

Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: External evaluation of five projects Regional

Triangular Cooperation Project:

“Consolidation and promotion of sustainable tourism
project between Tunisia, Costa Rica and Germany”

Report Date: January 2020.

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January 2020

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ACRONYMS

AHK	Deutsch-Tunesische Industrie- und Handelskammer
CATIE	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza
CORP	Centre d'Orientation et de Reconversion Professionnelle
CW	Capacity Works
FTH	Fédération tunisienne de l'hôtellerie
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Costa Rican Institute of Tourism
IHEC	University of Cartage
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
TEC	Technological Institute of Costa Rica
THS	Tunisia Hospitality Symposium

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROYECT BRIEF

Date of purpose:	04/2016 – 09/2018
Name of project:	Consolidation and promotion of sustainable tourism project
Cooperation area:	Triangular Cooperation Costa Rica – Tunisia – Germany
Countries bidding:	Costa Rica, Tunisia, (oferente Sur) and Germany (oferente tradicional).
Beneficiary country:	Costa Rica, Tunisia
Budget :	349.000 Euro
Duration:	04/2016 – 09/2018
Stakeholders:	<p>COSTA RICA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costa-ricanisches Tourismusinstitut (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo - ICT) • Nationale Tourismuskammer (Cámara Nacional de Turismo - CANATUR) • Costa-ricanische Kammer für ökologischen und nachhaltigen Tourismus (Cámara Nacional de Ecoturismo y Turismo Sostenible - CANAECO) • Costa-ricanischer Verband der Reiseveranstalter (Asociación Costarricense de Operadores de Turismo - ACOT) • Reiseagentur und Stiftung Horizontes • Technologisches Institut von Costa Rica (Tecnológico de Costa Rica - TEC) • Zentrum für tropische agrarwirtschaftliche Forschung und weiterführende Studien (Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza - CATIE) • Hotel Punta Islita und Consultingunternehmen RBA (Reinventing Business for All) • Macaw Lodge <p>TUNISIA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institut für Höhere Wirtschaftsstudien in Carthage (Institut des Hautes Études Commerciales - IHEC Carthage) Institut für Höhere Studien im Tourismus (Institut des Hautes Etudes Touristiques - IHET Sidi Dhrif) • Ecolodge Dar Zaghuan • Hotel Menara • Verband für nachhaltigen Tourismus in Tunesien (Sustainable Tourism Association of Tunisia - STT) • Tunesischer Hotelverband (Fédération tunisienne de l'hôtellerie - FTH) • Kulturministerium • Organisation "Grünes Djerb
Executing institution of the traditional offering country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

(Germany):

- Federal State of Baden-Württemberg/Universidad de Heilbronn
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

The evaluation of the project “Consolidation and promotion of sustainable tourism project” was commissioned by the GIZ Regional Triangular Cooperation Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean in July 2019 and conducted by ECI consultant Antoine Bossel between October 2019 and January 2020. The objective of the evaluation is to reinforce accountability and learning, with a special focus on the advantages, result and challenges of trilateral project methodology and its respective implementation approach.

The evaluation assesses and reports on the project’s activities and results, as well as the perception of its main stakeholders. The evaluation focused on the design and implementation of the project entitled “Consolidation and promotion of sustainable tourism project” implemented in Costa Rica and Tunisia with the support of Heilbronn University in the State of Baden-Württemberg in Germany. The aim of the project was to promote the exchange of best practices in the field of sustainable tourism between the partner countries and to adapt them to the respective local circumstances in order to make a contribution to improving income and employment opportunities in the sustainable tourism sector. The project included interventions in the following areas: (i) exchanges of information and experiences about best practices, (ii) trainings and (iii) marketing and certifications.

The following criteria guided the evaluation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Additionally, the evaluation considered the criteria specific to triangular cooperation evaluations. Each criterion was assessed according to several key evaluation questions. The methodology and approach were fine-tuned and agreed upon with GIZ during the inception phase. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, comprising a literature review, semi-structured key informant interviews, as well as field visits and observations. The evaluation findings were systematically triangulated through these different approaches, allowing the evaluators to validate the findings. The compliance with the main concepts of the “Capacity Works”-methodology was constantly assessed during the evaluation.

Fieldwork took place from 29th of November to 1st of December 2019 in Tunisia. The evaluator selected the interlocutors in consultation with GIZ, based on criteria such as coverage of the main components, focussing on locations where different components worked side by side, as well as accessibility. Interviews were conducted with several stakeholders and included key GIZ staff, implementing partners, beneficiaries and local stakeholders.

Due to logistical and cost-efficiency aspects the field visit was limited to a representative sample of project implementation sites in Tunisia. Furthermore, the turnover of GIZ staff on the project’s sites implied that several people who played an important role during the implementation period were no longer present. Some weaknesses and inconsistencies in GIZ monitoring and reporting also constrained the evaluation - this was particularly the case with regards to the limited outcome level data available and the absence of interim project reports. In general, the evaluability of the project appeared to be a bit limited and significantly more resources would have been required for the evaluation to revert this situation.

Our analysis of the various evaluation criteria indicates that the project components were very relevant from a design perspective and that the implementation was overall effective and efficient. The project may have an impact on the beneficiaries, but such appraisal is merely subjective as the sustainability of several project' outputs is at this moment not assured. Overall, we consider that the project partially reached its goal, and our assessment of its performance is moderately positive. Still, we were faced with some limitations in collecting information and data, and consequently our assessment might be slightly incomplete and partly subjective.

GIZ has proved through this project that it is capable of designing a policy-consistent triangular intervention. However, the project's internal coherence showed some weakness due an incomplete design, but also in terms of ownership. While the main project components are theoretically appropriate to the needs of the stakeholders of the tourism sector in both Costa Rica and Tunisia, no significant evidence was found regarding a protracted involvement of the Costa Rican and Tunisian stakeholders in the conception of the project and the specifications of its interventions (→violation of two core CW elements: cooperation environment and steering structure). The absence of any significant involvement of the public sector in both countries and the inadequacy of marketing and certifications activities in Tunisia points to a rather weak level of ownership. In fact, we consider that many project activities were designed and implemented responding in first place to Heilbronn university priorities and interests, mostly corresponding to academical commitments of its professors and students. Although many of those priorities were at least partially congruent with the interests of the Tunisian and Costa Rican stakeholders, a more consistent preliminary consultation by / coordination with GIZ would probably have improved the quality and effectiveness of the intervention and might have contributed to better streamline the topics addressed by the Heilbronn university students.

Therefore, a key lesson to be drawn from the project and its evaluation points to the need to invest significant resources at an early stage, in order to ensure participation and appropriation from all triangular parties. Such process would in turn lay the ground for a successful compliance with all DAC and triangular evaluation criteria.

Basically, all key principles of the CW-methodology were not sufficiently respected and followed. Applying them correctly would probably have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the project's interventions in a significant manner.

This report is divided into five chapters and includes several annexes. The first chapter introduces the evaluation work, presenting objectives, methodology, structure, and constraints encountered. The second chapter presents the intervention. It briefly describes the main characteristics of the project (objectives, activities, expected results, stakeholders, etc.). The third chapter addresses the evaluation itself, applying the five classical analysis criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact) and criteria specific to triangular cooperation. The last chapter presents the conclusions of the evaluation, summarizing the degree of appraisal of the project evaluation criteria, presenting lessons for the future and recommendations to improve similar interventions.

Table 1: Evaluation Results Qualification

	Dimension	Evaluation Criteria	Qualification	Comments
RELEVANCE	Project	Tematical relevance &and design quality	9	Very successful regarding the relevance of its thematic; very unsatisfactory in matter of design.
	Trilateral Cooperation	Relevance for trilateral cooperation	11 Moderately successful	Cooperation between the involved countries moderately successful due to the limitation of the Tunisian context in key areas such as certification and marketing.
EFFICIENCY	Project	Efficiency of the implementation	n/a	We were not in a position to respond to the evaluation questions addressing efficiency in a documented and objective manner and our analysis do not assess the cost/ benefit ratio of activities and results.
	Trilateral Cooperation	Efficiency in trilateral approach and structures		Regarding triangular cooperation, while the project appears to be fully congruent with the involved countries' national strategies and policies, it is probable that more resources would have been required to foster the project's "co-creation" process called by OECD. This situation somehow limited the value added of the project's triangular partnerships.
EFFECTIVENESS	Project	Results Effetiveness	11 Moderately successful	The project fully achieved three of its five intended results. Therefore, the project can be considered as moderately effective.
	Trilateral Cooperation	Effectiveness of the trilateral contribution to the results	11 Moderately successful	The project effectiveness as per a triangular cooperation approach was moderately successful as few linkages between Costa Rica and Tunisia were instilled.
SUSTAINABILITY	Project	Sustainability of processes and results	11 Moderately successful	The level of sustainability of the project achievements varies significantly according to its components.
IMPACT	Project	Impacto del proyecto más allá del logro de sus resultados	8 Moderately successful	Overall, we consider that the impact of the project was limited. The evaluation does not allow distinguishing significant global changes toward the project goal. Yet, tangible impacts can be observed at the level of some individual project's components.
OVERALL EVALUATION	OCDE/CAD Criteria		9,8 Moderately successful	
	Trilateral Processes		11 Moderately successful	
	GENERAL EVALUATION		10,4 Moderately successful	

1. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the project “Consolidation and promotion of sustainable tourism project” of the Regional Triangular Cooperation Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean was commissioned by the in July 2019 and conducted by Antoine Bossel, ECI’s specialised evaluation consultant for the francophone countries, between October 2019 and December 2019.

Purpose and scope: This evaluation serves the - dual and mutually reinforcing - objectives of accountability and learning, as well as to better understand the efficiency, challenges, advantages and effectiveness of the trilateral cooperation methodology, compared to the traditional bilateral approach. It may contribute to the formulation of new triangular interventions focusing on sustainable tourism. The evaluation assesses and reports on the project’s activities and results, the contribution and positioning of GIZ in fostering the triangular cooperation, as well as the compliance with the guiding principles of the CW-methodology.

The evaluation focused on the design and implementation of the project as per the following intervention areas: (i) exchanges of information and experiences about best practices, (ii) trainings and (iii) marketing and certifications.

Evaluation methodology: The work was guided by the evaluation’s Terms of Reference (ToR) as well as the GIZ and OCDE Evaluation Toolkits. A central element was the ECI evaluation questions catalogue, linked to the evaluation criteria. The main points of reference for this evaluation, constituting the logic of the operation were:

- The project rationale;
- The project’s objective set out in the project proposal;
- The project’s expected outputs;
- The project’s implementation practices and operational collaborations;
- The key evaluation questions which address the usual evaluation criteria (appropriateness of the operation, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability), gender considerations, strategic positioning, lessons learned and good practice, as well as internal and external factors that contributed to the results;
- The evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability).

The primary users of this report are GIZ staff, which may should share this information with the stakeholders of this intervention in Tunisia, Costa Rica and Germany for any future project design and decision-making,

Evaluation criteria: According to GIZ evaluation guidelines, the following criteria guided the evaluation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Each criterion was assessed according to several key evaluation questions listed in table 2 further below. This general approach was completed by specific criteria related to the triangular cooperation concept, as detailed in table

Table 2: Triangular Project Evaluation Criteria

<p>1) Build ownership and trust</p>	<p>Triangular cooperation can ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase the appropriation of all partners involved; b) Build a level of comfort that leads / contributes to building trust among the partners involved; c) Establish associations that go beyond development cooperation and facilitate exchanges in other areas (for example, in foreign policy, trade or environment).
<p>2) Promote complementarity and increase coordination in development cooperation</p>	<p>Triangular cooperation can ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Make good use of complementary strengths to achieve development results, such as specific experience or access to technology b) Promote greater coordination, complementarity and coherence (the 3C) between development cooperation mechanisms (North-South, South-South, regional and international cooperation)
<p>3) Share knowledge and learn together</p>	<p>Through triangular cooperation, all partners involved can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Share knowledge and practical solutions that take advantage of similarities in national contexts, as well as the best that South-South and North-South cooperation has to offer b) Expand perspectives on different approaches and principles for development cooperation c) Ensure long-term commitment to capacity development, including the roles and capabilities of key partners d) Ensure a long-term commitment to the association e) Provide flexibility and adapt to changing circumstances
<p>4) Joint creation of solutions and flexibility</p>	<p>Through triangular cooperation, all partners involved can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Share knowledge and practical solutions that take advantage of similarities in national contexts, as well as the best that South-South and North-South cooperation has to offer b) Expand perspectives on different approaches and principles for development cooperation c) Ensure long-term commitment to capacity development, including the roles and capabilities of key partners d) Ensure a long-term commitment to the association e) Provide flexibility and adapt to changing circumstances
<p>5) Increase volume, scope and sustainability</p>	<p>Triangular cooperation can ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mobilize partners, in-kind resources and financing by increasing the volume and scope of development cooperation projects (for example, creating bridges with countries where one of the partners does not have diplomatic representation, but where the offices are used in multilateral countries, networks and platforms between partners from the South and other partners) b) Encourage the exchange of successful experiences as a result of bilateral cooperation and provide an entry point for the expansion of these projects c) Easily integrate into larger development cooperation programs, where a component of the program can be implemented trilaterally

<p>6) Achieve global and regional development goals through strengthened partnerships for sustainable development</p>	<p>Triangular cooperation can ...</p> <p>a) Contribute to improving the effectiveness of development activities using the combined knowledge, technology, experience and financing of different partners</p> <p>b) Encourage different types of stakeholders to participate, and that they do so effectively in development cooperation, including the private sector, academia, civil society, private philanthropy, parliaments, as well as to regional and local governments</p> <p>c) Contribute to develop a shared understanding of development policy and discuss instruments, tools and criteria</p> <p>d) Contribute to promoting and disseminating good local practices, also worldwide</p> <p>e) Have a key role in enabling the effective achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through the inclusive approaches of the multiple stakeholders in development cooperation</p>
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Evaluation questions: The following key evaluations questions oriented the evaluation as per the OCDE/DAC and the specific criteria were related to the triangular cooperation concept:

Table 3: Evaluation questions

	As per the OCDE/DAC criteria	As per triangular cooperation criteria
Relevance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was any diagnosis made to match the project to the needs of the beneficiary institution? Was the intervention context considered (institutional conditions of the beneficiary entity, policies, resources, political dialogue, etc.)? 2. How did the Project originate? How did the beneficiary country participate in the definition of content? 3. Was the project design consistent with the logical framework approach (i.e. internal coherence)? 4. Were the risks and assumptions fully identified? 5. Was the intervention approach adequate? (technical assistance method, tools, training to achieve the objectives) 6. Was the budget and its distribution enough and consistent with the planned strategies and activities? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Would the project have been potentially different following a classic project approach? 8. Has the project mobilized all sectors involved in the subject, at all levels? If not, why? 9. Did the solutions / innovations incorporate the local sociocultural aspects in the project (idiosyncrasy, cultural practices, local knowledge, local technologies, etc.)? 10. Are the results of the project aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the objective level (beyond the thematic alignment)? Can you give a concrete example?

Effectiveness	<p>11. What factors contributed to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the Project?</p> <p>12. To what extent were the expected outputs and outcomes achieved and how did GIZ contribute toward them?</p> <p>13. What are the enabling and limiting factors that contributed to the achievement of results and what actions need to be taken to overcome any barriers that limit the progress?</p>	
Efficiency	<p>14. What factors contributed to the efficiency or inefficiency of the Project?</p> <p>15. Have there been results (positive / negative) not expected / planned?</p> <p>16. Were resources (economic, human, time, expertise, etc.) allocated to the Project in a timely manner? Is the expected time for execution considered enough? Were there delays?</p>	<p>17. In your opinion, was the triangular project more expensive than if it was implemented under another format of cooperation (bilateral, South-South, etc.)?</p>
Sustainability	<p>18. Has the Project developed a sustainability strategy?</p>	<p>19. Is it possible to confirm or reject the following hypothesis: The sustainability of triangular cooperation results seems to be greater, since it frequently works on very specific (technical or institutional) aspects that arise from the needs of the counterpart institution?</p> <p>20. Is sustainability greater or equal with the trilateral methodology than other forms of cooperation?</p>
Impact	<p>21. Is the Project considered to have the necessary basis to make a significant contribution to broader and longer-term development?</p> <p>22. What were / are the main positive / negative impacts of the Project?</p>	<p>23. Do you feel that your institution has learned some knowledge or skill? Can you give a concrete example?</p> <p>24. The triangular cooperation works on the hypothesis that the results (of institutional strengthening) materialize and that the beneficiary institution is able, after the project, to take these results to a larger scale. Is this hypothesis confirmed? If so, would a higher cost in technical transfers be justified in your opinion if the results actually obtained serve to take them to a larger scale?</p>

Transversal issues	<p>25. Can you mention specific examples of (i) Good practices and (ii) Lessons learned that are worth documenting?</p> <p>26. What are the main challenges for future interventions?</p> <p>27. What have been the main limitations or difficulties that the project management has had to face to manage it?</p> <p>28. Has the Project carried out follow-up and monitoring activities? were regular reports generated?</p>	<p>29. Can you mention strengths and weaknesses of the triangular cooperation approach (in relation to efficiency, effectiveness, planning, coordination, operational management and implementation, monitoring)?</p> <p>30. During the exchange process, did you feel that all parties contributed actively, with the same enthusiasm and dedication? If not, why such contributions and attitudes were not achieved?</p> <p>31. Can you mention a concrete example of the complementarity or innovation (in terms of products or services) obtained as a result of the exchange?</p> <p>32. Is there a database of knowledge and lessons learned during the project (systematization, knowledge management)?</p> <p>33. Was the gender perspective considered? If it is positive, can you explain it with an example? If not, can you explain the reasons?</p>
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Sources: The evaluator has reviewed the GIZ and OCDE Evaluation toolkit as part of the evaluation’s bibliography, complemented with the documents gathered by the consultant. The documentation was systematically reviewed to feed into the analysis of the overall context, to identify elements core to decision making, to understand how progress was monitored and to identify which results were reported from the various interventions. Records of lessons learnt from interventions were also seen as an important focus area, but it appeared that such exercises were not done by the project team or its local counterparts.

It was initially foreseen to include a comprehensive collection of GIZ internal data, comprising minutes of meetings and annual work plans, together with government level data. Unfortunately, very few secondary data were disclosed by GIZ. We thus had to draw a large part of our conclusions on reports and studies made during the project by Heilbronn University. The secondary data analysis was supposed – similarly to the documentation review –to be performed prior to the visit in Tunisia, in order to assist in streamlining the questions of the evaluation matrix. The lack of such data impeded that approach.

Key informants and stakeholders’ interviews were the main form of primary data collection. Interviews with stakeholders were conducted using a comprehensive, structured interview guideline which covered all focus areas of the evaluation. Some questions in the interview guideline were adapted to the informant’s background and cognitive capabilities, as well as to the areas that required special attention. By default, all interviews were treated as confidential.

A group discussion with GIZ staff in Tunis was an important element to dialogue with GIZ staff as well as its consultants about the evaluation process and emerging findings. At this occasion, we pointed to the difficulties in identifying and collecting GIZ project documentation (see 2.3 further below). According to our interlocutors, this situation was known, but could not be remediated. In fact, it appeared to us that GIZ faced some project management challenges during the course of the project, partly due to staff turnover in Costa Rica and inconsistent follow-up and coordination in Tunisia (insufficient compliance with the CW core elements “processes” and “knowledge documentation”).

Field visit: The field visit in Tunisia was defined to cover the main elements (in terms of components and operations) of the project, as well as regarding its geographical coverage. It was used to mitigate some of the gaps in available data and for triangulation. It helped in the assessment of capacity issues, for example through observation of service delivery and productive activity at local level and also contributed to a further understanding of cultural issues by systematically including related questions in the interviews.

Limitations and evaluability assessment: Evaluability is the extent to which an activity, a project or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. This is mainly assessed in terms of relevance and effectiveness. Due to the time-and resource-consuming nature of travelling to all project locations, the evaluator restricted the visit to a representative sample. The field visit was short and intensive. Furthermore, the turnover of GIZ and government staff implied that several people who had played an important role during the implementation period were no longer present or available.

With respect to the first evaluation criteria - relevance - the evaluator used available policy and strategy documents, external context analysis, GIZ project documents as well as project documents from GIZ partners involved in the project. The second evaluation criteria closely related to the question of the evaluability focuses on the effectiveness of GIZ project’s operations. The evaluator used the information as recorded by GIZ and its partners, in combination with those collected during interviews. This was complemented by the annual project reports, which provide, although not systematically, some details on achievement of results against planned outputs and outcome, which the evaluator was able to compare with stated objectives.

However, the evaluation faced several challenges due to:

34. The absence of baseline data and SMART indicators for all expected results and activities;
35. Difficulties in measuring progress against baselines;
36. Incompleteness of the project logframe, which complicated the decision on what indicators and sources of verification should be used to assess the results;
37. Data gaps in relation to efficiency, immediate/short term results of operations and planning versus effective implementation dates.
38. Limitations originating from the fact that GIZ and governmental entities commonly experienced considerable staff rotation during the project cycle;
39. Absence of disaggregated financial data at both budget and disbursement level;
40. Absence of a narrative intermediary report (Midterm review) at beneficiary and GIZ levels;

Availability of GIZ staff and project partners, as well as project data and information. Some specific information requested was not provided by GIZ, and several potential informants were not available for interviews. This was one of the evaluation's main constraints, limiting the objectivity of our assessments.

In order to overcome these limitations, the evaluator to reconstruct some base line elements from information provided by the stakeholders, including perception changes from the start.

2. PROJECT'S PRESENTATION

The “operational factsheet” below summarizes the main characteristics of the project:

- Project brief (Title, implementing agency, location, duration budget, etc.)
- Goal, outcomes and outputs
- Strategy and main activities
- Inputs
- Project management structure
- Stakeholders
- Main component and activities

Table 4: Operational Factsheet – Project brief

PROJECT BRIEF	
Project title	“Consolidation and promotion of sustainable tourism”
Project number	15.2121.0-004.00
Executing agency	GIZ
Location	Costa Rica, Tunisia, Germany
Duration	04/2016 – 09/2018
Budget (Euro)	349.000 Euro
Stakeholders	<p>Germany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staatsministerium Baden-Württemberg • Hochschule Heilbronn <p>Costa Rica:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 41. Costa-ricanisches Tourismusinstitut (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo - ICT) 42. Nationale Tourismuskammer (Cámara Nacional de Turismo - CANATUR) 43. Costa-ricanische Kammer für ökologischen und nachhaltigen Tourismus (Cámara Nacional de Ecoturismo y Turismo Sostenible - CANAECO) 44. Costa-ricanischer Verband der Reiseveranstalter (Asociación Costarricense de Operadores de Turismo - ACOT) 45. Reiseagentur und Stiftung Horizontes 46. Technologisches Institut von Costa Rica (Tecnológico de Costa Rica - TEC) 47. Zentrum für tropische agrarwirtschaftliche Forschung und weiterführende

	<p>Studien (Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza - CATIE)</p> <p>48. Hotel Punta Islita und Consultingunternehmen RBA (Reinventing Business for All)</p> <p>49. Macaw Lodge</p>
	<p>Tunisia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institut für Höhere Wirtschaftsstudien in Carthage (Institut des Hautes Études Commerciales - IHEC Carthage) Institut für Höhere Studien im Tourismus (Institut des Hautes Etudes Touristiques - IHET Sidi Dhrif) • Ecolodge Dar Zaghouan • Hotel Menara • Tourism Promotion Group 1001Tunisie • Verband für nachhaltigen Tourismus in Tunesien (Sustainable Tourism Association of Tunisia - STT) • Tunesischer Hotelverband (Fédération tunisienne de l'hôtellerie - FTH) • Internationales Zentrum für Umwelttechnologien (Centre International des Technologies de l'Environnement – CITET) • Tunesisches Ökotourismus-Netzwerk • Lokale Vereinigung für integrierte nachhaltige Entwicklung (ALDID) • Nationales Tourismusbüro (ONTT) • Kulturministerium • Organisation "Grünes Djerba"

Table 5: Operational Factsheet – Objective and indicators

OBJECTIVE AND INDICATORS	
Objective	The aim of the project was to promote the exchange of best practices in the field of sustainable tourism between the partner countries and to adapt them to the respective local circumstances in order to make a contribution to improving income and employment opportunities in the sustainable tourism sector.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least three best practices are transferred from one country to another. • At least one bilateral scientific cooperation between the participating partner universities will be established to carry out research projects in the context of bachelor and / or master theses. • The certification process as a “sustainable travel destination” is successfully initiated in at least one destination in Tunisia and in Costa Rica. • At least one innovative marketing campaign is being developed, tested and introduced in Costa Rica and Tunisia. • At least one new tourism product is introduced.

Table 6: Operational Factsheet – Main components and activities

MAIN COMPONENTS AND ACTIVITIES	
Exchange of information and experience on best practices	<p>A total of three delegation trips took place as part of the project, including a trip by the Tunisian project partners to Costa Rica, a trip by Tunisian and Costa Rican project partners to Germany and a trip by Costa Rican representatives of the tourism sector to Tunisia. During these three trips, capacity building measures were implemented, the exchange of knowledge between the partner countries was promoted and specialist knowledge was exchanged.</p> <p>On site, the project partners were able to get to know the strengths and challenges of the respective tourism sector and had the chance to make suggestions for improvements. In addition, new incentives and ideas for the respective tourism industry were introduced, such as the German model of public-private partnerships for the Costa Rican tourism industry or the integration of rural communities in sustainable tourism in Costa Rica as a stimulus for the Tunisian project partners.</p>
Training	<p>Regarding the academic exchange, two student trips from Heilbronn University to Costa Rica and Tunisia were carried out as part of research projects, in which the students published a total of six country-specific final reports on project-related topics. In June 2018, student trips from the three involved universities (in Germany, Tunisia and Costa Rica) continued without GIZ support.</p> <p>In June 2017, students from the Costa Rican universities TEC and CATIE and the Tunisian university IHEC also traveled to Germany. In this way a student exchange took place between all three countries. In addition, the trips enhanced the networking between the professors.</p>
Marketing and certifications	<p>In October 2017, the certification process as a sustainable travel destination in Sarchí started as a pilot project. For this purpose, the Costa Rican consulting company RBA was trained by the German certification company TourCert so that they can represent them in all of Central America in the future. In addition, the German TourCert experts visited Sarchí in April, June, July and December 2018, in which they accompanied the tourism companies in the certification process and in the marketing strategy for the destination.</p> <p>In addition to Tunisia's interest in TourCert's certification, the ecological footprint of two destinations (Tozeur and Djerba), which serves as the basis for a sustainable travel destination, was examined in cooperation with Harvard University's international sustainable tourism initiative (ISTI).</p> <p>Through the triangular cooperation, the Tunisian project partners have recognized the potential of cultural tourism. Based on the results of the student trips and the intensive exchange between the participating countries, further measures were developed within the GIZ Open Regional Fund (ORF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An expert mission in Tunisia to support the ministries of tourism, culture and labor on the topics: product development, destination management and job creation

measures through cultural tourism.

- A trip for a delegation of the above-mentioned ministries to North Rhine-Westphalia on the topic: value chains, cultural tourism and job creation measures in the region of historical sites.
- There was also a summer school on Djerba on the topic of “Djerba 2030, between beach and culture”, which was organized in cooperation with the technical university, the private sector and the “Institut National du Patrimoine”. Students took part in a five-day seminar held by international tourism experts. The central topics ranged from destination management and cultural tourism to sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship.
- The restoration of the historic Meninx site and the construction of observation platforms.

3. PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The following assessment of the Project's performance is based on the methodology of the logical framework analysis and the assessment of five typical criteria recommended by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) and GIZ triangular cooperation criteria.

3.1 RELEVANCE

The Relevance criterion examines the consistency of the intervention with respect to the objectives and issues determined at the outset. In this respect, we examine the project's origin, to what extent the project was consistent with national strategies and policy, the needs and expectations of beneficiaries and its internal coherence.

The following questions were addressed regarding the project's relevance:

- Was any diagnosis made to match the project to the needs of the beneficiary institution? Was the intervention context considered (institutional conditions of the beneficiary entity, policies, resources, political dialogue, etc.)?
- How did the Project originate? How did the beneficiary country participate in the definition of content?
- Was the project design consistent with the logical framework approach (i.e. internal coherence)?
- Were the risks and assumptions fully identified?
- Was the intervention approach adequate? (technical assistance method, tools, training to achieve the objectives)
- Was the budget and its distribution enough and consistent with the planned strategies and activities?

3.1.1 Initial diagnosis

According to our informants from the three countries, an "initial diagnosis" (or "baseline") was not formulated in a systematic and formal manner right from the beginning of the intervention or as a preliminary step. We understood that the objective of the project and its indicators were defined by GIZ on the ground of its knowledge of the tourism sector in Costa Rica and Tunisia and as per the experience and practices of Baden-Württemberg State Ministry and Heilbronn University in matter of sustainable tourism. Yet, before the official start of the project, GIZ offices in Costa Rica and Tunisia liaised with key tourism sector' stakeholders in these countries in order to confirm the project's goal and its main components. According to GIZ, major contributors of this exercise were the Professors Ralf Vogler and Christian Buer from Heilbronn University, that provided important insights about the relevance and feasibility of know-how transfer from Germany to Costa Rica and Tunisia. Available information and the declarations of our informants do not allow to express an informed and objective opinion about the quality and intensity of the involvement of the Tunisian and Costa Rican stakeholders in the initial diagnosis. We believe that the application of the CW-tools and recommendations for setting a cooperation environment was quite limited.

3.1.2 Project origin

While the “author” of the project is stated in its presentation as GIZ, the project’s “origin” is not specified, for example in a “background and justification” chapter. The project documentation does not mention if and how it’s Costa Rican and Tunisian counterparts were involved in the design of the project and/or who requested the GIZ intervention. This raises the issue of the project’s outcome and outputs’ ownership and, ultimately, their long-term durability and viability. In practice, it is about responsibility for project deliveries and benefit realization.

3.1.3 Coherence with national strategies policies

Our interlocutors in Costa Rica and Tunisia unanimously declared that the project objective, its three main components (exchanges, training and marketing/certifications) and its five expected results (labelled as “indicators” in GIZ project documentation) were fully relevant for their respective country in general and for their organizations in particular. These declarations are congruent with the guidance of the tourism sector strategies of both countries.

In Tunisia, the sectoral development strategy “Vision 3+1” for 2014-2017 aims to develop better quality and allow for a more sustainable form of tourism to emerge. The strategy comprises four central pillars: products diversification in line with regional specificities, quality and training, promotion and sector modernization. One of the key programs implemented within the “Vision 3+1” framework (but already initiated in 2010) is the PNMH (*Programme de Mise à Niveau des établissements Hôteliers*) to improve the quality of services, increase the performance of the hotel business and strengthen its competitiveness and its ability to withstand external hazards in order to consolidate the positioning of the tourism sector on a global scale.

All activities implemented by the Project fit well within the pillars of “Vision 3+1” and the measures of the PNMH. Additionally, it should be noted that the Tunisian national strategy for the adaptation of the tourism sector to climate changes (2010), elaborated with the support of GIZ, is focused on sustainability issues and includes several recommendations that were reflected by the project activities and deliverables. Lastly it is interesting to note that the 2016-2017 Tunisian Employment Strategy (and its new version launched in June 2019) also highlights the needs to improve professional qualifications of the tourism sector’s workers, in particular through “know-how transfer” and “international exchanges” addressing the development of the ecotourism. Yet, a report from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Bass et al. 2016) considers that this strategy is largely ineffective due to the lack of coordination between public institutions, an issue that was mentioned by several of our interlocutors in Tunisia.

In Costa Rica, the National Development Plans for 2011-2014 and 2015-2018 identify the development priorities at national, regional and sectoral levels. Tourism strengthening is set as one of the Government priorities to diversify the economy and promote sustainable growth. The plans state that tourism development should be effectively and constructively contributing to the generation of economic benefits, protecting the environment and respecting the culture and values of Costa Rica. The National Sustainable Tourism Plan 2010 – 2016 formulated in close partnership with the private sector states that “Sustainable management of tourism is the best means that the country has to efficiently use its natural and cultural heritage in order to generate wealth that will be translated into real benefits for all Costa Rican society”. This plan encourages and promotes tourism development fostering a “sustainable use of resources” (natural and human) and “equitable distribution of

benefits” and establishes 11 strategic programs. Several of these programs mirrors the project’s activities: Education and Awareness Program, Sustainable Tourism Program, Quality Tourism Program, Marketing and Communications Program and Destinations and products development program.

In general, we consider that the project objective and its activities were fully aligned with the official tourism development strategies and policies of both Tunisia and Costa Rica. It is also interesting to note that Tunisia has established cooperation conventions in the area of tourism with 52 countries, which only one is a Latin American country (Chile). In this perspective, the project appears to have played a quite pioneering role.

Lastly, it should be noted that triangular cooperation is not a novelty for Costa Rica, Tunisia and Germany, as all these countries had previous experiences in this matter. In fact, Tunisia is one of the first countries of the South to have developed a South-South cooperation policy since its independence, in particular by sending teachers to neighboring countries. According to Saoussen Dhokkar (2015: 60) Tunisia has carried out more than 64 projects within the framework of triangular cooperation, with financial support from multilateral institutions such as AFDB, BADEA, EU, OPEC Fund, UNDP, the World Bank and various governments.

Costa Rica also has significant experience in triangular cooperation. Among several examples, Costa Rica collaborated with Benin and Bhutan with the support of Netherland between 2007 and 2011, focusing on four components of sustainable development: economic development, social development, environmental protection and gender equality. In 2014, the government of Costa Rica along with El Salvador and Spain initiated a triangular cooperation agreement, seeking to optimize resources and support housing initiatives. From 2013 to 2016, GIZ supported a triangular cooperation between Costa Rica and Morocco to strengthen the sustainable management and use of forest, protected areas and watersheds in the context of climate change¹.

We consider that such previous experiences and practices of triangular and South-South cooperation well sustain the project relevance.

3.1.4 Internal coherence

This dimension of relevance is examined in terms of design (logical framework and theory of change, geographical coverage, beneficiary selection, management and coordination, risks and assumptions, monitoring and budget).

The project’s documentation does not provide insights on the methodology used to formulate the project objective and its expected results. No specific references to the application of the CW-methodology could be found. As per the presentation of the project component, we assume that the Logical Framework Analysis Methodology inspired its formulation. However, we observe that the project conception did not result from a systematic use of this methodology (definition of problematic, goal, specific objective(s), expected results, indicators, planned activities and respective inputs, sources of verification and assumptions).

¹ www.giz.de/en/worldwide/28717.html

The main problem, or nexus of problems, to be addressed by this GIZ intervention is not expressed in one or a few clear sentences. Causal relations are not explained/established and do not substantiate the definition of the envisioned project's goals, outcomes and outputs. This concern is not only of a conceptual and methodological nature, but rather addresses the understandability of GIZ intentions and propositions, as well as the intended "appropriation" of its processes, products and respective stakeholders' roles. While the Project objective is clear, we observe that its five outputs are labeled as "indicators" and that source of verification and main assumptions (and related risks assessment/mitigation strategy) are not mentioned. Yet, we consider that these indicators are not enough to qualify the proposed interventions and to track the progress made toward achieving the outputs and objective. In fact, several project activities were realized without explicit reference to the project's results framework. Nonetheless, we deem that such activities were congruent with the purpose of the project and thus fully relevant. As depicted further below in chapter 4.2 dealing about effectiveness, these activities also usefully contributed to the project expected results.

The absence of SMART indicators compromised the possibility to track progress and to assess the level of outputs achievement. Overall, we consider that the insufficient understanding (and thus, application) of the LogFrame-methodology, especially the confusion between outputs and indicators, restricts the project's evaluability and reflects some of the insufficiencies in the design of the intervention.

For each "indicator", the project's final report outlines specific activities that were implemented, but their formulations are quite generic. Nevertheless, we deem that all activities are relevant regarding the project objective, an opinion that is shared by all our interlocutors in Costa Rica and Tunisia. Unfortunately, the project report does not reflect planned activities versus realized ones, nor does it systematically indicate canceled or postponed interventions. Furthermore, the project documentation does not disclose work plan(s) and budget(s), thus not allowing to compare scheduled activities versus effective implementation and planned resources versus mobilized ones. Along the same line, and in the absence of a Gantt chart, we struggled to recover the theoretical/actual schedule and duration of activities along the implementation.

Overall, the project design appears to be quite rudimentary and its internal coherence is relatively weak. This somehow compromises the relevance of the project in terms of ownership, but also its implementation and respective monitoring. We consider that these conditions may have had a negative impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the project as a whole, as well as on the sustainability of its products. This consideration is further analyzed in the chapters dealing with the respective evaluation criteria.

a) Theory of change

From a similar perspective than in the case of project design, we note that the project has been built as per a development-oriented focus, while including room for timely and specifically related actions, in line with the characteristics and agenda of the partner's countries and their tourism sector parties. There is considerable documentation and oral evidence of the reasons behind the project's choices made. These sources also illustrate assumptions about the stakeholders, and the way in which particular interventions should achieve desired short- and longer-term objective(s). However, there is no documented overarching "theory of change" for the project as a whole, and the theories of change that underlie its various components are also largely implicit. We thus had to deduce and draw out a

sense of what these objectives and strategies would have looked like, had they been articulated at the time, and how these might have changed as operations unfolded and experience was gained. As was the case with the logical framework gaps, these obviously led to quite subjective assessments regarding the production of results and achievement of the objectives.

The design issues in theory of change's perspective presented above raise some questions concerning the project's internal coherence, its theoretical foundations and implementation modalities (including management, coordination, monitoring and reporting). Again, a stringent application of the CW methodology would have avoided these shortfalls.

b) Beneficiaries/Stakeholders' selection

This is an important element/input of relevance. The criteria for the selection of direct beneficiaries (i.e. private and public tourism ventures) are not defined in the project documentation. However, the list of parties appears to be fully coherent with the project objective and we did not find evidence that selected organisations appear to have been enrolled because of personal links with GIZ staff or political decision makers. It seems that the selection process was merely informal and mostly based on previous linkages with GIZ agencies and reputation. A problematic issue with the project's selection practice is also the absence of individualised baseline data.

c) Needs and expectations of the stakeholders

Needs and expectations of the stakeholders were not formally defined from the onset. Nevertheless, our interlocutors stated that GIZ engaged with them during the course of the project in order to define activities that would respond to their needs. While all informants stated that GIZ proposed activities were relevant, it was commonly indicated that they expected further support to implement tangible measures. In fact, this appeared as the main critic the tourism sector actors involved in the project. Still, it should be noted that all of them declared that GIZ clearly stated the project's timing and resources and did not fuel false expectations.

d) Ownership, sustainability and risk mitigation

The project documentation does not address the issues of ownership, sustainability and risk mitigation. One might expect that GIZ would intend to include government and private sector representative as key stakeholders of the project's planning, implementation and monitoring phases to ensure buy in, ownership, institutionalization and sustainability. While this may require a certain level of readiness, GIZ would be a priori able to build on its previous work with relevant authorities and that additional capacity building would meet arising challenges. In this perspective, a quick preliminary risk assessment might have highlight, for example, the lack of time by government actors interested in the project and the language constraints of some key Tunisian stakeholders. In the context of the evaluation, we did not find tangible evidence of such an approach and its respective measures.

e) Management and coordination

This structure is not clearly disclosed in the project documentation. Repeated requests for clarification on the exact number of the GIZ project team and the specific responsibilities of its members were not returned by GIZ.

As far as we could see, the GIZ project management and implementation structure was composed of the following people:

- A Project Manager, based in Costa Rica, who was responsible for the overall project and financial management, technical support, partnership building and staff management
- A Project Assistant, based in Tunisia, who supported the project implementation, as well as, support the logistics and financial processes for project implementation;
- A junior consultant based in Costa Rica.
- A senior consultant, based in Tunisia

We were not given access to the TOR of the consultants, so we cannot make statements on their role and responsibilities.

Considering the quite ambitious intentions of the project in terms of topics to be addressed and geographical coverage, the project team was only minimally staffed. This is *a priori* not a “killing factor”, if we consider the project’s “partnership approach” and the use of consultants. According to the project partners we met, sufficient staff was mobilized to realize the activities and their involvement in the project did not generate unbearable extra workload. Yet, we did note some challenges regarding the coordination within GIZ Tunisia and between GIZ agencies in Costa Rica and Tunisia, including its partners, as well as between the national stakeholders themselves.

f) Reporting

The project reporting commitments are not stated in the documentation made available to us. It doesn’t mention GIZ or its partners’ reports frequencies, format and content, nor does it provide some information about a final project report. This makes it difficult to evaluate the efficiency (release date vs. end of reporting period) and accuracy (confidence in and traceability of the source) of the reporting process. None of the Tunisian and Costa Rican project stakeholders that we consulted declared having received progress reports from GIZ. This would have contributed to promote dialogue, as well as transparency and accountability.

g) Budget

The project’ budget was 349.000 Euro. The project documentation does not disclose a detailed budget, distributing the costs according to different categories. GIZ did not provide details on how funds distribution was made between the three expected results and/or between the countries and on how the budget was calculated. GIZ disclose that the total expenses were 342.793 Euro but does not provide details about cost distribution. Due to these limitations, we were not in the condition to assess the adequacy of the budget with regards to its intentions. Still, we consider that the total budget seems to be quite limited to adequately generate its five expected results. This opinion is shared by our informants within GIZ and Heilbronn University, but they rightly highlighted the fact that all project stakeholders made significant in-kind contributions. In this perspective, the funds committed by GIZ had a significant leverage effect.

Despite the limitations presented above, we consider that the project objective, its expected results and activities were highly relevant, both for Costa Rica and for Tunisia. The tourism industry in Tunisia plays a crucial role in the country's economic development. It is therefore particularly important to create incentives for alternative models to mass tourism by transferring best practices, promoting

bilateral cooperation and exploring certifications and marketing measures. Due to the important differences in local context, the linkage between Costa Rica and Tunisia is not obvious at a first sight. Still, Costa Rica is one of the first nations to have developed its own national certification system to encourage eco-friendly actions, ensure environmental sustainability and to protect the country's natural resources and biodiversity among local agents in the private sector. Furthermore, Costa Rica created its own Blue Flag Ecological Program, extended to nine categories (including beaches), which aim to improve education and provide information regarding the environment. It should also be indicated that Costa Rica has developed a very well managed system of National Protected Areas, closely linked to ecotourism. All these achievements were mentioned by the Tunisian stakeholders as a valuable source of inspiration. They therefore called for the reiteration of exchanges with Costa Rica.

Overall, the project appears to be well relevant with regard its context and thematic but its flaws in term of design compromise its level of ownership, an important aspect of relevance.

3.2 EFFICIENCY

Typically, efficiency examines the relationship between the resources implemented and their costs on the one hand, and the funded outcomes on the other hand. In this perspective, the evaluation should assess whether the required resources were actually used in a timely manner and at reasonable cost, as well as analyzing any observed delays or overspending. However, the absence of detailed financial project data did not allow for such thorough efficiency assessment, as it was not allocated to specific activities, outputs and outcomes. Along the same line, the project reports do not allow to reconstruct the planning and effective implementation calendar. Therefore, we were not in condition to fully respond to the evaluation questions addressing efficiency as stated in our methodological approach. Consequently, we merely focus our analysis on the timing of operation, capacities (human resources, technical, administrative and advocacy skills, equipment and facilities) of the project management and organizational/operational structure to realize (or support) activities and to deliver and document results.

The following questions were addressed regarding the project's efficiency:

- What factors contributed to the efficiency or inefficiency of the Project?
- Have there been results (positive / negative) not expected / planned?
- Were resources (economic, human, time, expertise, etc.) allocated to the Project in a timely manner? Is the expected time for execution considered enough? Were there delays?

3.2.1 Capacities

Human resources mobilized by GIZ corresponded to 2 staff members running the project (with only one staff allocated full time). Additionally, 1 junior and 1 senior consultant based in Tunisia and Costa Rica significantly contributed to the project operationalization and follow-up. We consider that the number of staff was, in theory, adequate to the project implementation and management needs. But this was not confirmed in practice according to our interlocutor, mostly due to GIZ staff turnover.

Furthermore, the project implementation relied on several partners and service providers, mostly for academical researches and training purposes and short-term consultancy (Heilbronn University, CATIE and IHEC).

The project's products also required a significant contribution of Heilbronn University' students in research activities, even though such participation is not systematically and explicitly described in the project's documentation. This makes it difficult to exactly evaluate the volume of the Heilbronn University students' involvement.

Taking into account the sector addressed by the intervention, Costa Rican and Tunisian public institutions should also have been involved in the project, for example in the context of an advisory board or a steering committee and during annual review meetings. Similarly, the present evaluation could have been governed by an "evaluation management/reference group".

GIZ staff and consultants' skills appear to have been quite consistent and effective to mobilize private actors in the project's activities. All our interlocutors stated that GIZ staff clearly expounded the role and intention of the agency in the tourism sector in general and in the context of the project.

Technical skills required by the project were quite varied in terms of domains (marketing, certifications, etc.). Mirroring our interlocutors' statements, it seems that GIZ staff and consultants faced no major technical limitations and were very knowledgeable about the tourism sector in both partner's countries. In fact, evidence shows that GIZ staff have been clearly up to the challenges in matters of tourism. Yet, it seems that GIZ staff overestimated the capacity and willingness of national and local public institutions to be involved in the project. Without a deep and inside knowledge of GIZ internal administrative procedures, it is difficult to objectively assess the administration capacity of GIZ staff involved in the project. However, fractional information that we obtained from both insiders and outsiders on this issue indicates that the project design and implementation was somehow hampered by delayed decisions and administrative red-tape. Apparently, GIZ has been flexible and quick to implement research activities but faced some limitations when it came to follow-up more "development-oriented" operations in Tunisia. Furthermore, it seems that cumbersome internal systems and processes related to the distribution of responsibilities between the Tunisia and Costa Rica agencies were a limitation to the effective delivery of project results.

Facilities and equipment used by the project consisted in the GIZ offices in Tunisia and Costa Rica, as well as infrastructure of the partners or rented ones. Generally, no particular problems related to the facilities used by the project were mentioned and our interviewees indicated that the facilities were fully adequate. According to our informants, the project's logistic and follow-up was not particularly constrained.

It is difficult to precisely assess the workload of the "project's partners" in supporting the design and implementation of activities, but we understood that it was substantial, as they indicated that their roles were quite time-consuming and represented an extra-burden for them, as well as for their respective institutions. In Tunisia, this situation was somehow increased by deficient coordination and communication between the parties.

3.2.2 Project expenditures

The project's budget presented by GIZ was 349.000 Euro and the project final report indicates a total disbursement of 342.793 Euro. This may indicate that UNW managed to stick with most of its initial plan.

In kind contributions from the could not be exactly estimated, as details were not disclosed by GIZ. Consequently, we were not in condition to assess what kind of planning and eventual changes were

made by GIZ and its partners to define the effective project's budget and how this was done. Without more details on the budgeting of each outputs' underlying activities and considering that no detailed project expenditure data were provided to us, it was impossible to assess the financial efficiency of the Project's actions and their respective results.

However, as previously mentioned, it should be noted that GIZ resources were probably well matched by the partners' contributions. The project partners provided in-kind services for the implementation of workshops and visits to Costa Rica, Tunisia and Germany (including contributions to logistics, meals, internal transport, event rooms, accommodation, etc.). In addition, they delivered significant technical support and knowledge to the project. In this perspective, the project can be considered as overall efficient.

3.2.3 Organizational/operational structure

The project documentation discloses little information about the organization of the intervention and its operationalization in the field. As indicated further above, we consider that the project staffing was insufficient to properly implement and monitor the project activities, let alone to report on it in a systematic manner, as for example indicated in the CW methodology and other internal GIZ systems and procedures (DMS, IGMI etc.).

In the absence of written information about the project activity planning and coordination mechanisms, we understand that the organization of activities was mostly ad-hoc and strongly relied on the involvement of consultants and partners. Apparently, this led to some delays and miscommunication issues between the project, its public counterparts and the beneficiaries. This somehow diluted activity ownership and operational responsibilities. A particular and recurrent problem was apparently the communication and coordination between GIZ Tunisia and GIZ Costa Rica.

3.2.4 Timing of operations

Apart from specific events, the project reports rarely disclose timing data for the preparation of activities. We were unable to complete the missing chronological information. Similarly, the documentation does not present work plans that could serve as a baseline to assess planned versus effective timing. In these conditions, it is impossible to systematically review the project calendar as we obtained partial, and mostly subjective, temporal information from our interlocutors at GIZ and in the field. Still it appears that the project's implementation supported some delays, in particular regarding activities related to the definition of a marketing campaign and the introduction of a new tourism product in Tunisia.

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS

This criterion assesses the extent to which the project's objective was fulfilled, as well as its possible unexpected (positive or negative) effects. It encompasses a comparison of intended and actual project results (or "indicators" as per the project's wording) as an analysis of the gaps observed. As indicated in the previous chapter, SMART outcome indicators were not specified from the onset. Therefore, our investigation and assessment mostly refer to references obtained through the reading of the project's documentation and the interviews. To this extent, our assessment of the project's effectiveness is partly subjective and not completely systematic.

The following questions were addressed regarding the project's effectiveness:

- What factors contributed to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the Project?
- To what extent were the goal and expected results achieved and how did GIZ contribute toward them?
- What are the enabling and limiting factors that contributed to the achievement of results and what actions were taken to overcome any barriers that limited the progress?

Indicator 1: "At least three best practices are transferred from one country to another"

Two best practices were transferred from Costa Rica and Germany to Tunisia:

- In Tunisia, an ecological sewage treatment plant cleaning wastewater through a system of terraces with different types of vegetation was introduced in the eco-lodge Dar Zaghouan. This biological system is used in the Costa Rican car rental company "Mapache Rent a Car". During our visit in Dar Zaghouan eco-lodge on 31/10, we observed that the system was fully operational and the manager, Mr. Skander Zribi, declared that he was very satisfied with this transfer of technology from Costa Rica. Interestingly, Mr. Zribi also stated that his visit to Costa Rica inspired him to adopt renewable energy solutions (solar water heater, solar energy and pellets made from olive seeds and trees residues) and to implement proper waste management.
- The concept of "Hospitality Symposium" realized in Heilbronn was transferred to Tunisia, where a similar event was successfully carried out in Tunis in November 2017. About 150 representatives from academical institutions and the tourism sector participated. This event was reiterated in November 2018 and 2019 at the Sidi Dhrif Higher Institute of Tourism Studies in Cartage (IHEC - Institut des Hautes Etudes Touristiques de Sidi Dhrif). The first "Tunisia Hospitality Symposium" replicated the format of the Heilbronn Hospitality Symposium and benefited of the conceptual and technical support of the Heilbronn University. The main topics of the 1st Tunisia Hospitality Symposium was on sustainability and capitalized on a collaboration between University of Carthage and University of Heilbronn, initiated in the context of the triangular project. In the framework of the 1st Tunisia Hospitality Symposium, a workshop dedicated to the subject "Sustainability & Culture Costa Rica" was held, which received a very positive rating from the participants.

Both interventions in Tunisia responded well to the stated indicator. Additionally, these activities correspond with the concretization of the first project component dealing with "Exchange of information and experience on best practices" as presented in table 5.

It should also be noted that the project supported the transfer of know-how between Germany and Costa Rica regarding tourism certification. End 2017, the Costa Rican consulting company RBA was trained by the German certification company TourCert so that they can represent them in all Central America in the future. In addition, the German TourCert experts visited Sarchí in December 2018, April, June and July 2018, in order to accompany tourism companies in the certification process and to support their marketing strategy for the Sarchí destination.

Indicator 2: "At least one bilateral scientific cooperation between the participating partner universities will be established to carry out research projects in the context of bachelor and / or master theses"

Three bilateral and one trilateral university collaborations were initiated in the context of the project:

- An agreement on various cooperation options was agreed between Heilbronn University and the Technological Institute of Costa Rica (TEC), including for an exchange of bachelor and master students as well as for professors and scientists. The agreement has a term of at least five years and was signed end of 2017. However, no specific activities resulted from this agreement until the realisation of this evaluation.
- The Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) in Costa Rica cooperates with Heilbronn University to carry out student trips to Costa Rica as part of research projects.
- A bilateral cooperation agreement between the IHEC and Heilbronn University was concluded. The first joint activities were the student trips from Heilbronn University to Tunisia in 2016 and 2017, the visit of students from the Costa Rican universities TEC and CATIE and the Tunisian university IHEC in Germany in June 2017 and the organization of the first "Tunisia Hospitality Symposium (THS) in November 2017. For the second Tunisian Hospitality Symposium, held in October 2018, the students of Heilbronn University presented an extensive concept and Prof. Dr. Christian Buer of Heilbronn University participated at the third symposium in October 2019.
- End of 2017, CATIE, Heilbronn University and the Tunisian IHEC University started to collaborate on the design of a trilateral module on sustainable tourism. This should be later be offered online and inserted into the study programs at the universities. The module will consist of nine case studies (three from each country). The following topics were defined: rural tourism and quality labels in sustainable tourism in Costa Rica, cultural tourism in Tunisia and the influence of public-private partnerships on the tourism sector in Germany. As the semester times of the three countries differ significantly and there is only a six-week "common overlap", the module has not yet been introduced. The participating universities continue to work on a solution according to GIZ.

The activities and outputs presented above adequately fulfilled the second project's indicator.

Indicator 3: "The certification process as a "sustainable travel destination" is successfully initiated in at least one destination in Tunisia and in Costa Rica"

- In Costa Rica, the certification process developed by the German company TourCert was successfully completed in September 2018 as a pilot project, by certifying Sarchí and Sarapiquí as a "sustainable travel destination". Consequently, a total of 27 participating companies quickly implemented measures to improve their tourism products and thus increase their competitiveness. Sarchí and Sarapiquí are one of the first certified travel destinations in Costa Rica².
- In Tunisia, the advantages and disadvantages of various destination certifications were examined, in particular by TourCert, a German **non-profit company for certification in tourism**, and Blue Flag, a voluntary eco-label awarded to beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism operators. The Tunisian Hotel Federation (*Fédération tunisienne de l'hôtellerie* - FTH) established contacts with TourCert to initiate the first activities for the certification process as a sustainable travel destination for the medina in Hammamet at the end of 2018. In addition, four Tunisian hotels participated in an audit of the German environmental label GreenSign.

² See the following site for further information:

<https://www.elmundo.cr/sarapiqui-y-sarchi-son-certificados-como-primeros-destinos-turisticos-sostenibles/>

These results respond to the stated “indicator”, although the certification process was not concluded in Tunisia. According to our informants and project reports, this objective was in fact premature and unrealistic in the Tunisian context (see chapter 4.4 about sustainability) and taking into account time and resources’ constraints as the project was in its final phase.

Indicator 4: “At least one innovative marketing campaign is being developed, tested and introduced in Costa Rica and Tunisia”

Two marketing campaigns were drafted in Costa Rica:

50. In Costa Rica, students from Heilbronn University and of the CATIE developed in 2017 the terms of a marketing concept for the new tourism product of RETUS, a network of women-owned businesses (Women-entrepreneurs in Sustainable Tourism of Turrialba) in Santa Cruz and Mollejones de Turrialba. This work covered topics such as price strategies, graphical identity and possible advertising measures, but its main effort consisted in the collection of information and their analyses toward the definition and promotion of RETUS offer. The initial objective to develop, test and introduce an “innovative marketing campaign” had to be reformulated and narrowed in the light of RETUS limitations and constraints.

Additionally, Heilbronn University students analyzed the campaign “Vamos a turistear” (let’s go on tourism) initiated in 2012 and aiming at enhancing domestic tourism. They work highlighted some limitations of the campaign and they proposed key improvements focusing on the use of social network. GIZ shared this work with the Tunisian project’s counterparts FTH and IHEC, whom representatives declared being very interested to develop a similar campaign in Tunisia.

51. As part of the TourCert process, an integral communication and marketing strategy was developed in collaboration with the local stakeholders in Sarchí. As a result, a regional brand with slogan for the destination Sarchí was designed and launched.

These results respond only partially to the stated “indicator” as no marketing campaign was designed in Tunisia and only partially done in the case of RETUS in Costa Rica. Furthermore, the campaign conceived for Sarchí in Costa Rica was not tested and implemented in the context of the project as initially foreseen. However, the processes were finalized during 2019 according to information disclosed by CATIE.

In general, GIZ contribution to Heilbronn University students and CATIE work in analysing the context and drafting marketing campaigns in Costa Rica was praised by our informants: GIZ provided practical support to identify and involve private sector entities in Germany and Costa Rica, contributed to the elaboration of the work methodology and reviewed its deliverables.

Regarding Tunisia, it should be noted that the GIZ final project report mentions the development of an “innovative marketing campaign for Star Wars tourism”. Nonetheless, this initiative was not implemented in the context of the triangular project but with the support of the Open Regional Fund (ORF) Employment (*Fonds pour la Formation et la Promotion de l’Emploi des Jeunes or FondsEmploi*). Yet, FTH and IHEC representatives and GIZ consultant Amel Djait involved in the triangular project consider that the marketing campaign for “Star Wars tourism” is a very valuable contribution of GIZ and they called for its continuation and development and its promotion in the German market.

Interestingly, it should be noted that the triangular project paved the way for further development in the field of “cultural tourism” in the context of the ORF. As indicated in table 5 further above, the following activities were realized through the ORF from 2018 onward:

- An expert mission in Tunisia to support the ministries of tourism, culture and labor on the topics: product development, destination management and job creation measures through cultural tourism.
- A delegation trip for the above-mentioned ministries to North Rhine-Westphalia, addressing the following topic: value chains, cultural tourism and job creation measures in the region of historical sites.
- There was also a summer school on Djerba on the topic of “Djerba 2030, between beach and culture”, which was organized in cooperation with the technical university, the private sector and the National Patrimonial Institute (*Institut National du Patrimoine*). Students took part in a five-day seminar held by international tourism experts. The central topics ranged from destination management and cultural tourism to sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship.
- The restoration of the historic Meninx site and the construction of observation platforms.

We consider that the realization of these activities under the ORF corresponds to a positive achievement of the triangular project and constitute a valuable capitalization of its activities.

Indicator 5: “At least one new tourism product is introduced”

In 2017, three Heilbronn University students drafted a marketing and sales strategy for two destinations in Costa Rica (Santa Cruz and Mollejones de Turrialba) addressed to the European/German market. This work was realized under “indicator 4” in collaboration with CATIE and with the support of GIZ. It led to the identification of several tourism products in both destinations that could be improved and promoted in Germany. Five travel agencies (avenTOURa, Travel-to-Nature, INTI Tours, Aventerra and Birding Tours) and two Youth Organizations (AWO and the Commission for Education Exchange eV-COINED) were identified and approached in Baden-Württemberg. They showed a strong interest to include in their portfolio the tourism products developed by the project. Two students from CATIE were then commissioned to follow up with the above-mentioned institutions until December 2018. Beginning of 2019, three travel agencies approached by the project indicated that intend to integrate the tourism products of Mollejones de Turrialba in their offer, but this was not yet concretized end of 2019. In addition, the project invited RETUS to work with Costa Rican travel agencies on a travel package combining the stay in Turrialba with other travel destinations in Costa Rica. This work was still ongoing end 2019 with the support of CATIE students.

According to Heilbronn University project’s report and Prof. Dr. Christian Buer, GIZ support in Costa Rica and in Germany were instrumental in identifying professional contacts in both countries and in helping to organize the students field works in Costa Rica. We consider that the envisioned output under “indicator 5” was fulfilled.

Overall, three expected results (1, 2 and 5) of the project on a total of five appear to have been adequately realized and the project can be considered as moderately effective. Results 3 (certification) and 4 (marketing campaigns) were partially achieved. Key factors that contributed to this situation (evaluation question 1) can be summarized as follow

- The relevance of the project goal and activities in the eyes of the Costa Rican and Tunisian stakeholders sustained their active participation and reactivity to GIZ offers.
- The key role of Heilbronn University and CATIE in providing academical insights and methodologies nurtured and enlarged the reflexion of the tourism operators.
- In both Costa Rica and Tunisia, internal and external limitations and constraints of the stakeholders turned the realisation of indicators 3 and 4 unrealistic.
- In Tunisia, the lack of involvement of public actors and of self-organisation of the private operators restricted the effectiveness of the intervention.

3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

We examined whether the project's outputs are sustainable at the technical, organizational, institutional and economic levels and according to the following question: Has the Project developed a sustainability strategy?

3.4.1 Sustainability at the technical, organizational, institutional and economic levels

Several technical innovations and improvements of technical processes were addressed by the project in both Costa Rica and Tunisia. In Costa Rica, this corresponded mostly to the design of marketing campaigns and the certification of Sarchí and Sarapiquí destinations by TourCert and its local partner RBA in September 2018. For both topics, the project documentation and stakeholders' declarations indicate that the project outputs were well adequate to the Costa Rican context and capacities. Contrarily to the Tunisian case, Costa Rica has a significant number of institutions and professionals combining environmental and tourism management qualifications. In this regard, the GIZ support to the linkage between TourCert and the Costa Rican company RBA is a particularly pertinent measure for the technical, organizational and economic viability of the certification scheme in the country. With regard Sarchí certification, a sustainability council ("*Consejo de Sostenibilidad*") was formed in 2018 by representatives from the public and private sectors in order to elaborate comprehensive sustainability reports on a regular base and to monitor the implementation of three-year action plans. We believe that the existence of such institution significantly contributes to the sustainability of tourism certification.

Both the concept of "sustainable tourism" and the benefits of respective certification are widely acknowledged in Costa Rica according to Heilbronn University professors and TourCert representatives. In this context, the financial costs and the technical and administrative processes of the certification do not constitute a very strong barrier for the large majority of the Costa Rican operators. Furthermore, the clientele of the Costa Rican tourism sector proved to be a privileged certified destination according to a Heilbronn University professor and other sources consulted in the context of the present evaluation.

Certification in Tunisia raised a lot of interest from the tourism operators involved in the project, the Tunisian Hotel Federation (FTH) and IHEC, in particular regarding its potential to develop new niche products in the "sustainable tourism" market and to diversify and improve the clientele. Four hotels participated in an environmental audit under the German label GreenSign, laying the ground for their future certification. These interlocutors considered that the GIZ intervention was perfectly coherent

with the project objective. It was also noted that a sustainable tourism certification could nurture a diversification (and improvement) of the current clientele and destinations. Such evolution is seen as a key factor for improving the overall sustainability of the Tunisian tourism sector.

However, all our interlocutors in Tunisia expressed serious concerns about the technical and financial capacities of most Tunisian tourism operators to embark in a certification process. Apparently, the concept of “sustainable tourism” is still not well understood by many operators and the Tunisian labor market has few professionals combining environmental and tourism management competencies. They also pointed the fact that the majority of the current visitors (and their respective operators) seems to give little importance to certification and to the environmental performances and impacts of their travel and visit. The benefits of certification in terms of occupancy rate and energy saving for example are also not well known or considered as insufficient in comparison with the financial and administrative burden generated by the certification. After years of underinvestment in infrastructures and equipment, many tourism ventures may not prioritize certification. Additionally, it seems that past experiences with the “Tunisian Eco-Label” established in 2007 were not fruitful and did not provide any marketing advantage to the few certified establishments. Furthermore, it should be noted that most operators are cash-strapped due to the decline of the Tunisian destination³, a high rate of indebtedness and the severe consequences of Thomas Cook Group bankruptcy. Lastly, a tourism operator interviewed in Hammamet pointed several constraining factors to certification at the national and local levels: the current regulations do not favor a quick and affordable adoption of renewable energy solutions, the absence of law enforcement in environmental matters and the sluggishness of the local administration regarding waste management.

The information and opinions expressed by our interlocutors in Tunisia are fully in line with the findings of Heilbronn University professors and students that worked in Tunisia in 2016 and 2017 in the context of the project. One of their conclusions well depict the recent context: “It cannot be denied that sustainability is not one of the priorities in Tunisia at the moment. Stabilizing the national political situation is basically the most important point. Hammamet and Tunisia, in general, need to improve their political images by electing an active municipality and by minimizing the impacts of terrorism. At the same time, they can start implementing small changes, for example, improving mentality, placing more separated bins and promoting a mobile application or map to provide all the necessary information for tourists. At the same time, it is crucial to unite the service providers for working together and replace the current competition by cooperation. Afterwards, a certification, either TourCert or Blue Flag, could be more realistic and feasible by identifying the destination’s desired images and future objectives” (Prof. Dr. Christian Buer and Prof. Dr. Ralf Vogler, July 18th, 2017: 24).

In this context, the GIZ consultant in Tunisia, FTH and IHEC representatives consider that an ample combination of measures would be required to foster sustainable tourism certification. In this perspective, individual certification is considered as premature and both FTH and IHEC would favor a

³ After terrorists’ attacks, international visitors decreased from 6 million arrivals in 2014 to 4.2 million in 2015 (arrivals from Germany dropped 48.6% from 2014 to 2015) according to the Tunisian Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts, 2016.

more incremental, targeted and integrated approach (i.e. involving a large array of public and private actors, both in Tunisia and in the countries of visitors' origins). They exemplified their thoughts by mentioning the launch of a UK/Tunisia "Sustainable Tourism Charter" in Hammamet in November 2019. Supported by the UK government, this initiative focuses on waste management and involves the Municipality of Hammamet, the Ministry of Tourism, the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), Tunisia's waste management agency (ANGED) and the FTH.

In Tunisia, the realization of the first Hospitality Symposium held on November 15th and 16th 2017 at the Campus of IHEC proved to be sustainable as it was successfully reiterated twice in 2018 and 2019 without the financial support of GIZ. The financing of the first events was covered by GIZ and other sponsorship. GIZ successfully sought additional support from AHK Tunisia (Tunisian Chamber of Industry and Commerce) and their subsidiary CORP (*Centre d'Orientation et de Reconversion Professionnelle*). In 2019, significant financial support was provided by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. According to IHEC professors in charge of the event, the involvement of GIZ and Heilbronn University were instrumental to design, promote and finance the symposium. It raised a lot of interest from private and public stakeholders of the tourism sector and IHEC is now in condition to continue it on a yearly base.

3.4.2 Sustainability strategy

The project documentation does not address the question of sustainability in a comprehensive and systematic manner at both the internal level (the project actions) and external level (the targeted sector, despite the fact that the project's theme and objective is precisely about fostering sustainability of the tourism sector). Yet, through the interviews, it clearly appeared that all project stakeholders have a thorough understanding of the issue at the sector level, in general and regarding their specific national context.

While it appears that the project interventions in Costa Rica benefited from an overall "enabling legal and institutional framework" and established local competencies, the situation in Tunisia is far less favorable to the development of sustainable tourism ventures. In this perspective, the project would have needed to define a specific "sustainability strategy" for each country.

3.5 IMPACT

Impact measures the benefits of an intervention through an analysis of its direct long-term effects (or changes) on the actors involved - particularly on the final beneficiaries - that can be reasonably attributed, either partly or entirely, to the project under evaluation.

The following evaluation questions addressed the impact issue:

- What were / are the main positive / negative impacts of the Project?
- Is the Project considered to have the necessary basis to make a significant contribution to broader and longer-term development?

Both the project documentation and the information collected during the interviews do not allow to identify significant changes that can be attributed to the project, both intended ones, as well as the unintended ones. In general, the project's realizations (design of marketing campaigns, certification in

Costa Rica, studies about cultural tourism and certification in Tunisia, etc.) would require systematic follow-up measures to generate meaningful and tangible impacts.

This perspective is in fact constantly expressed in the project's reports produced by Heilbronn University. Its report for Costa Rica of July 2016 states for example: "After having set up the general framework based on which sustainable tourism in Costa Rica takes place, potential actions and strategies to put into practice were developed in order to achieve the goals of the project. Following, based on the on-site research conducted in Costa Rica key findings were identified and specific recommendations formulated" (Carla Rachele et al., 2016: 39). This work was then continued in 2017 with the realisation of studies about (i) marketing and sales strategies for the destinations of Santa Cruz and Mollejones de Turrialba, (ii) analyse of the campaign "Vamos a Turistea" and (iii) the elaboration of strategies to raise the awareness of Costa Rican operators about sustainability. In these cases, the project report defines the students' goal as "to bring up the key issues and give recommendation for its improvement" (Miji Ha. et al., 2017: 59).

Similar statements were made in the studies addressing the Tunisian case. Respective project report of July 2016 provides detailed and comprehensive information about the tourism sector in Tunisia, concludes that targeted marketing campaigns, new products and certifications would be required to improve sustainability. It formulates several recommendations for these purposes. The report of 2017 "(...) analyses the potential of sustainable cultural tourism in Tunisia and aims to develop and point out possibilities how to strengthen the unstable Tunisian tourism industry in light of the current crisis" (Aysel Allahverdiyeva et al., 2017: 1). Alike the precedent study, in-depth information and several suggestions are provided to nurture cultural tourism in Tunisia.

Out of the certifications in Costa Rica and the realization of a tourism symposium in Tunisia, all other tangible project outputs correspond with applied researches. Few impacts can be objectively anticipated and observed in this matter.

With regard Sarchí and Sarapiquí destinations, significant developments occurred during 2019 following the TourCert certification and in direct relation with it. In Sarchí, a Sustainability Council has been established and a commission was set up to strengthen tourism products. The 20 companies involved in the certification started to systematically collect statistics on the sector, the visitors, their purchasing behaviour and their experiences. This process is an integral part of the TourCert check process aiming at informing and maintaining the certification. As foreseen in the context of the project studies, collaboration with local businesses and educational institutions to prepare tourist guides and bilingual professionals were initiated, an awareness campaign on the collection and disposal of recyclables was carried out. The creation of a tourism and cultural manager position in the Municipality of Sarchí is expected to be completed beginning of 2020. In Sarapiquí, 25 companies have successfully completed the TourCert check process and a Tourism Manager position was created by the Municipality to support the destination management and promotion. Under the direction of the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT), the destination Sarapiquí was chosen for its tourism potential to develop an Integral Management Plan (one of the recommendations of the project' studies) and some measures were taken (f.e. waste management). In March 2019, the President of the Sustainability Council took part in the International Tourism Exchange (ITB) in Berlin and was able to make direct contact with other businesspeople and keep track of the needs and trends of the European market.

In the light of these developments in both Sarchí and Sarapiquí, we consider that the certification supported by the project is dynamizing the tourism sector and serving as an important platform to present the destinations on the market. While it is too early to distinguish immediate economic and social impacts of the certification, tangible and significant effects occurred in 2019 and positive impacts can be anticipated. Accordingly, we deem that the project intervention in Costa Rica regarding certification was successful.

In Tunisia, a tangible and significant output of the project corresponded with the realization of the first “Tunisia Hospitality Symposium” on November 15th and 16th, 2017 at the Campus of IHEC in Cartage. This event was repeated in 2018 and 2019. In 2018, the symposium presented the findings of the activities realized in Costa Rica in the context of the project, with a specific focus on approaches for marketing "sustainable destinations" and through which channels this niche strategy might be disseminated in Tunisia. We can thus consider that the continuation of the symposium in 2018 and 2019 is a direct effect of the initial support provided by GIZ in 2017. As stated in chapter 4.4, the event appears to be sustainable at all levels (technical, institutional and financial).

4. TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

This chapter addresses the project evaluation in the perspective the triangular cooperation. It analyses several criteria through key evaluation questions.

Strength and weaknesses of the triangular cooperation

a) Evaluation questions related to relevance as per triangular cooperation criteria:

- Would the project have been potentially different following a classic project approach?

According to all our informants, the exchanges of experiences and information between Costa Rican and Tunisian parties were interesting and inspiring. Despite the language barrier, both parties declared that they would be interested to reiterate such relation. GIZ and Heilbronn University's work was instrumental in fostering this relation. A particular aspect that raised a common interest from the Costa Rican and Tunisian parties corresponds with the certification issues, despite the fact that the TourCert approach appeared to be not readily adequate for the Tunisian case. A classical project would not have allowed the Tunisian stakeholders to explore and experiment "sustainability in the making" as offered by the Costa Rican case.

- Has the project mobilized all sectors involved in the subject, at all levels? If not, why?

In both Costa Rica and Tunisia, a notable missing stakeholder of the project was the public sector. While this situation was less relevant in Costa Rica due to the relatively high level of the sectors' self-organisation and the existence of an enabled legal and policy framework, the absence of the public sector on the Tunisian side is more challenging. In this case, numerous aspects would have required, and benefited from, an engagement of the public entities such as the National Tunisian Tourism Office (ONTT), the Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts, the Ministry of Culture, Permanent Delegation of Tunisia to UNESCO the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development and its CITET (*Centre International des Technologies de l'Environnement de Tunis*), the developer of the Tunisian ecolabel and of sustainable energy programs. Such involvement, or at least consultation, was recommended by Heilbronn University and also by GIZ, but it appeared that a confusing political and institutional situation at the time of the project restricted the involvement of the Tunisian authorities.

- Did the solutions / innovations incorporate the local sociocultural aspects in the project (idiosyncrasy, cultural practices, local knowledge, local technologies, etc.)?

Heilbronn University studies about marketing and cultural tourism in both Costa Rica and Tunisia implied thorough consultation and contribution from local actors that are well reflected in the project deliverables. Some written records of Costa Rican and Tunisian stakeholders' comments about the studies, as well as our own interviews sustain this observation. They reflect the positive appreciation of the project's conclusion and recommendations and do not express reservations about eventual incongruencies. However, in the case of the certification, it appears that the project did not fully anticipate the limitations and constraints of the Tunisian context. This is in fact a finding that is portrayed in the respective project deliverables and that was confirmed by our interlocutors. It should also be noted that the Heilbronn University students intervening in Tunisia faced some

communication, organisation and coordination problems during their fieldwork that could not be addressed due to their tight and busy schedule. A more thorough field work preparation and flexible schedule might have improved the mobilization of their Tunisian counterparts and enhanced the efficiency of the students' interventions.

- Are the results of the project aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the objective level (beyond the thematic alignment)? Can you give a concrete example?

As indicated in chapter 4.1 and 4.2 about relevance and effectiveness respectively, three expected results (1, 2 and 5) of the project on a total of five appear to be fully relevant and have been adequately realized. The transfer of best practices (ecological sewage treatment plant and Hospitality Symposium focusing on "Sustainability & Culture"), the realization of bilateral and trilateral university collaborations and the introduction of a new sustainable tourism product match SDGs such as "Clean Water and Sanitation", "Decent Work and Economic Growth", "Sustainable Cities and Communities", "Responsible Consumption and Production" and "Partnerships for the Goals". Results No. 3 (certification) and 4 (marketing campaigns focusing on sustainable tourism, in particular cultural tourism) were partially achieved but also appear to be congruent with these SDGs.

b) Evaluation question related to efficiency as per triangular cooperation criteria:

- In your opinion, was the triangular project more expensive than if it was implemented under another format of cooperation (bilateral, South-South, etc.)?

In the absence of detailed financial data and calculation of in-kind contributions about the project, it is impossible to respond to this question in an objective manner. It is however probable that the triangular cooperation in this specific project framework did not yield significant economies of scale and rather generated significant travel and translation costs in comparison with a bilateral approach.

c) Evaluation questions related to sustainability as per triangular cooperation criteria:

- Is sustainability greater or equal with the trilateral methodology than other forms of cooperation? Objective elements of comparison are missing in order to be able to systematically address this question in the context of the project. Taking into account our appraisal of the results' sustainability, we believe that the triangular feature of the project has a low incidence on sustainability and, other things being equal, that a bilateral approach would not have changed this scenario.

d) Evaluation questions related to impact as per triangular cooperation criteria:

52. Do you feel that your institution has learned some knowledge or skill? Can you give a concrete example?

All Tunisian stakeholders and Heilbronn University intervenors stated in their report and declarations that the triangular feature brought valuable perspectives for their work. For the Tunisians, it was particularly enlightening to observe the high level of collaboration and coordination between the Costa Rican tourism sector' stakeholders, including academical ones such as CATIE. Their concern for the environment and sustainability in general and the valorisation of the Costa Rican culture within their tourism offer was especially highlighted. The role of innovative marketing campaigns and certifications in Costa Rica in accessing new market was also highly valued and inspiring. Similarly, the

Tunisians stakeholders well appreciated the knowledge and experience of cultural tourism generated through their visit in Baden-Württemberg. They praised the role of Heilbronn Tourism University in developing applied research and labor capacities. This trip also motivated them to support the idea of a replication of Heilbronn Hospitality Symposium in Tunisia and to promote stronger links between the academical and business communities. While most Heilbronn University students' recommendations still lack concrete and sustained responses, several Tunisians actors consider that their work contributes to the knowledge of the tourism sector and should be referred to in future development's initiatives.

Costa Rican stakeholders expressed similar positive appreciations about the project role in developing skills and knowledges. In addition to Heilbronn University's contribution in paving the way for the formulation of new sustainable tourism products and marketing campaigns, the realisation of its questionnaire analyzing travel habits of Europeans travelling to Costa Rica and their perception of the importance of the sustainability filled a knowledge gap. TouCert involvement also was considered as particularly effective in supporting the obtention of Costa Rican destinations' certification. Its know-how transfer to a local certification body is seen as crucial.

53. The triangular cooperation works on the hypothesis that the results (of institutional strengthening) materialize and that the beneficiary institution is able, after the project, to take these results to a larger scale. Is this hypothesis confirmed? If so, would a higher cost in technical transfers be justified in your opinion if the results actually obtained serve to take them to a larger scale?

Several activities initiated in the context of the project were still ongoing and are continued by the Costa Rican tourism sector stakeholders. This is particularly evident regarding the certification of Sarchí and Sarapiquí destinations as indicated in chapter 4.5 about impacts (completion of TourCert check process, creation of "Sustainability Council", improvement of waste management, etc.). But other activities that had fewer tangible results within the project framework, like the marketing campaign for RETUS or the involvement of CATIE, were also continued and developed in 2019 (new academical collaborations, linkage between RETUS and US academical and philanthropic business-oriented organizations). While the Costa Rican parties are clearly demonstrating capacities and mobilizing own resources to develop the project's interventions, it seems that supplementary external contributions from Germany would still be justified, in particular to promote Costa Rican destinations in Germany.

Some project activities in Tunisia are being followed-up and developed autonomously, although to a lesser extent. An obvious example corresponds to the reiteration of the Tourism Symposium in Cartage and the development of the reflections regarding cultural tourism, concretized through the realization of a summer school on the topic of "Djerba 2030, between beach and culture". This training was organized in cooperation with a technical university, the private sector and the National Patrimonial Institute (*Institut National du Patrimoine*). Such multisectoral collaborations somehow reflect the project approach and are still uncommon in Tunisia. In this country, the major loophole regarding the project's interventions corresponds to the certification issue. A proper continuation and development of the respective process would most probably require significant external support. This is highlighted through the comments made by the Tunisians' stakeholders and the observations of Heilbronn University students, but also in the context of the recent initiative aiming at setting up a "Sustainable Tourism Charter" in Hammamet, with the support of the UK government and the

Association of British Travel Agents. In general, all project interventions in Tunisia (including the Hospitality Symposium that required German support for its last two realizations) would require, and benefit from, significant external medium - long term support to yield sustainable changes.

Articulation and horizontality

One of the key principles of triangular cooperation is “horizontality”, or the capacity to make use of complementary strengths to achieve development results. It is thus closely related to the DAC principle of efficiency and refers to important cooperation processes: Ownership of all partners, monitoring of transaction costs and alignment with national development strategies. Such processes generate some constraints that were not systematically addressed by the project, in particular regarding the Tunisian case. Regarding ownership, additional time would have been required to mobilize Tunisian public sector entities (like the Ministries of Tourism, Culture or Environment and the national tourism office – ONTT) but also to encourage dialogue between the Tunisian private and public sectors (in this matter, GIZ final project report states the “Tunisia is still at the beginning of developing a common vision for the future of the Tunisian tourism industry”). In Costa Rica, more time would also have allowed to remobilize national chambers of tourism CANATUR and CANAECO, whose directors changed during the course of the project and made little contribution to it.

As indicated in OECD toolkit for triangular cooperation, such situations imply higher transaction costs than in the case of bilateral cooperation. This seems to have not been fully anticipated by GIZ when designing the project. Similarly, during the negotiation and planning phase, the beneficiary partner should be in a position to clearly voice its demands, in order to tailor the initiative to its development needs and capacities. While the project appears to be fully congruent with the involved countries’ national strategies and policies, it is probable that more resources would have been required to foster the project’s “co-creation” process called by OECD. In general, we consider that the situations depicted above somehow limited the added value of the project’s triangular partnerships.

Complementarity and innovation

Our understanding of the project as per the documentation and the interview findings points to significant complementarities between the project’s components and the involved parties. Heilbronn University provided valuable academical and technical insights about sustainable tourism for both its academical counterparts in Tunisia and Costa Rica, IHEC and CATIE respectively. These institutions appeared to be not just mere recipients of aid, but effective stakeholders of the initiatives promoted by the project.

In Tunisia, the Hospitality Symposium of 2017 held at IHEC in the context of the project was completed by Future2job, a job fair focusing on tourism and gastronomy. This event was reiterated during the Symposiums of 2018 and 2018 and realized in partnership with the Tunisian - German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK Tunisia), GIZ (in the context of its Tunisian program) and Heilbronn University. Future2job is designed to bring together professionals, job seekers and students. This is an opportunity for job applicants trained at IHEC and the Tunisian “Guidance and Vocational Retraining Centre” (*Centre d’Orientation et de Reconversion Professionnelle – CORP*, an organization supported by GIZ) to brief professionals about their qualifications.

In Costa Rica, the partnership between CATIE and Heilbronn University was initiated in the context of the triangular project in 2016. Ever since, in every year groups of students of Heilbronn University work together with CATIE on several integrated tourism projects. In 2019 a total of five students from Heilbronn traveled to Costa Rica to support CATIE in the design of a conference plan for STAR21, an academic conference on sustainable tourism to be hosted in Costa Rica in 2021.

In October 2017, the certification process as a sustainable travel destination in Sarchí started as a pilot project. For this purpose, the Costa Rican consulting company RBA was trained by the German certification company TourCert so that they can represent them in all of Central America in the future. In Tunisia, preliminary work by TourCert toward sustainable tourism certification was completed by the review of the ecological footprint of two destinations (Tozeur and Djerba) by Harvard University's international sustainable tourism initiative (ISTI).

The triangular project (*Dreieckskooperation* - DEK) activities were carried out in close coordination with the Open Regional Fund (ORF) to promote employment in Tunisia. This enabled to learn from ORF experiences and results and the activities of both DEK and ORF were coordinated and supplemented on the basis of the principle of complementarity. In addition, it was possible to mobilize additional partners and resources specifically for Tunisia that are required for the implementation of the initiatives created by the DEK, such as the valorization of the Roman cultural heritage. In Costa Rica there was also intensive coordination with regard to the overall portfolio. There were references to the content as well as with regard to the counterparts in several projects (e.g. ORF FACILIDAD) and service packages from global projects.

As indicated in chapter 4.1 about the project's relevance, Triangular Cooperation was not a novelty for Costa Rica, Tunisia and Germany as all these countries had previous experiences in this matter. While projects implemented within such framework cover a large array of topics (rural development, environment, health, fisheries, vocational training, public administration, teaching etc.), it appears that sustainable tourism attracted relatively less attention, in general and in particular for GIZ. Until 2013, a survey of OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (2013: 19) mentions only one project in the tourism sector, a cooperation supported by GIZ between Costa Rica, Colombia and Germany in the field of community-based rural tourism (Fordelone, 2009: 23). As a matter of fact, there was no triangular cooperation between Costa Rica, Tunisia and Germany in the field of sustainable tourism before this project. In this sense, the project appears to be quite innovative.

Results

As stipulated in the OECD toolkit for triangular cooperation, "Triangular co-operation projects need results frameworks that include activities, processes, outputs and outcomes, with their related indicators, to measure both the intended development results and other intended benefits generated by the partnership". This approach is not reflected in the project's documentation, to a point that it compromises the evaluability of the intervention as expressed in chapter 2.3 (limitations) and 4.1 (relevance – internal coherence) of the present evaluation.

Chapter 4.3 about effectiveness observes that the project fully achieved three of its five intended results. Yet, typically, the triangular cooperation approach not only aims to yield "products results" but also to generate "partnership results" that include (i) building ownership and trust, (ii) promoting complementarity and increasing co-ordination in development co-operation, (iii) sharing knowledge

and learning jointly, (iv) co-creating solutions and flexibility, (v) enhancing volume, scope and sustainability, and (iv) achieving global and regional development through strengthened partnerships for sustainable development.

The achievement of such results is closely related to the quality of the partnership, which in turn is influenced by various processes. Like in the case of the “project internal coherence”, we consider that the project design process was not sufficiently structured (and documented) and that management and resources limitations issues negatively impacted the way that partners related to each other. For instance, we believe that a more systematic exchange among the partners could have built more ownership and could have led to a more strengthened partnership between Tunisia and Costa Rica.

Gender and Sustainable Development Goals

None of the project documents refer explicitly to gender issues and the SDGs, even though they are underlined in the sustainability problematic and universally relevant, but also considering that the TourCert certification includes the proportion of “women in leadership positions” in its criteria.

Yet, it should be noted that at least one project intervention in Costa Rica was somehow related to gender issue: The marketing and sales strategy for the destination Santa Cruz and Mollejones de Turrialba that involved the “Network of Sustainable Tourism Women Entrepreneur” (RETUS). Nevertheless, we observe in the available project’s documentation, that this involvement did not generate specific thoughts about gender relations in the tourism sector, in particular regarding to entrepreneurship in general.

The absence of reference to the gender problematic is also prevalent in the studies and activities related to Tunisia. We found only one reference about “gender equality” in an annex of Enrique Alvarez Diaz et. al, 2016, indicating some very generic measures that should be implemented, such as to improve women “employment opportunities and working conditions”, to instore “equal payment regardless of gender” or to provide “continuous training”. Heilbronn University students’ reports contain some anecdotal reference to the gender problematic (like the observation that restaurants in rural area are frequented by men only) but they do not further reflect about it.

5. KEY LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A key lesson that can be drawn from the project and its evaluation corresponds with the need to invest significant resources at an early stage to foster participation and appropriation from all triangular parties. Such process would in turn lay the ground for a successful compliance with all DAC and triangular evaluation criteria.

The GIZ project design should include specific baselines (i.e. at target-groups' level), clear and specific indicators to measure the envisioned changes at the individual, collective, and institutional levels, and periodic measurements of progress, probably in conjunction with Government institutions and/or, in the particular case of the tourism sector, with business associations.

In designing triangular cooperation projects, GIZ should ensure that priorities and activities of each of the future project components are based on an assessment of partners' capabilities in that particular sector/area, and on an assessment of realistically achievable change in the area, taking into account the timeframes and resources needed for bringing about the envisioned change. Project design should ensure that it includes appropriate support (training, technical assistance, systems and corresponding budget) to address loopholes, and that targets and expectations are revised to realistically achievable levels (likely downwards) in line with this assessment. Such revision should be well documented in order to insure its coherence with the overall project goal. In terms of resources allocation, GIZ needs to encourage for adequate Government and private resources to be mobilized enabling a smooth and sustainable hand over.

A project's logical framework and/or theory of changes should be elaborated in a systematic manner, in particular with regard to its indicators, means of verifications and key assumptions. It should be fully endorsed by all project stakeholders and revised/amended if needed. Indicators calculation and assumptions should be detailed in an annex. The Project's foreseen Implementation schedule should be added to the documentation and a periodic review should allow to record any major changes and/or delay.

In planning the strategies, activities and targets for a similar project involving Tunisia, GIZ needs to take specific care of the implementation and coordination capacity of the Tunisian institutions and the many technical, organizational and financial constraints that they face. This implies increasing support to partner institutions/services, adjusting targets and expectations to realistically achievable levels and taking into account the time frames needed for bringing about the envisioned change.

GIZ should develop a capacity development strategy and plan for its engagement with key partners in order to avoid ad-hoc short trainings, but also to clarify the project capacity building component, an important factor toward sustainability and impact. The strategy should set measurable targets for the changes that are being targeted at individual, collective, and institutional levels, and should periodically measure progress against these targets. This should include ensuring a capacity baseline is drawn up (i.e. training need assessment) and that it is regularly followed up.

GIZ should ensure that a formal feedback mechanism is in place so that partners can provide information and suggestions on the implementation of the project. This is a requirement in many development programmes that is considered as a good practice and it is instrumental to support internal monitoring and external evaluation.

In general, GIZ should closely stick to the CW methodology throughout the project lifecycle.

For similar projects, we believe that GIZ should stipulate a reporting format and content that is distinct from the project deliverables (several products of Heilbronn University were in fact labeled as “project reports”). Information loopholes could discredit GIZ procedures and competences and may impede a proper and independent identification of possible causes of problems, as well as the lessons learnt. We believe that a well-documented project is also a necessary tool for risk mitigation and, if required, for “damage control”, as it is a substantiation of GIZ responsibility toward the use of public funds. Collection of data needs to be systematized and standardized for regular monitoring of progress, both quantitatively and qualitatively. This will provide more regular feedback on progress and allow the management to take appropriate decisions, as well as to make the required changes to enhance the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the intervention. It will also provide valuable information to GIZ on areas of strength/progress that can feed into the dialogue with partners.

We faced some difficulties in clearly distinguishing the GIZ role in the planning and realization of activities, as most reports were produced by Heilbronn University. In general, activity reporting is unsystematic and rather incomplete. It is not possible to clearly compare the time needed for implementation in itself and in relation to the initial planning. We recommend that GIZ produces its own activity reports, systematically including dates and places of activities, type and number of participants, the means used, as well as immediate quantitative and qualitative results obtained. This form of presentation should be based on standardized planning tools depending on the type of activity and target group. Periodic reports (annual and semi-annual) should distinguish between results obtained during the period covered, from the results “accumulated” from one year to another. Typically, the “accumulated” results should appear on the report's conclusion as a summary, and not mixed in the text. Reports should systematically refer to the Project Logical Framework, particularly its indicators, and mention (in the text and as an annex) all reference documents that support the activities (preliminary technical studies, plans, maps, technical reports, manuals, minutes, agreements, etc.).

Particular attention should be given to ensure that these reference documents mention the author (not only the institution, but also the person) and the date when they were written. A plan of activities to be developed in the following period should be included in the document. The subsequent report should then refer to this chronogram and clearly identify any delays, their causes and consequences.

Finally, project partners should use a commonly agreed template to present their own activities and results. In summary, we recommend documenting systematically and thoroughly all activities, as well as to produce specific summarized reports about such activities. These documents should facilitate the planning, monitoring and reporting of activities.

We found that very few project documents were readily available. Therefore, it seems that the GIZ internal information management system is deficient. Specific attention to the management of information would sustain the GIZ transparency policy, would allow a more efficient monitoring and would facilitate evaluation.

Sustainability of the expected project results should be considered during the project design phase, at an overall level (i.e. the project goal) and according to each project component and levels of sustainability (technical, institutional, organizational, economical, etc.). Any productive or “business

oriented” activities promoted by the project should include a detailed technical and financial viability study. Several project’s interventions and deliverables (in particular marketing campaign and certification) made no cost/financing appraisal at all and we believe that it is a serious flaw toward sustainability

Sustainability of cross-cutting capacity building and awareness measures is difficult to grasp. Still, GIZ should consider how to capitalize its investment in this respect and look at mechanisms that could institutionalize such activities or relay it in the context of existing institutions or programs.

It is clearly not enough to promote know-how transfer, the exchange of information and experiences or to produce “research papers” to generate meaningful and long-lasting impact. In the context of similar triangular projects and in order to strengthen its approach to capacity development, GIZ should systematically involve the stakeholders of the partner countries’ in the elaboration and review of the project deliverables. One could imagine that a systematic involvement of Tunisian and Costa Rican professors and students would significantly improve the impact potential of the researches. In this perspective, we believe that major deliverables should be translated in the language of each involved countries.

Evaluation should not be considered as just a mandatory project component. Evaluation should be considered as a tool for self-assessment and programme/project improvement. Evaluation should thus benefit from proper support by GIZ.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes our overall assessment of the project’s performance in the light of the evaluative analysis, highlights some key lessons for future interventions and provides some recommendations. Our analysis of the various evaluation criteria indicates that the project components were very relevant from a design perspective and that the implementation was generally effective and efficient. The project may have an impact on the beneficiaries, but such appraisal is merely subjective as the sustainability of the project realization is not assured. Overall, we consider that the project partially reached its goal, and our assessment of its performance is positive. Still, we were faced with many limitations in collecting information and data, consequently our assessment is to a certain extent incomplete and might thus be partly subjective.

Relevance: Overall, the project appears to be relevant with regard its context and thematic, but its limitations in terms of design compromise its level of ownership, an important aspect of relevance. In a triangular perspective, the cooperation between the involved countries, in key areas such as certification and marketing, was moderately successful due to the limitation of the Tunisian context.

The project was strongly coherent with the Costa Rican and Tunisian tourism strategic and policy framework. There are in fact numerous correlations between the governments strategies and policies, the project as a whole and at the level of its various components. The project is also very relevant in relation to the specific situation of the tourism sector in Tunisia and Costa Rica.

The project design in terms of logical framework and/or theory of change, geographical coverage, beneficiary selection, management and coordination, risks and assumptions, monitoring and budget is quite rudimentary. In the absence of proper description and articulation of its logical framework and/or theory of change, the project’s internal coherence is relatively weak.

Effectiveness: The project fully achieved three of its five intended results. Therefore, the project can be considered as moderately effective. The project was marked by some delays, significant staff overload and -turnover, as well as some management issues in Tunisia. This contributed to diminish the possible effectiveness of several activities. But the main issues that affected the full realisation of results 3 and 4 are of conceptual (project internal coherence) and contextual natures (limitations of the Tunisian context regarding sustainable tourism certification and the introduction of new marketing campaign focusing on culture). In this perspective, the project effectiveness as per a triangular cooperation approach was moderately successful, as few linkages between Costa Rica and Tunisia were instilled.

Efficiency: As indicated in chapter 4.3, the financial project's data does not allow for a thorough efficiency assessment as they are not allocated to specific activities and outputs. Along the same line, the project documentation does not allow for the reconstruction of the planning and effective implementation calendar. Therefore, we were not in a position to respond to the evaluation questions addressing efficiency in a documented and objective manner and our analysis do not assess the cost/ benefit ratio of activities and results. Yet, considering the project staffing, its organizational and operational structure and its timing of operation, we believe that the project was efficient in the light of DAC's evaluation approach.

Regarding the triangular cooperation, while the project appears to be fully congruent with the involved countries' national strategies and policies, it is probable that more resources would have been required to foster the project's "co-creation" process called by OECD. In general, we consider that this situation somehow limited the added value of the project's triangular partnerships.

Sustainability: The level of sustainability of the project achievements varies significantly. While the certification of Sarchí and Sarapiquí destinations in Costa Rica and the realization of the "Hospitality Symposium" appear to be sustainable at all levels (technical, organizational, institutional and financial), the studies on best practices, marketing and cultural tourism products would require a systemic follow-up and accompaniment measures to yield tangible and sustainable results. There is also a rather low probability that Tunisia and Costa Rica will continue bilateral exchanges and collaborations without the kind of external support provided by GIZ in the context of the project. Therefore, and in general, we consider that the project was moderately sustainable.

Impact: Overall, we consider that the impact of the project was limited. Both the project documentation and the information collected during the interviews do not allow distinguishing significant global changes toward the project goal that can be attributed to its intervention, both intended ones, as well as the unintended ones.

Yet, tangible impacts can be observed at the level of some individual project's components. Certification Sarchí and Sarapiquí destinations in Costa Rica generated positive development at the institutional and environmental levels. While it is too early to distinguish immediate economic and social impacts of the certification, tangible and significant effects occurred in 2019 and positive impacts can be anticipated. In Tunisia, a tangible and significant output of the project corresponded with the realization of the first "Tunisia Hospitality Symposium" in 2017. This event was then reiterated in 2018 and 2019. We consider that the continuation of the symposium in 2018 and 2019 is a direct effect of the initial support provided by GIZ in 2017. Furthermore, the event appears to be

sustainable at all levels (technical, institutional and financial) and the project can be credited to have produced a lasting impact in this matter.

Table 7. Evaluation Results Qualification

	Dimension	Evaluation Criteria	Qualification	Comments
RELEVANCE	Project	Tematical relevance &and design quality	9	Very successful regarding the relevance of its thematic; very unsatisfactory in matter of design.
	Trilateral Cooperation	Relevance for trilateral cooperation	11 Moderately successful	Cooperation between the involved countries moderately successful due to the limitation of the Tunisian context in key areas such as certification and marketing.
EFFICIENCY	Project	Efficiency of the implementation	n/a	We were not in a position to respond to the evaluation questions addressing efficiency in a documented and objective manner and our analysis do not assess the cost/ benefit ratio of activities and results.
	Trilateral Cooperation	Efficiency in trilateral approach and structures		Regarding triangular cooperation, while the project appears to be fully congruent with the involved countries' national strategies and policies, it is probable that more resources would have been required to foster the project's "co-creation" process called by OECD. This situation somehow limited the value added of the project's triangular partnerships.
EFFECTIVENESS	Project	Results Effetiveness	11 Moderately successful	The project fully achieved three of its five intended results. Therefore, the project can be considered as moderately effective.
	Trilateral Cooperation	Effectiveness of the trilateral contribution to the results	11 Moderately successful	The project effectiveness as per a triangular cooperation approach was moderately successful as few linkages between Costa Rica and Tunisia were instilled.
SUSTAINABILITY	Project	Sustainability of processes and results	11 Moderately successful	The level of sustainability of the project achievements varies significantly according to its components.
IMPACT	Project	Impacto del proyecto más allá del logro de sus resultados	8 Moderately successful	Overall, we consider that the impact of the project was limited. The evaluation does not allow distinguishing significant global changes toward the project goal. Yet, tangible impacts can be observed at the level of some individual project's components.
OVERALL EVALUATION	OCDE/CAD Criteria		9,8 Moderately successful	
	Trilateral Processes		11 Moderately successful	
	GENERAL EVALUATION		10,4 Moderately successful	

6. ANNEXES

Annex 1.a - List of informants

Name	Institution	Position	Contact	Country
1. Alexander Rieper	Friedrich Nauman Foundation	Director	Alexander.rieper@fnst.org	Tunisia
2. Amel Djait	Mille-et-une-tunisie	Journalist and founder of a travel magazine	milleetunetunisie@gmail.com	Tunisia
3. Ana Corrales	Foundation and travel agency Horizontes	Coordinator	ana@fundhorizontes.org	Costa Rica
4. Hannia Cordero	ACOT (Asociación Costarricense de Operadores de Turismo)	Executive Director	direccion@acot.co.cr	Costa Rica
5. Anna-Maria Innocenti	GIZ	Development Advisor	Anna-maria.innocenti@giz.de	Tunisia
6. Cherifa Lakhoua	IHEC University of Carthage	THS President		Tunisia
7. Christian Buer	Heilbronn University	Professor	christian.buer@hs-heilbronn.de	Germany
8. Eduardo Villafranca	Grupo RBA/TourCert	CEO	evillafranca@grupo-rba.com	Costa Rica
9. Eliécer E. Vargas-Ortega	CATIE (Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza)	Coordinador Programa Académico de Turismo Sostenible -MIST	Eliecer.VargasOrtega@unt.edu	Costa Rica
10. Fatma Ben Nour	Swisscontact	Chefe de projet operationel	Fatma.bennpour@swisscontact.org	Tunisia
11. Hedil Fares	GIZ	Junior expert	hedil.fares@giz.de	Tunisia
12. Irina Kausch	GIZ	Senior expert		Costa Rica
13. Lotfi Rahmouni	Higher School of Tourism Sidi Dhrif	Director	rahmounilotfi@yahoo.fr	Tunisia
14. Narjes Bouasker	Fédération tunisienne de l'hôtellerie (FTH) / Hotel Menara	Director / owner	hotel.lilas@planet.tn	Tunisia

15. Nidhal Ben Babis	IHEC	Student		Tunisia
16. Pablo Gordienko	Macaw Lodge	Director	pgordienko@macawlodge.com	Costa Rica
17. Saoussen Ben Hamouda	GIZ	Senior Fachexperte GIZ Tunesien-Entwicklungszusammenarbeit	Saussen.ben-hamouda@giz.de	Costa Rica
18. Simone Schnepf	GIZ	Junior consultant	simone.c.schnepf@gmail.com	Costa Rica
19. Skander Zribi	Association of alternative tourism / Guest house Dar Zaghuan	Vice-president / Owner	darzaghuan@gmail.com	Tunisia

Annex 1.b –Agenda

Date	Activity	Location	Informant	
07/11/2019	Skype Interview	N/A	Eduardo Villafranca	Grupo RBA/TourCert
11/11/2019	Skype Interview	N/A	Hannia Cordero	ACOT (Asociación Costarricense de Operadores de Turismo)
16/11/2019	Skype Interview	N/A	Simone Schnepf	GIZ Consultant Costa Rica
22/11/2019	Skype Interview	N/A	Irina Kausch	GIZ
28/11/2019	Travel	Maputo - Doha	N/A	N/A
29/11/2019	Travel	Doha - Tunis	N/A	N/A
30/11/2019	Meeting	Carthage	Christian Buer	Heilbronn University
30/11/2019	Tunisia Hospitality Forum (THF)	Carthage	N/A	N/A
30/11/2019	Meeting (THF)	Carthage	Alexander Rieper	Friedrich Nauman Foundation
30/11/2019	Meeting (THF)	Carthage	Loft Rahmouni	Higher School of Tourism Sidi Dhrif
30/11/2019	Meeting (THF)	Carthage	Fatma Ben Nour	Swisscontact
31/11/2019	Meeting	Carthage	Cherifa Lakhoua	IHEC University of Carthage
31/11/2019	Travel	Carthage - Dar Zaghouan	N/A	N/A
31/11/2019	Meeting, visit	Dar Zaghouan	Skander Zribi	Guest house Dar Zaghouan
31/11/2019	Travel	Dar Zaghouan - Cartage	N/A	N/A
01/12/2019	Travel	Tunis – Hammamet	N/A	N/A
01/12/2019	Meeting	Hammamet	Narjes Bouasker	Fédération tunisienne de l'hôtellerie (FTH) / Hotel Menara
01/12/2019	Travel	Hammamet - Tunis	N/A	N/A

01/12/2019	Meeting	Tunis	Amel Djait	Mille-et-une-tunisie
01/12/2019	Meeting	Tunis	Hedil Fares	GIZ
01/12/2019	Meeting	Tunis	Saoussen Ben Hamouda	GIZ
02/12/2019	Meeting	Tunis	Nidhal Ben Babis	IHEC University of Carthage
02/12/2019	Travel	Tunis – Doha	N/A	N/A
03/12/2019	Travel	Doha - Maputo	N/A	N/A

Annex 2 – Questionnaire

	As per the OCDE/DAC criteria	As per triangular cooperation criteria
Relevance	<p>20. Was any diagnosis made to match the project to the needs of the beneficiary institution? Was the intervention context considered (institutional conditions of the beneficiary entity, policies, resources, political dialogue, etc.)?</p> <p>21. How did the Project originate? How did the beneficiary country participate in the definition of content?</p> <p>22. Was the project design consistent with the logical framework approach (i.e. internal coherence)?</p> <p>23. Were the risks and assumptions fully identified?</p> <p>24. Was the intervention approach adequate? (technical assistance method, tools, training to achieve the objectives)</p> <p>25. Was the budget and its distribution enough and consistent with the planned strategies and activities?</p>	<p>26. Would the project have been potentially different following a classic project approach?</p> <p>27. Has the project mobilized all sectors involved in the subject, at all levels? If not, why?</p> <p>28. Did the solutions / innovations incorporate the local sociocultural aspects in the project (idiosyncrasy, cultural practices, local knowledge, local technologies, etc.)?</p> <p>29. Are the results of the project aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the objective level (beyond the thematic alignment)? Can you give a concrete example?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>30. What factors contributed to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the Project?</p> <p>31. To what extent were the expected outputs and outcomes achieved and how did GIZ contribute toward them?</p> <p>32. What are the enabling and limiting factors that contributed to the achievement of results and what actions need to be taken to overcome any barriers that limit the progress?</p>	

Efficiency	<p>33. What factors contributed to the efficiency or inefficiency of the Project?</p> <p>34. Have there been results (positive / negative) not expected / planned?</p> <p>35. Were resources (economic, human, time, expertise, etc.) allocated to the Project in a timely manner? Is the expected time for execution considered enough? Were there delays?</p>	<p>36. In your opinion, was the triangular project more expensive than if it was implemented under another format of cooperation (bilateral, South-South, etc.)?</p>
Sustainability	<p>37. Has the Project developed a sustainability strategy?</p>	<p>38. Is it possible to confirm or reject the following hypothesis: The sustainability of triangular cooperation results seems to be greater, since it frequently works on very specific (technical or institutional) aspects that arise from the needs of the counterpart institution?</p> <p>39. Is sustainability greater or equal with the trilateral methodology than other forms of cooperation?</p>
Impact	<p>40. Is the Project considered to have the necessary basis to make a significant contribution to broader and longer-term development?</p> <p>41. What were / are the main positive / negative impacts of the Project?</p>	<p>42. Do you feel that your institution has learned some knowledge or skill? Can you give a concrete example?</p> <p>43. The triangular cooperation works on the hypothesis that the results (of institutional strengthening) materialize and that the beneficiary institution is able, after the project, to take these results to a larger scale. Is this hypothesis confirmed? If so, would a higher cost in technical transfers be justified in your opinion if the results actually obtained serve to take them to a larger scale?</p>

Transversal issues	<p>44. Can you mention specific examples of (i) Good practices and (ii) Lessons learned that are worth documenting?</p> <p>45. What are the main challenges for future interventions?</p> <p>46. What have been the main limitations or difficulties that the project management has had to face to manage it?</p> <p>47. Has the Project carried out follow-up and monitoring activities? were regular reports generated?</p>	<p>48. Can you mention strengths and weaknesses of the triangular cooperation approach (in relation to efficiency, effectiveness, planning, coordination, operational management and implementation, monitoring)?</p> <p>49. During the exchange process, did you feel that all parties contributed actively, with the same enthusiasm and dedication? If not, why such contributions and attitudes were not achieved?</p> <p>50. Can you mention a concrete example of the complementarity or innovation (in terms of products or services) obtained as a result of the exchange?</p> <p>51. Is there a database of knowledge and lessons learned during the project (systematization, knowledge management)?</p> <p>52. Was the gender perspective considered? If it is positive, can you explain it with an example? If not, can you explain the reasons?</p>
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Annex 4 – Methodology

The work was guided by the evaluation's Terms of Reference (ToR) as well as the GIZ and OCDE Evaluation Toolkits. A central element was the ECI evaluation questions catalogue, linked to the evaluation criteria. The main points of reference for this evaluation, constituting the logic of the operation were:

- The project rationale;
- The project's objective set out in the project proposal;
- The project's expected outputs;
- The project's implementation practices and operational collaborations;
- The key evaluation questions which address the usual evaluation criteria (appropriateness of the operation, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability), gender considerations, strategic positioning, lessons learned and good practice, as well as internal and external factors that contributed to the results;
- The evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability).

The primary users of this report are GIZ staff, which may should share this information with the stakeholders of this intervention in Tunisia, Costa Rica and Germany for any future project design and decision-making,

Evaluation criteria

According to GIZ evaluation guidelines, the following criteria guided the evaluation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Each criterion was assessed according to several key evaluation questions listed in table 2 further below. This general approach was completed by specific criteria related to the triangular cooperation concept, as detailed in table 1.

Triangular Project Evaluation Criteria:

<p>1) Build ownership and trust</p>	<p>Triangular cooperation can ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase the appropriation of all partners involved; b) Build a level of comfort that leads / contributes to building trust among the partners involved; c) Establish associations that go beyond development cooperation and facilitate exchanges in other areas (for example, in foreign policy, trade or environment).
<p>2) Promote complementarity and increase coordination in development cooperation</p>	<p>Triangular cooperation can ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Make good use of complementary strengths to achieve development results, such as specific experience or access to technology b) Promote greater coordination, complementarity and coherence (the 3C) between development cooperation mechanisms (North-South, South-South, regional and international cooperation)
<p>3) Share knowledge and learn together</p>	<p>Through triangular cooperation, all partners involved can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Share knowledge and practical solutions that take advantage of similarities in national contexts, as well as the best that South-South and North-South cooperation has to offer b) Expand perspectives on different approaches and principles for development cooperation c) Ensure long-term commitment to capacity development, including the roles and capabilities of key partners d) Ensure a long-term commitment to the association e) Provide flexibility and adapt to changing circumstances
<p>4) Joint creation of solutions and flexibility</p>	<p>Through triangular cooperation, all partners involved can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Share knowledge and practical solutions that take advantage of similarities in national contexts, as well as the best that South-South and North-South cooperation has to offer b) Expand perspectives on different approaches and principles for development cooperation c) Ensure long-term commitment to capacity development, including the roles and capabilities of key partners d) Ensure a long-term commitment to the association

	e) Provide flexibility and adapt to changing circumstances
5) Increase volume, scope and sustainability	<p>Triangular cooperation can ...</p> <p>a) Mobilize partners, in-kind resources and financing by increasing the volume and scope of development cooperation projects (for example, creating bridges with countries where one of the partners does not have diplomatic representation, but where the offices are used in multilateral countries, networks and platforms between partners from the South and other partners)</p> <p>b) Encourage the exchange of successful experiences as a result of bilateral cooperation and provide an entry point for the expansion of these projects</p> <p>c) Easily integrate into larger development cooperation programs, where a component of the program can be implemented trilaterally</p>
6) Achieve global and regional development goals through strengthened partnerships for sustainable development	<p>Triangular cooperation can ...</p> <p>a) Contribute to improving the effectiveness of development activities using the combined knowledge, technology, experience and financing of different partners</p> <p>b) Encourage different types of stakeholders to participate, and that they do so effectively in development cooperation, including the private sector, academia, civil society, private philanthropy, parliaments, as well as to regional and local governments</p> <p>c) Contribute to develop a shared understanding of development policy and discuss instruments, tools and criteria</p> <p>d) Contribute to promoting and disseminating good local practices, also worldwide</p> <p>e) Have a key role in enabling the effective achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through the inclusive approaches of the multiple stakeholders in development cooperation</p>

Annex 5 – References

Author		Date	Title	Type	Pages
Institution	Name				
GIZ	N/a	April 2017	Consolidación y fomento - Cooperación triangular Costa Rica – Túnez – Alemania del turismo sostenible	Factsheet	2
GIZ	N/a	11/26/2018	Regionaler Fonds für Dreieckskooperation in Lateinamerika und der Karibik - Abschlussbericht zu einer fondsfinanzierten Einzelmaßnahme	Final report	10
GIZ	N/a	10/6/2016	Closing Workshop of the trip from Tunisia to Costa Rica	Interim report	8
GIZ	Taller de Cierre	6/18/2018	Consolidación y Fomento del Turismo Sostenible - Informe de resultados	Report	7
N/a	N/a	N/a	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTIONS RELATED TO COSTA RICA		2
ICT	N/a	11/30/2015	Propuesta de Proyecto	Proposal	14
HH	Radivoje, Livia Lucena Jelovac	N/a	ANALYSE THE MARKETING CAMPAIGN “VAMOS A TURISTEAR” TO FIND STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (CST 2.0, Blue Flag) WITHIN THE COSTA RICAN POPULATION	Presentation	19
HH	Rachele, C. et al.	7/4/2016	Integrated Tourism Project 2016 - Final project report	Final report	95
HH	N/a	7/4/2019	CONSOLIDATION AND PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN TUNISIA AND COSTA RICA - IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GIZ	Presentation	20
HH	Diaz, A. E. et al.	7/4/2019	For Nature, For Culture, For All	Presentation	38

HH	Ha, M. et al.	7/27/2017	Integrated Tourism Project 2016 - COSTA RICA FINAL PROJECT REPORT	Final report	72
HH	A. Allahverdiyeva et al.	6/23/2017	Conference Minutes - Tunisia and Costa Rica Tourism Projects	Minute	4
HH	Anna Jopp, Sarah Schillinger	7/10/2019	Marketing Concept for STAR21 Conference	Presentation	73
HH	Anna Jopp, Sarah Schillinger	7/1/2019	STAR21 - Marketing Proposal	Proposal	21
HH	A. Allahverdiyeva et al.	N/a	Sustainable Tourism - Subproject Cultural Tourism in Tunisia	Report	39
HH	N/a	2/13/2018	Project plan 2. Tunisia Hospitality Symposium	Plan	3
HH	Buer, C. and Vogker, R.	7/18/2017	Sustainable Beach Tourism in Hammamet	Project report	59
HH	Nguyen L. and Harnischmacher S.	N/a	Sustainable Beach Tourism in Hammamet	Presentation	31
HH	Diaz, A. E. et al.	7/4/2016	Tunisia - Trilateral Sustainable Tourism Project 2016	Report	110
HH	Ha, M. et al.	04-11/05/2017	COSTA RICA -TURRIALBA REGION	Presentation	28
HH	Ovits, M. and Radzanowski, S.	N/a	CONCEPT PRESENTATION FOR THE 2018 TUNISIAN HOSPITALITY SYMPOSIUM	Presentation	27
HH	A. Allahverdiyeva et al.	7/27/2017	Tunisia - Sustainable Cultural Tourism	Project paper	131
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