakeholder views on coordination, complementarity and duplication.
Sources	National development and enterprise policies; programme agreements and records; government, UN, partner and private-sector KIIs.
Methods	Document content analysis; stakeholder mapping; comparative country analysis.
Illustrative KII questions	How has EntreprenHER partnered with government or private-sector initiatives? Were there important gaps, duplication or synergies?
Illustrative beneficiary questions	Not a primary beneficiary-level coherence question; beneficiary evidence was used where referral or market linkages affected experience.

Effectiveness

Element	Detail
Evaluation focus	To what extent were intended outputs and outcomes achieved, which programme components contributed most, and how did results differ across the three countries?
Indicators	Women supported against target; business continuity; revenue change; jobs created; application of new skills; mentoring, grant/asset and market-support pathways.
Sources	Phase III MIS/evaluation dataset; beneficiary survey; training/mentoring/grant records where available; KIIs; FGDs; field observation.
Methods	Paired quantitative analysis; country comparison; outcome assessment; contribution analysis and triangulation.
Illustrative KII questions	Were planned training, mentoring and grant activities delivered? What factors enabled or constrained achievement of outcomes?
Illustrative beneficiary questions	How has the way you run your business changed? Which support was most useful? What effect did mentor, finance, grants or equipment have?

Efficiency

Element	Detail
Evaluation focus	To what extent were financial, human and partnership resources used efficiently, and how well did sequencing, management and monitoring support results?
Indicators	Timeliness and sequencing; availability of cost information; mentor caseload and logistics; partnership use; MIS functionality.

Element	Detail
Sources	Approved budgets and workplans; programme records; MIS; KIIs with programme management, finance/M&E, implementers and trainers.
Methods	Process analysis; planned-resource review; triangulation of operational bottlenecks; assessment of MIS use.
Illustrative KII questions	Were staff and resources deployed efficiently? What delays, logistics or administrative bottlenecks occurred?
Illustrative beneficiary questions	Beneficiary evidence focused on the timeliness, continuity and accessibility of support rather than internal cost efficiency.

Impact

Element	Detail
Evaluation focus	What changes occurred in business performance, resilience, confidence and economic autonomy, and what positive or negative unintended effects emerged?
Indicators	Business continuity; revenue movement; employment; business practices; confidence, agency and autonomy; unintended effects.
Sources	Beneficiary survey; beneficiary KIIs/FGDs; programme and country portfolio evidence; field observations.
Methods	Contribution analysis; thematic synthesis; comparison of observed changes with the programme theory of change and alternative explanations.
Illustrative KII questions	What significant changes have been observed among beneficiaries? To what extent can they reasonably be linked to the programme?
Illustrative beneficiary questions	How has your business or economic independence changed? What else contributed to these changes?

Sustainability

Element	Detail
Evaluation focus	To what extent are programme benefits and delivery functions likely to continue, and what institutional, financial and policy conditions are required for scale?
Indicators	Institutional ownership; continued trainer/mentor capacity; business continuation; partnerships and referral systems; availability of resources for grants and high-touch support.
Sources	Government and programme KIIs; policy and programme documents; beneficiary evidence; country implementation arrangements.
Methods	Comparative institutional sustainability assessment across Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.
Illustrative KII questions	What plans exist to sustain support after 2026? Which institutions have adopted or can absorb programme functions?
Illustrative beneficiary questions	Do you expect to continue using the skills and support gained? What support or networks will you still need?

Annex 7. Data Collection Instruments

The instruments used in the evaluation were developed during the inception phase and aligned to the evaluation matrix. The beneficiary survey captured respondent profile, programme exposure, business outcomes, empowerment, other support, constraints and sustainability. The qualitative tools were tailored to stakeholder roles while retaining common questions on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Annex 7A. Beneficiary Survey Questionnaire

Consent: Do you consent to participate? 1 = Yes; 0 = No (end interview).

Module A: Respondent Profile

Q#	Question	Response Options / Notes
A1	Country	1 SA, 2 Botswana, 3 Namibia
A2	Age	Numeric
A3	Education	None / Primary / Secondary / TVET / University
A4	Location	Urban / Rural
A5	Sector	Agriculture / Mining / Retail / Services / Manufacturing / Other

Module B: Programme Exposure

Q#	Question	Response Options / Notes
B1	Participated in programme	Yes
B2	Support received	Training / Mentorship / Grant / Finance / Market access
B3	Received grant	Yes / No
B4	Duration	<6m / 6–12m / >12m
B5	Intensity	Low / Medium / High

Module C: Business Outcomes

Q#	Question	Response Options / Notes
C1	Revenue before	Numeric
C2	Revenue now	Numeric
C3	Employees before	Numeric
C4	Employees now	Numeric
C5	Profit before	Loss / Break-even / Profit
C6	Profit now	Loss / Break-even / Profit

Module D: Empowerment

Q#	Question	Response Options / Notes
D1	Confidence change	Scale 1–5
D2	Decision-making	Low / Medium / High
D3	Market access improved	Yes / No
D4	Economic independence	Yes / No

Module E: Other Support

Q#	Question	Response Options / Notes
E1	Other programmes	Yes / No
E2	Specify	Open
E3	Main contributor	EntreprenerHER / Other / Both / Neither

Module F: Challenges

Q#	Question	Response Options / Notes
F1	Top constraints	Finance / Markets / Skills / Infrastructure / Regulation

Module G: Sustainability

Q#	Question	Response Options / Notes
G1	Continue business	Yes / No
G2	Support needed	Open

Annex 7B. Key Informant Interview Guide: UN Women, Donor and Private-Sector Partners

Relevance

How were the needs and priorities of women entrepreneurs identified during programme design?

- Probe: Stakeholder consultations
- Probe: Use of baseline or market data
- Probe: Identification of vulnerable groups
- Probe: Country-specific differences

To what extent did the programme respond to the actual needs of women entrepreneurs?

- Probe: Financial inclusion
- Probe: Business development skills
- Probe: Access to markets
- Probe: Digital inclusion
- Probe: Structural gender barriers

In your view, were there needs or gaps that the programme did not sufficiently address?

- Probe: Informal sector realities
- Probe: Rural women
- Probe: Youth entrepreneurs
- Probe: Sustainability of support

Coherence

How well did the programme align with national priorities and broader women's economic empowerment agendas?

- Probe: Government priorities
- Probe: SDGs
- Probe: Private sector commitments
- Probe: Corporate social investment strategies

To what extent was the programme coherent with other interventions supporting women entrepreneurs?

- Probe: Complementarity
- Probe: Duplication
- Probe: Ecosystem strengthening

How effective were the partnerships established under the programme?

- Probe: UN Women coordination
- Probe: Government engagement
- Probe: Financial institutions
- Probe: Private sector collaboration
- Probe: Communication and accountability mechanisms

Effectiveness

To what extent do you believe the programme achieved its intended objectives and outcomes?

- Probe: Business growth
- Probe: Skills development
- Probe: Access to finance
- Probe: Increased confidence and agency
- Probe: Market access

Which programme components appeared to work particularly well?

- Probe: Training
- Probe: Grants
- Probe: Mentorship
- Probe: Networking opportunities
- Probe: Exposure and visibility initiatives

Were there differences in outcomes across countries or beneficiary groups?

- Probe: Rural vs urban
- Probe: Grant vs non-grant beneficiaries
- Probe: Different business sectors

What were the main implementation challenges experienced?

- Probe: Coordination
- Probe: Beneficiary mobilisation
- Probe: Economic context
- Probe: Monitoring systems
- Probe: Private sector engagement

Efficiency

To what extent were programme resources utilised efficiently to achieve results?

- Probe: Value for money
- Probe: Timeliness
- Probe: Administrative processes
- Probe: Coordination mechanisms

Were there any implementation delays or operational bottlenecks?

- Probe: Funding disbursement
- Probe: Procurement
- Probe: Stakeholder coordination
- Probe: Reporting systems

In your view, were there alternative approaches that could have improved efficiency?

- Probe: Delivery modalities
- Probe: Digital systems
- Probe: Partnership arrangements

Impact

What significant changes have you observed among beneficiaries as a result of the programme?

- Probe: Income generation
- Probe: Business sustainability
- Probe: Employment creation
- Probe: Confidence and empowerment
- Probe: Decision-making power

Have you observed any unintended positive or negative effects?

- Probe: Dependency
- Probe: Increased aspirations
- Probe: Social dynamics
- Probe: Community perceptions

To what extent do you believe observed changes can reasonably be linked to the programme?

- Probe: Other support programmes
- Probe: Economic environment
- Probe: COVID-19 recovery context

Sustainability

To what extent are programme results likely to continue beyond 2026?

- Probe: Institutionalisation
- Probe: Continued mentorship
- Probe: Market linkages
- Probe: Access to finance ecosystems

What conditions are necessary to sustain or scale programme gains?

- Probe: Funding
- Probe: Partnerships
- Probe: Policy support
- Probe: Private sector involvement

Are there aspects of the programme that De Beers or partners may continue supporting beyond the current phase?

- Probe: Strategic interest
- Probe: Long-term partnerships
- Probe: Ecosystem development

Lessons Learnt and Forward-Looking Reflections

From your perspective, what are the greatest lessons learnt from the EntreprenHER programme?

Which approaches or interventions proved most effective, and why?

Were there components that did not work as expected?

- Probe: Why?
- Probe: Operational challenges
- Probe: Contextual limitations

If the programme were to be redesigned or implemented again, what would you recommend doing differently?

- Probe: Targeting approach
- Probe: Duration of support
- Probe: Follow-up support
- Probe: Partnership structure
- Probe: Monitoring and learning systems

What recommendations would you make for future women's economic empowerment programming in the region?

Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the programme's contribution, challenges, or future direction?

Annex 7C. Stakeholder-Specific KII Guides

B.1.2 GOVERNMENT

Relevance

- How relevant is the programme to national priorities?
 - Probe: Gender policy
 - Probe: SME development

Coherence

- How does it align with existing programmes?
 - Probe: Duplication

- Probe: Synergies

Effectiveness

- What outcomes have been observed?
 - Probe: Business growth
 - Probe: Employment

Efficiency

- Was implementation efficient?
 - Probe: Coordination
 - Probe: Resources

Impact

- To what extent did the programme contribute?
 - Probe: Other initiatives
 - Probe: External factors

Sustainability

- Has government adopted any components?
 - Probe: Budget
 - Probe: Ownership

B.1.3 IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Relevance

- Did the programme respond to beneficiary needs?
 - Probe: Local context
 - Probe: Sector needs

Effectiveness

- Which interventions worked best?
 - Probe: Training
 - Probe: Grants
 - Probe: Mentorship

Efficiency

- What challenges occurred?
 - Probe: Logistics
 - Probe: Staffing

Impact

- What changes did you observe?
 - Probe: Income
 - Probe: Confidence

Sustainability

- Will benefits continue?
 - Probe: Independence
 - Probe: Systems

B.1.4 FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Relevance

- Did the programme address financial barriers?
 - Probe: Collateral
 - Probe: Literacy

Effectiveness

- Did beneficiaries access finance?
 - Probe: Loan uptake
 - Probe: Approval

Impact

- Did financial inclusion improve?
 - Probe: Savings
 - Probe: Credit

Sustainability

- Will access continue?
 - Probe: Repeat borrowing

B.1.5 TRAINERS / TVET

Relevance

- Was training aligned with needs?
 - Probe: Practical relevance

Effectiveness

- What skills improved?
 - Probe: Business planning
 - Probe: Finance

Impact

- What business changes occurred?
 - Probe: Revenue
 - Probe: Growth

Sustainability

- Are skills still applied?
- Probe: Long-term use

Annex 7D. Focus Group Discussion Guide

- What support did you receive?
 - Probe: Training
 - Probe: Mentorship
 - Probe: Grants
- How has your business changed?
 - Probe: Income
 - Probe: Customers
 - Employment
- What caused these changes?
 - Probe: Programme vs others

- What challenges remain?
 - Probe: Finance
 - Probe: Markets
- Will your business continue?
 - Probe: Risks
 - Probe: Support

Annex 7E. Consent and Ethical Protocol

Participation was voluntary and respondents were informed of the purpose of the evaluation, what participation involved, confidentiality arrangements and their right to withdraw without penalty.

Consent was obtained before surveys, interviews or focus groups proceeded. Where audio recording was proposed, separate consent was required.

Personally identifying information was not used in the analytical reporting, and qualitative participants were referenced through anonymised country and stakeholder codes.

Fieldwork arrangements sought to minimise disruption to participants' businesses and to apply do-no-harm and gender-sensitive principles when discussing household income, business difficulties or other potentially sensitive experiences.

Annex 8. Qualitative Consultation Coverage

The qualitative component covered programme, government, delivery and beneficiary perspectives across the three countries. Purposive selection was used to capture differences in institutional role, geography, sector and programme exposure. The table summarises the final consultation coverage used in the analysis.

Country / level	KIs	FGDs	Stakeholders represented
Botswana	14	3	Government and district officials, trainers, financial or enterprise partners, women entrepreneurs
Namibia	12	3	Ministry and regional officials, mentors, local authorities, women entrepreneurs
South Africa	12	2	Municipal officials, implementing partners, private trainers/advisers, women entrepreneurs
Programme / regional	6	0	UN Women management and M&E, regional programme stakeholders, De Beers representatives
Total	44	8	Multi-country evidence base used for triangulation with the beneficiary survey and programme documentation

The consultation design was intended to test convergence and divergence across stakeholder groups. Government and programme actors provided evidence on programme design, institutional arrangements and sustainability; implementers and trainers explained delivery quality, mentoring and operational constraints; and women entrepreneurs provided direct evidence on relevance, business change, unmet needs, grants, market access and empowerment. The smaller South African survey sample was therefore interpreted alongside this qualitative evidence rather than used alone for country-level judgement.

Detailed names of individual respondents are not reproduced in the public report in order to protect confidentiality. Qualitative evidence is referenced through anonymised country and stakeholder codes.