

## Management Response to the OIOS Evaluation of the International Trade Centre

### Final

18 March 2015

ITC Management is pleased to submit its response to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on its evaluation of ITC. ITC Management welcomes the report and thanks the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS for its assessment of the organisation. Oversight services are invariably very welcome at ITC, as a key vehicle for accountability, learning and transparency, even where, as in this case, an OIOS evaluation comes in the footsteps of another comprehensive evaluation.

In July 2012 ITC's donors decided to carry out a full evaluation of ITC, independent both of ITC management and of OIOS. The terms of reference of this evaluation were agreed in February 2013. The evaluation that followed was exhaustive, wide-ranging and comprehensive. It was carried out in 2013-14. The independent evaluators, a company chosen through a competitive selection process, were managed via an arms-length committee of member country representatives, including donors and beneficiaries. They delivered their report in June 2014. The report was well received by all ITC's stakeholders, and was, by all accounts, including our own, a reasonable, robust, and useful analysis of the progress made in the period 2006-2013. ITC has since crafted a full management response, which was endorsed by its governing body, the Joint Advisory Group, in January 2015.

The OIOS evaluators began their work in mid-2014. ITC has co-operated fully with them and was supportive of their attempt to ensure that their approach added value to the prior evaluation. In essence this was to validate, or otherwise, the findings of the independent evaluation. This was a pragmatic response to a situation created by factors over which they apparently had little control. The team has been very responsive and ITC management has had adequate opportunities to comment on drafts of the report.

Overall ITC management welcomes the final report. It has considered its conclusions and recommendations and is able to accept all five of the recommendations of the report. But it does not do so without a number of caveats, especially regarding Recommendation 2, *'to enhance efforts to strengthen its results orientation, ITC should incrementally adopt a more holistic, data-driven approach to planning and budgeting while still seeking alignment with donor and client priorities'*. These caveats are detailed in the ITC action plan.

Recommendation 2 presents the greatest challenge to ITC because it can be seen as ignoring the practical constraints on a small agency like ITC. Whereas larger agencies with a far wider reach can, and should, invest in thorough, in-depth and universal needs analyses, for a small agency like ITC this is practically very challenging, a view shared by the independent evaluators. Of course ITC can and will take this recommendation on board as a direction in which to move, but it will do so carefully, to make sure that it is complementary to the valuable role it plays as a trusted broker between demand for its services and the funding that is available for them.

This report is a useful tool for emphasising areas for improvement in the future. ITC also views it as a validation of the independent evaluation that preceded it, judging it generally satisfactory in quality and credibility in the areas it covered, having harnessed the best evidence available at the time, and having been sufficiently independent. More importantly, it is also a validation of the direction of travel of the organisation as a whole. ITC is an organisation that has made significant, concrete progress in recent years. As a result ITC is growing and expanding its assistance to SMEs in the developing world to help them internationalise.