

Tetra Tech International Development

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business Long-term Sustainability Study Draft Report

April 2021, v2



Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation

PO 7117

30 April 2021, v2

Tetra Tech International Development Ltd

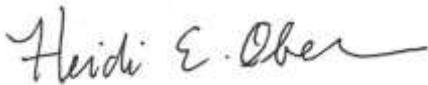
The Malthouse 1 Northfield Road Reading Berkshire RG1 8AH United Kingdom
T (+44) (0) 1189 566 066 F (+44) (0) 1189 576 066 www.tetratecheurope.com
Registered Office: 1 Northfield Road Reading Berkshire RG1 8AH United Kingdom
Registered in England No. 3799145 Vat Number: GB 724 5309 45

This document has been approved for submission by Tetra Tech International Development Project Director, based on a review of satisfactory adherence to our policies on:

- Quality management;
- HSSE and risk management;
- Financial management and Value for Money (VfM);
- Personnel recruitment and management;
- Performance Management and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Heidi Ober

Project Director



Disclaimer

This report is provided on the basis that it is for the use of Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), USAID and DFAT only. Tetra Tech International Development Ltd will not be bound to discuss, explain or reply to queries raised by any agency other than the intended recipients of this report. Tetra Tech International Development Ltd disclaims all liability to any third party who may place reliance on this report and therefore does not assume responsibility for any loss or damage suffered by any such third party in reliance thereon.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Background	1
1.2. Sustainability Study Purpose, Objectives, and Scope	1
1.3. Research Questions	1
1.4. Approach and Methodology	2
1.5. Response Rate.....	3
1.6. Limitations	4
2. Findings.....	5
2.1. Overview of business operations and prototype	5
2.2. The sustainability of SPRING businesses' adolescent girl targeting	5
2.3. The sustainability of SPRING's prototypes	9
2.4. The sustainability of SPRING businesses' implementation of Human Centred Design	14
3. Conclusions and lessons learned	17
3.1. Conclusions	17
3.2. Lessons	17
Annex A – Concept Note.....	A-1
Annex B – Research framework.....	B-1
Annex C – List of businesses interviewed	C-1
Annex D – Interview guide.....	D-3

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AR	Annual Review
BOP	Business Operation Forms
BPE	Business Performance Evaluation
CM	Country Managers
DFID	Department of International Development
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EP	Evaluation Partner
FCDO	UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HCD	Human-centred design
IP	Implementing Partner
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
PDF	Prototype Development Funding
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VfM	Value for Money

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents Tetra Tech International Development's findings, conclusions and lessons learned from the SPRING business sustainability study. Tetra Tech International Development is the independent monitoring and evaluation partner for the SPRING Programme.

SPRING ran from July 2014 to September 2019 and was funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office¹ (FCDO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), The Nike Foundation and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

SPRING supported 75 businesses in nine countries in South Asia and East Africa to transform the lives of adolescent girls by working with businesses to develop products and services that would help girls stay safe, learn, earn, and save, and improve their wellbeing. Specifically, the programme provided mentoring support, limited financial support for the development of prototypes, and expertise in business growth, design, innovation, and marketing to help drive their business models forward.

Aim and method

This sustainability study aims to respond to the overarching research question "*do businesses continue to target adolescent girls beyond the accelerator's lifetime?*"² and has been guided by four sub-questions:

1. To what extent do businesses still target girls?
2. What incentives do businesses have to remain committed to girl-focused solutions in the long-run?
3. To what extent are businesses still operating their SPRING-related products, services, or business models up to four years after graduating?
4. To what extent are businesses still using HCD principles?

To respond to these questions, the study completed four key steps:

- Key informant interviews with 52 businesses that participated in SPRING.
- Primary and secondary-level coding and analysis of interview transcripts using Dedoose software
- Presentation of emerging findings to the FCDO and USAID in April 2021.
- Report drafting, including revisions based on donor feedback.

Conclusions

1. The 51 operational SPRING businesses interviewed are continuing to reach and target adolescent girls one to four years after their participation in the programme. There is anecdotal evidence that some businesses have taken this a step further and have started to make more sustained changes to mainstream girls and women into their businesses both as customers and employees.
2. The barriers to adolescent girls' access identified in [Tetra Tech's 'Business Performance Evaluation' report](#) have continued beyond the SPRING programme and have been exacerbated by Covid-19.
3. Adolescent girl targeting is most often driven by altruism and a business's desire to contribute to social impact. This aligns with our findings from the Business Performance Evaluation.
4. SPRING prototypes have largely proven commercially sustainable. However, many businesses are achieving growth by supporting their adolescent girl-targeted prototypes with products that target a broader audience.
5. SPRING businesses proved agile in responding to Covid-19.
6. The HCD method has remained relevant and useful to SPRING businesses. HCD has been useful in helping businesses to navigate the changing context created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

¹ Prior to September 2021, The SPRING programme was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID)

² In this study, we refer to targeting of adolescent girls as the development of services and products with the specific intention of reaching adolescent girls, or the intentional recruitment/integration of adolescent girls into the value chain of the business.

1. Introduction

This report presents Tetra Tech International Development's findings, conclusions and lessons learned from the SPRING business long-term sustainability study. This section provides the background to the study and its purpose, objectives, and scope before providing an overview of the research questions that guided the study and the methods used to answer them. Section 2 then presents the study's findings. Section 3 summarises the conclusions and lessons learned regarding SPRING's sustainability. This report is supplemented by four annexes: the concept note for the study, the research framework, the interview guide, and the list of businesses interviewed.

1.1. Background

SPRING was a five-year programme funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office³ (FCDO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Nike Foundation co-funded the programme until February 2018, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade co-funded the programme from 2018 to date. SPRING aimed to transform the lives of adolescent girls by working with businesses to develop products and services which would help girls stay safe, learn, earn, and save, and improve their wellbeing. SPRING identified businesses that it thought could improve the lives of girls and provided mentoring support, limited financial support for the development of prototypes, and expertise in business growth, design, innovation, and marketing to help drive their business models forward.

The SPRING programme ran from July 2014 to September 2019. It supported 75 businesses across East Africa (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda) and South Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Myanmar).

Tetra Tech International Development (formerly Coffey; hereafter Tetra Tech) is the independent monitoring and evaluation partner for the SPRING programme.

1.2. Sustainability Study Purpose, Objectives, and Scope

In December 2020, Tetra Tech agreed the purpose, objectives and scope of this study as submitted in a concept note to the FCDO. This concept note is provided in [Annex A](#). The purpose of this study is to contribute to our understanding of the sustainability of the SPRING businesses and their prototypes.

In doing so, the study has three **objectives**. To understand the extent to which:

- i. businesses are still operating;
- ii. businesses are operating their SPRING prototype and are reaching or targeting adolescent girls; and
- iii. the Covid-19 pandemic has affected SPRING businesses' operations and targeting of adolescent girls.

The **scope** was limited to businesses that had received either grant support or prototype development funding and therefore had received direct financial support from SPRING. Sixty-six businesses were invited to participate in the study from all four SPRING cohorts.

1.3. Research Questions

This sustainability study aims to respond to the overarching research question "*do businesses continue to target adolescent girls beyond the accelerator's lifetime?*". In this study, we refer to targeting of adolescent girls as the development of services and products with the specific intention of reaching adolescent girls, or the intentional recruitment/integration of adolescent girls into the value chain of the business. The answer to this overarching question has been guided by four sub-questions:

- i. To what extent do businesses still target girls?
- ii. What incentives do businesses have to remain committed to girl-focused solutions in the long-run?
- iii. To what extent are businesses still operating their SPRING-related products, services, or business models up to four years after graduating?

³ Prior to September 2021, The SPRING programme was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID)

iv. To what extent are businesses still using HCD principles?

These research questions were adapted from Tetra Tech's evaluation framework to reflect the focus of the long-term sustainability research. The first two research questions scrutinise the sustainability of SPRING businesses' adolescent girl targeting and are therefore answered in [Section 2.2](#) of this report, which presents the study's findings regarding SPRING's sustainability in relation to adolescent girls.

The third question scrutinises the sustainability of the SPRING prototypes more broadly, and the findings against this question are presented in [Section 2.3](#).

The final research question interrogates the extent to which SPRING's human-centred design approach has continued to be used by the businesses and presents these responses in [Section 2.4](#).

The Covid-19 pandemic has influenced all three areas examined by this study and as such findings related to the influence of Covid-19 are integrated into the sections named above.

The research framework with detailed assessment criteria was submitted with the concept note and is provided in [Annex B](#) of this report.

1.4. Approach and Methodology

This study undertook a qualitative approach and reports primary data collected through key informant interviews with businesses that had received financial support to develop a prototype through SPRING. This included businesses that received grant support in Cohort 1 and prototype development funding (PDF) in Cohorts 2-4, had completed the SPRING accelerator and had not already notified us that that it had closed operations. In total, 66 businesses were invited to participate, and 52 businesses were included in the study. 51 of these businesses were still operational, and one had closed since the end of the SPRING programme⁴

The study followed an eight-step process:

- **Development of data collection tools**
 - Interview guides were developed that focused on the high-level lessons from SPRING and designed to align to the four research questions outlined above. The interview guide is provided in [Annex D](#).
- **Desk-based preparation prior to interview, which included:**
 - **Review of previous KPI and Business Operations data, and previous sustainability study transcripts** or reports where relevant. These were reviewed by the interviewer prior to the key informant interview. This process provided background context for the interview and informed the prioritisation of interview questions and probes during the interview.
 - **Engagement with SPRING country managers.** The sustainability study team contracted and engaged the SPRING country managers during the scheduling phase to understand their perspective of the businesses' trajectories since the end of spring.
 - **Online search** of each business. Prior to each interview, the interviewer conducted a search for the business to review any more recent updates and gain relevant insights into the businesses operations and updates including news on any recent investment, business expansion, or new related to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Planning and scheduling**
 - **Engagement with SPRING country managers.** The team engaged with the SPRING country managers to facilitate with scheduling. They also used their personal connections with SPRING businesses to encourage their participation.
 - **Invitations were sent to 66 SPRING businesses** requesting their participation in the interview and asking them to share any relevant KPI and business operations data. The invitation combined the request

⁴ Four businesses declined to be interviewed because they were no longer operating. Three businesses never responded to the invitation to participate, and eight businesses confirmed that they are still operating, but declined to be interviewed. Of the eight operational businesses that were not interviewed, four agreed to participate in the study but then did not respond to follow up emails, two Myanmar based business were unable to be interviewed because of the current political instability, and two businesses declined to be interviewed.

for sustainability interviews with the offer for further technical training, to encourage businesses to engage with this study.

- **Conducting interviews**
 - We conducted key informant interviews with 52 of the 66 businesses contacted. Responses and limitations to these are discussed in [Sections 1.5](#) and [1.6](#) below.
- **Coding transcripts**
 - The interview transcripts were coded blind to reduce confirmation bias using Dedoose coding software. They went through two levels – primary and secondary – of coding.
- **Data analysis**
 - Anonymised coded excerpts were analysed and organised in analytical frameworks according to the assessment criteria under each question (see research framework in [Annex B](#)). The team then underwent a two-stage peer-review process. In the first stage, the study lead reviewed the team's emerging findings; the team then held an internal analysis workshop with the SPRING monitoring and evaluation team leader and project director, who reviewed, and quality assured the draft findings.
- **Presentation of emerging findings**
 - Draft findings were then presented to FCDO and USAID on April 15th, 2021. Feedback from this meeting has been incorporated into this report.
- **Report drafting**
 - This report presents our anonymised findings, conclusions, and lessons. Businesses are referenced by their unique identifiers throughout.

1.5. Response Rate

We conducted interviews with 52 out of 66 businesses invited to participate, with a 79% response rate. [Tables 1](#) and [2](#) below show the total number of businesses interviewed in each cohort and impact pillar. These tables show that all cohorts and impact pillars are well represented through our data collection.

Cohort	Businesses interviewed	Total businesses	Response rate (%)
Cohort 1	12	18	67%
Cohort 2	14	14	100%
Cohort 3	11	15	73%
Cohort 4	15	19	79%
Total	52	66	79%

Table 1: the number of businesses interviewed by cohort

Impact pillar	Businesses interviewed	Total businesses	response rate (%)
Earn	15	16	94%
Learn	12	16	75%
Save	2	3	67%
Stay Healthy	19	25	76%
Stay Safe	4	4	100%
Total	52	66	79%

Table 2: the number of businesses interviewed by impact pillar.

Business themes across the study

Responses from Cohort 1 are slightly skewed towards 'earn' businesses, as 86% of 'earn' businesses in Cohort 1 were interviewed compared to 50-57% coverage across the other three impact pillars in Cohort 1.⁵ 'Stay healthy' businesses are slightly skewed towards Cohort 2, where all 'stay healthy' businesses were interviewed compared to 57% of 'stay healthy' businesses in Cohorts 1 and 3 and 67% in Cohort 4. [Annex C](#) provides a full breakdown of businesses interviewed in each cohort and impact pillar.

⁵ Learn, save, and stay healthy.

1.6. Limitations

The study relies on self-reported data provided by businesses during interviews. It was beyond the scope of the study to independently verify business' inputs and reporting. It also provides a snapshot of businesses as of February 2021, but in the absence of baseline data or comparison group cannot isolate the effect of the programme on these findings.

A comprehensive analysis of business performance was not possible as very few businesses are still recording sales data for their prototypes and were willing to share it with the team. Therefore, the analysis of business prototype performance is limited to the qualitative description of prototype performance reported during the key informant interviews rather than a more thorough longitudinal analysis of KPI data.

Businesses from Cohort 1 and especially Cohort 1 businesses in Uganda are under-represented compared to businesses from other cohorts and countries. Additionally, the current political instability in Myanmar may also have affected responses from Myanmar businesses in the study. Interviews were conducted with three out of five businesses from Myanmar.

There is a risk of sampling bias as the businesses are a self-selecting sample and businesses that have performed well may have been more likely to agree to participate in the study. However, this was mitigated by pro-active follow up by the country managers and the final response rate of 79% provides a positive indication the risk of sampling bias is low.

There is also a risk of social desirability bias as all the businesses interviewed had previously received financial support from the SPRING programme and so could potentially respond to questions with the potential of future funding in mind. This was mitigated by the involvement of SPRING country managers in the scheduling phase, who have established relationships with the businesses. The country managers explicitly explained the role of Tetra Tech as the evaluation partner and that this study was not linked to any potential funding. This was reiterated as part of the informed consent process at the beginning of each interview.

In 11 cases⁶, we interviewed a member of staff who had joined the business since the end of the SPRING programme. This issue was identified and discussed at the beginning of the interview, and questions asked prioritised and/or eliminated accordingly. But having a new staff member to the business meant that they required more explanation as to the SPRING programme and their unfamiliarity may have influenced answers.

Lastly, all interviews were conducted remotely, which can lower the quality of the discussion due to difficulties in building rapport and interruptions to the conversation because of background noise or connectivity issues. Remote data collection also reduces the interviewer's ability to read visual or nonverbal cues, behaviour, and body language.

⁶ B42, B19, B71, B12, B17, B18, B11, B32, B6, B13, B41

2. Findings

In this section we present the findings from the study.

2.1. Overview of Business Operations and Prototype

Finding 1: 59 SPRING businesses that received financial support to develop a prototype through SPRING are still operating in 2021 and 46 are still operating their SPRING prototypes in some form.⁷

We conducted interviews with 51 businesses that are still operational and one business that had closed down operations.

Of the 51 operational businesses, 46 businesses reported that their SPRING prototype was operational, whilst four businesses had discontinued their prototypes. The four businesses that had discontinued their prototypes all did so because they reported that the prototype was not profitable. Three of the 46 businesses reporting operational prototypes had temporarily paused their prototypes due to difficulties operating them in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, (See Figure 1).

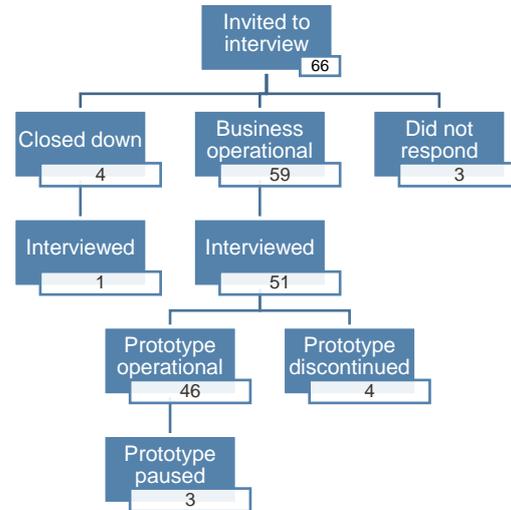


Figure 1 : diagram showing the number of businesses contacted that are operational, and the number of businesses that had continued to operate their SPRING prototypes

2.2. The Sustainability of SPRING Businesses' Adolescent Girl Targeting

This sub-section presents the EP's findings against two research questions of this sustainability study:

- i. To what extent do businesses still target girls?
- ii. What incentives do businesses have to remain committed to girl-focused solutions in the long-run?

In response to the first question, the findings reflect SPRING businesses' targeting of adolescent girls one to four years after they received accelerator support. These findings report the different ways in which the businesses are currently reaching girls and the reasons why some businesses have not continued to target girls.

The second set of findings relate to businesses' commitment to girl-focused solutions in the long-term, and specifically looks at:

- The extent to which the Covid-19 pandemic has affected business' ability to or interest in reaching adolescent girls,
- The incentives for businesses to continue reaching or targeting adolescent girls,
- The extent to which SPRING businesses have integrated girl-focused approaches or behaviours into their wider business beyond their prototypes.

⁷ These numbers are minimum values, as some of the businesses that did not respond to our interview request may be operational, and some businesses that are operational but were not available for interview may have continued operating their prototypes.

Finding 2: All the operational businesses interviewed are reaching adolescent girls, and 65% of businesses specifically target adolescent girls through their product or service.

All 51 operational businesses that we interviewed⁸ are, directly or indirectly, reaching adolescent girls through their products and services. This includes the seven businesses who are not currently operating their SPRING prototypes. 33 businesses are also currently deliberately targeting girls as a core target market.

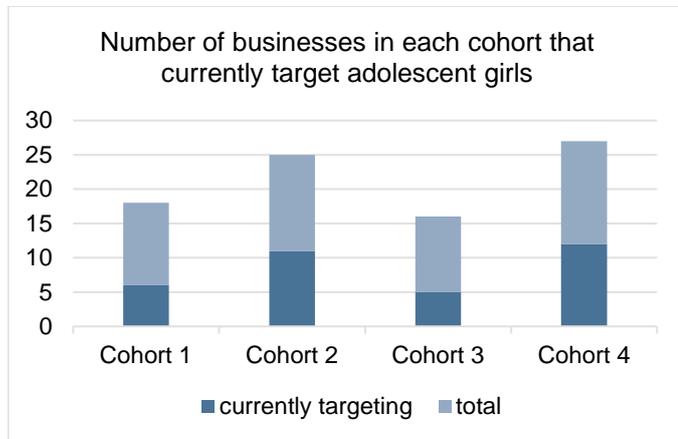


Figure 2: the proportion of businesses in each cohort that are currently targeting adolescent girls

Figure 2 shows that more South Asian businesses are deliberately targeting adolescent girls compared to East African businesses. Specifically, 79% of South Asian businesses (Cohorts 2 and 4) currently target girls compared to 48% of East African businesses interviewed. The South Asian businesses that target girls are evenly distributed across impact pillars, whereas nine of the 11 East African businesses that target girls are 'earn' or 'learn' businesses. This equates to 45% of 'earn' and 36% 'learn' businesses in East Africa targeting girls, which is still significantly below the reported rate of businesses targeting adolescent girls in South Asia.

It is beyond the scope of this study to suggest a causal relationship for this trend.

Businesses that are deliberately targeting girls are doing so either by including them in their value chain, for example by recruiting them as agents⁹ or upskilling them to be a network of entrepreneurs¹⁰ or targeting them as end users.¹¹ In contrast, the 18 businesses that are reaching but not targeting adolescent girls are doing so either:

- **directly** but not specifically, for example because adolescent girls make up a sub-set of their target market, as in the case for some 'learn' businesses that reach adolescent girls through their educational application/online learning models that target both girls and boys as a broader audience.¹²; or
- **indirectly**, for example by targeting households, schools or 'the community' in a given area, with no specific targeting by age or gender.¹³

Finding 3: 35% interviewed SPRING businesses are reaching more adolescent girls now compared to when they participated in the SPRING programme.

Of the 18 businesses that have increased their adolescent girl reach, 15 businesses currently *target* adolescent girls.¹⁴ Five of these directly attributed their increase in adolescent girl reach to their efforts in targeting girls – such as girl-focused marketing or community outreach.

Five businesses reported that they reach more adolescent girls now because of general business growth since the end of SPRING.

'Stay healthy' businesses were most likely to have increased their girl reach, with 52% of businesses in this pillar reporting that they had increased their reach in girls. This aligns with

Findings 9 and 7, which show that 'stay healthy' businesses have increased their sales more generally and that they are driven by having a positive social impact on adolescent girls, which is a key determinant of adolescent girl targeting.

"with this growth [expansion to 175 Mamapreneurs] we are reaching more girls - teenage moms are able to have high quality, affordable early child education for their child. Girl siblings are relieved of caregiving and are able to attend school or pursue other opportunities." (Kidogo)

⁸ For this analysis, we excluded responses from NexSource Uhealth as the only business that we interviewed that was no longer operational, and therefore no longer targeting nor reaching adolescent girls.

⁹ For example, B55.

¹⁰ For example, B4

¹¹ For example, B66

¹² For example, B78.

¹³ For example, B1, B80

¹⁴ B12, B80, B1, B5, B69, B77, B93, B22, B76, B81, B78, B75, B55, B20, B41

Finding 4: The 18 businesses that are not currently targeting adolescent girls cited legal barriers and business profitability as the main reasons for not doing so.

Of the 18 businesses that are not currently targeting adolescent girls¹⁵, eight¹⁶ have not targeted adolescent girls since the end of SPRING. The other 10 businesses reported that they had initially targeted adolescent girls but had since broadened their target market.¹⁷

The primary drivers for not targeting adolescent girls are:

Legal barriers/requirements: Four businesses¹⁸ that either employed girls or required girls' identification stated that they were unable to target adolescent girls under the age of 18 given that they were not eligible for certain requirements such as citizenship cards/ID cards/government verification.

Business profitability: Four businesses¹⁹ discussed business profitability, especially as small businesses, as a reason for not targeting adolescent girls. These businesses explained that they needed to establish themselves before explicitly targeting a certain demographic, otherwise they would incur losses. Similarly, these businesses stated that they did not have the requisite funding or financial stability to only focus only on adolescent girls, and that for business profitability they must focus on other target groups as well.

Change in target audience: Two businesses referenced a change in their target audience – one of which was due to an expansion of their target market²⁰ and the other which changed their direct customer from adolescent girls to the government.²¹

Four businesses that are not currently targeting adolescent girls reported that they intended to do so in the future, once these barriers had been removed.²²

Finding 5: The Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for businesses to reach adolescent girls. The pandemic has both created new barriers to girl reach and exacerbated existing challenges to reaching girls.

18 businesses reported that the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult to reach adolescent girls. The most commonly mentioned challenges businesses have faced in reaching girls during Covid-19 include:

“Yes, because girls were out of school, and it was difficult to reach them at home...it has been difficult training girls remotely because we need parental consent, which is challenging when they are no longer at school” (Resonate)

Inability to reach in-school girls. Seven²³ businesses mentioned that due to schools shutting down during 'lockdowns', they were unable to reach in-school girls, which has impeded their reach.

Inability to do outreach. Due to travel restrictions/limited mobility during 'lockdown' periods, four²⁴ businesses were not able to do community or girl outreach. As such, these businesses found it more challenging to reach adolescent girls.

In addition, businesses reported that the pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges to reaching adolescent girls previously reported in the Business Performance Evaluation report. This included reaching girls online where businesses had previously provided face-to-face services but had pivoted to remote working because of the pandemic. This was especially the case in rural communities where girls are less likely to have access to technology or money. Businesses also reported additional barriers to reaching girls through their new gatekeepers. Due to schools being closed, businesses that had previously had direct

“In lockdown it was hard as girls do not have a phone – family has phone, and this is kept by the man...Everyone is saying to digitise the training, but [adolescent girls] don't have a phone or tablet” (KadAfrica)

¹⁵ B3, B26, B32, B49, B53, B11, B92, B18, B15, B59, B21, B31, B42, B28, B84, B17, B57, B27

¹⁶ B11, B32, B49, B53, B59, B18, B3, B31

¹⁷ B28, B92, B15, B21, B42, B26, B84, B17, B57, B27

¹⁸ B27, B15, B28, B17

¹⁹ B26, B42, B15, B18

²⁰ B84

²¹ B21

²² B17, B57, B59, B15

²³ B86, B91, B93, B19, B77, B22, B55, B1

²⁴ B76, B80, B55, B14

contact with girls at school, now had to engage girls through their parents or caregivers, who were not always supportive.

One needs-led businesses made the decision to deliberately move away from adolescent girl targeting during the pandemic, citing the increased needs of the general population as a reason for broadening out their target market to the most vulnerable in society rather than specifically adolescent girls.²⁵

Finding 6: Businesses have continued to reach girls through gatekeepers, community outreach and digital marketing.

This shows that businesses have continued to use the same mechanisms to reach adolescent girls as reported in the Business Performance Evaluation. They are:



Digital marketing. Businesses reach adolescent girls through social media, such as Facebook/YouTube, or a digital application. Due to Covid-19, most businesses had to switch to using online mechanisms such as digital marketing. Three businesses mentioned that while they primarily rely on digital mechanisms, they also have 'in-person' mechanisms in place for those who do not have access to technology.



Gatekeepers. Businesses target and reach adolescent girls through gatekeepers, such as parents, schools, older siblings, community mobilisers or partner organisations/'change-agents'.



Community outreach. Businesses have outreach teams or partner with organisations to conduct door-to-door engagement. Other forms of outreach include through community centres/religious gatherings (i.e., temples, mosques, churches) or other networks such as women's groups/word-of-mouth referrals.

Finding 7: The primary driver for SPRING businesses continuing to reach and target adolescent girls is the anticipated social benefit to girls. Business incentives and financial benefits to adolescent girls were also commonly reported as incentives for girl reach and targeting.

19 businesses²⁶ reported that social impact was their most important driver for targeting girls. As expected, 'stay healthy', 'learn' and 'earn' businesses reported that they are driven by the improvement of adolescent girls' health, education and economic empowerment outcomes. Businesses also wanted to:

- **Change community perceptions about girls' social and economic empowerment.** Eight businesses mentioned changing community or society perceptions about girls' social and economic empowerment as their primary incentive.²⁷
- **Increasing girls' self-esteem/self-confidence.** Five businesses discussed their passion for improving girls' self-perceptions through their products or services.²⁸

“women are always marginalised... so [we] want to encourage their participation and more empowerment for them and more access to knowledge and finance to demand what they need and fight for their rights”. (Shreenager Agro Farms)

Nine businesses in South Asia and three businesses in East Africa reported that they reach or target adolescent girls to reap business benefits. Business incentives for targeting adolescent girls included:

- **To secure funding:** Five businesses reported that they maintained a girl-focus in order to attract external funding because foundations, development agencies and donors often award grants to enterprises that have experience working with girls.²⁹ Therefore, targeting girls helps with securing such grants or external financial support.
- **A large target market:** This was reported by four businesses in South Asia.³⁰ For instance, one business in Bangladesh explained that there are approximately 45 million adolescent girls and boys in the country, and therefore huge potential for growth and scale.³¹
- **Long-term benefits:** Six businesses stated the longer-term return on investment of adolescent girls. Four businesses, particularly those involved in agriculture/food related this to the role that these girls could one

²⁵ B92

²⁶ B55, B2, B75, B20, B69, B77, B1, B4, B71, B13, B78, B9, B92, B5, B7, B6, B81, B66, B93

²⁷ B4, B13, B6, B7, B75, B20, B5, B66

²⁸ B5, B6, B81, B9, B77

²⁹ B6, B93, B1, B69, B55

³⁰ B55, B90, B7, B10

³¹ B55

day plan in the sector including to help to balance out male-dominated industries. Two businesses described instead how investing in girls can help the businesses longer-term sustainability. They said if the girls continue using their products or services into adulthood, they may also tell other family members or new generations to do so.

- **Assurance of high-quality work.** Two businesses mentioned that they work with girls because they tend to be trustworthy, hard-working, and eager to learn entrepreneurial skills.³²

“for business, then one of the benefits that we get from using the girls is that the quality of the data and the data is more accurate”. (Rooster Logic)

Finding 8: 18 SPRING businesses reported interest and focus on girls that has extended beyond their SPRING prototype.³³ These businesses have mainstreamed ‘girl-sensitive’ approaches, and eight have demonstrated repeated ‘girl-focused’ behaviour since the end of the SPRING programme.

We do not find a significant trend by cohort, region, or impact pillar, and further, the possibility of social desirability bias limits the confidence with which we present these findings. The two overarching behaviours we observe are:

Increased awareness of women and girls. 13 businesses³⁴ stated because of SPRING, or due to the gender-related workshops with SPRING, their understanding about the importance of gender considerations has increased. As such, these businesses self-reported being more conscious of the potential roles that women and girls might play with in the business value chain. Examples of this in practice include businesses focusing on gender parity within their own teams, striving to bring more women and girls into their sectors of operation (i.e., manufacturing), and considering how girls/women continue to benefit from their products and services.

“The girl-centric part stayed with us and we’ve continued it too. We try to think of girls before we develop anything.” (Dot and Line)

“SPRING’s focus was adolescents, but it helped [us] to realise [our] gender imbalance issue – so it introduced the idea of the gender lens” (Drinkwell)”

Gender lens in product development. 12 businesses said that they apply a gender lens when developing products. This includes tailoring training material to be more focused or targeted to suit adolescent girls’ varying literacies, as well as mainstreaming gender-sensitive content. For example, two ‘learn’ businesses demonstrate this in practice by challenging gender stereotypes through their portrayal of girls and boys in their content (see quotes above and left).

2.3. The Sustainability of SPRING’s Prototypes

This section presents the study’s findings in response to the research question: “to what extent are businesses still operating their SPRING-related products, services, or business models up to four years after graduating?”.

As noted in Finding 1 in Section 2.1 of this report, 46 businesses reported that their SPRING prototype was operational. This section discusses the extent to which the businesses have adapted, scaled, or discontinued their SPRING-related products, services and business models and the reasons for these changes. It then examines the influences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the SPRING prototypes.

Finding 9: 57% of SPRING businesses that continued to operate their SPRING prototypes reported an increase in prototype sales since the end of the SPRING programme.

26 businesses reported a sales increase since their participation in the SPRING programme.³⁵

³² B2, B76

³³ This also includes one business that has currently closed but had reported mainstreaming girl-focused approaches since the end of the SPRING programme.

³⁴ This was not a specific evaluation question. These businesses organically mentioned this when reflecting on their engagement with SPRING. The actual impact of SPRING on business’ gender awareness could be significantly higher.

³⁵ As noted in the limitations section of this report, this is self-reported data and is based on the responses of businesses during interview, rather than a systematic analysis of KPI data against baseline as there was not enough KPI data shared with the study team to make this possible.

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business Long-term Sustainability Study Draft Report v2

Sales increases were reported evenly across cohorts, with 40-57% of businesses in each cohort reporting a sales increase since the end of the programme. However, there was much greater disparity in businesses across impact pillars. For the impact pillar / cohort combinations, where less than 50% of businesses reported an increase in sales,

	earn	learn	save	stay healthy	stay safe	Total by cohort
Cohort 1	67%	100%	100%	25%	n/a	50%
Cohort 2	50%	100%	100%	86%	100%	57%
Cohort 3	33%	33%	n/a	75%	100%	55%
Cohort 4	100%	57%	n/a	75%	0%	40%
Total by pillar	47%	50%	100%	68%	50%	50%

Table 3: shows the percentage of respondents in each cohort and impact pillar that reported an increase in sales.

this was due to prototypes being discontinued for Cohort 1 'stay healthy' businesses, and for delays and challenges in reaching a critical mass for the 'earn' and 'learn' businesses in Cohort 3 and the 'stay safe' businesses in Cohort 4³⁶ that have also been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic (see Finding 5).

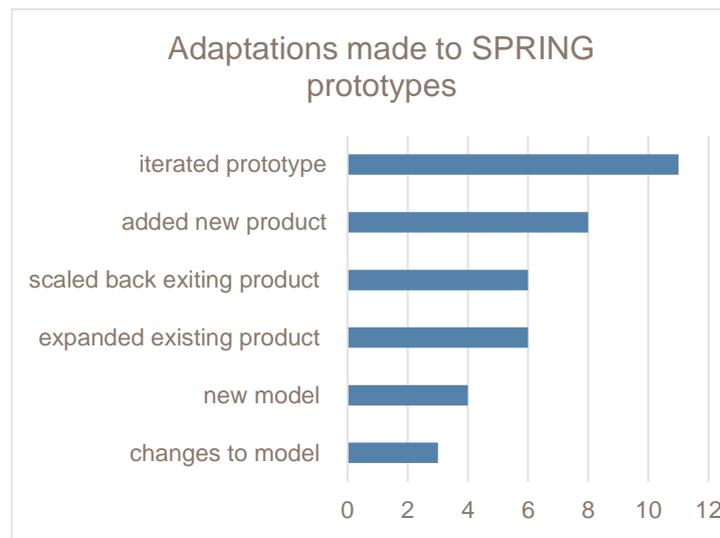
Nine businesses reported a decrease in sales of their prototype since the end of SPRING and these

are evenly spread across Cohorts 1,3 and 4, although many more businesses reported a decrease in sales within the last year, attributing this to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is detailed in the Finding 13, below.

³⁶ B69, B11, B76, B19

Finding 10: 76% of businesses that are still operating their SPRING prototypes have adapted their prototype since the end of the programme.

Out of the 46 businesses that are operating their SPRING prototypes, reported making changes to their since the end of SPRING. The most adaptations that businesses have their prototypes are show in Figure 3 Some businesses reported that they more than one of these adaptations to prototypes. The most reported was to have made multiple iterations prototype, and this was reported by 11 businesses. Reports of iteration were prevalent for businesses with that included websites or mobile applications, and these were usually customer feedback with the aim of customer experience.



currently 35 prototype reported made to (right). had made their adaptation to the especially prototypes driven by improving

Appealing to new audiences and scaling is the primary driver for prototypes, specifically for adding new or expanding existing product. Six businesses also scaled back their prototypes to try and reach more customers.³⁷ Whilst the primary driver behind this was to reduce costs to facilitate scaling, two businesses reported that they chose to scale back their product to make it more accessible by being less technologically advanced. This then allowed the app to be accessed from a larger range of – cheaper – mobile devices.³⁸

Figure 3: graph showing the frequency of different ways that SPRING businesses adapted their prototypes since the end of the programme.

facilitating adapting products,

More substantive changes, such as the seven businesses that changed their business model or moved to an entirely new business model, were driven by the need to boost profitability in order for the prototype to be commercially sustainable.

The most common adaptation to businesses' prototypes in response to Covid-19 was to introduce or bolster their remote working and online services, such as introducing e-commerce platforms³⁹, or moving to online training platforms.⁴⁰

Finding 11: 27 out of 51 SPRING businesses had scaled their prototypes since the end of programme support. This has consistently included expansion into areas where adolescent girls will continue to be reached but driven by access to new markets.

Of the 27 businesses that scaled their prototypes, 16 had done so by expanding geographically.²¹ Most often this included domestic expansion into new districts or provinces⁴¹, although seven business have also scaled into neighbouring countries⁴² or internationally.⁴³

In addition, 11 businesses had penetrated new markets with their prototypes. This was commonly as a result of adaptations made to their prototype to make it more attractive to a broader audience (see Finding 10, above) or was credited to either changes in consumer behaviour or circumstance opening up a new segment of the market to the prototype. For example, one business explained how their prototype had exclusively targeted urban girls during their participation in the SPRING programme, but how in the years since mobile phones mobile phone access in adolescent girls had risen by 30% in Pakistan and as such has become more prevalent in peri-urban centres. As a result, they are now reaching adolescent girl end-users in peri-urban centres.⁴⁴

³⁷ B11, B71, B77, B28, B57, B9

³⁸ B28, B57

³⁹ B77, B12, B17, B5, B53

⁴⁰ B55

⁴¹ B1, B10, B12, B17, B18, B2, B20, B3, B32, B4, B57, B59, B66, B77, B80, B92, B93

⁴² B12, B18, B57

⁴³ B4, B5, B78, B79

⁴⁴ B81

19 businesses discussed enabling factors that had helped them to scale beyond adaptations to their prototypes. These included, a partnership or merger with another organisation increasing their reach⁴⁵, having a good team, specifically a team that is competent,⁴⁶ motivated⁴⁷ and located in the geographical area of the new target market⁴⁸. Access to funding, a new product that is well suited to the market, and Covid-19 were the next most common enabling factors, with three businesses each reporting their utility in helping to scale their prototypes.

Finding 12: Barriers to scaling the SPRING prototype included prototype cost, access to continued investment, and, in the last year, issues related to the pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic was the most commonly reported barrier to scaling, reported by nine businesses⁴⁹. Although, given the scale and impact of the pandemic globally, it is possible that these results are skewed by recency bias. Three of the nine businesses that reported that Covid-19 has hindered their scaling plans, reported that they have still grown through 2020, albeit more slowly than planned⁵⁰. The specific negative influences of the pandemic on the businesses are discussed in detail in Finding 14.

SPRING businesses have also faced barriers to scaling their prototype that are not specific to the Covid-19 context. Specifically, the cost of the businesses' prototype or overheads was reported as providing a significant barrier to scaling by five of the businesses interviewed⁵¹. Working in partnership with government or other organisations can also hinder or delay scaling efforts. This can be because a government partnership is a necessary pre-requisite for businesses to scale their prototype⁵² but can be difficult to attain⁵³. Furthermore, working with other partner organisations is often necessary to share cost and risk of investing in scaling opportunities, but creates an interdependence between the two businesses. This means that any shock or negative influence on the partner business also has an effect on the other. This was reported by two businesses who gave the specific examples of their partner organisations having funding withdrawn⁵⁴ or experiencing delays in their own supply chain.⁵⁵

Lastly, seven businesses cited difficulties in attracting external funding or investment as their primary barrier to scaling.⁵⁶

Finding 13: Every business interviewed had been affected in some way by the pandemic. This included both changes in sales and broader opportunities and challenges.

The influence of Covid-19 on SPRING prototypes was neither consistently positive, nor negative. 14 businesses reported a decrease in their prototype sales that they attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic.⁵⁷ A further nine businesses reported slowed growth during the pandemic.⁵⁸ However, eight businesses reported that their prototype sales had increased during the pandemic⁵⁹ and 28 businesses reported positive effects of Covid-19 on their prototypes⁶⁰.

It is noteworthy that half of the businesses that reported increased sales during Covid-19 were in Cohort 4. This suggests that the reported increase in sales could be coincidental with the expected growth for a new prototype. It also demonstrates that these businesses were resilient to the shock of Covid-19, despite being at a time when prototypes are especially vulnerable, as they were not yet established in the market. However, we cannot confidently assert this without further interrogation of the effect of Covid-19 on different business typologies, which was beyond the scope of this current study.

Businesses from Cohort 1 reported the fewest influences of Covid-19 on their business, negative or positive, which could potentially indicate that they were more resilient to the shock of the pandemic. In contrast, businesses in Cohort 4 were most likely to report that Covid-19 had influenced their prototype. Businesses from Cohort 4 reported both the most positive (60%) and the most negative (73%) influences of Covid-19. This shows that the negative and positive influences of the Covid-19 pandemic were not mutually exclusive. For example, 'stay safe' businesses in Cohorts 4 all reported both positive and negative effects as did businesses across the other cohorts and impact pillars.

⁴⁵ B1, B19, B49, B15, B8

⁴⁶ B49

⁴⁷ B18, B3

⁴⁸ B78, B80

⁴⁹ B19, B52, B66, B69, B76, B9, B28, B57, B59

⁵⁰ B28, B57, B59

⁵¹ B12, B55, B69, B93, B13

⁵² B19, B59, B69, B78, B21

⁵³ B21, B69, B78

⁵⁴ B19

⁵⁵ B59

⁵⁶ B1, B20, B80, B93, B19, B2, B41

⁵⁷ B76, B5, B49, B69, B1, B19, B9, B81, B29, B28, B53, B88, B90, B8

⁵⁸ B19, B52, B66, B69, B76, B9, B28, B57, B59

⁵⁹ B93, B17, B20, B88, B79, B84, B71, B92

⁶⁰ B85, B88, B3, B22, B84, B93, B7, B80, B78, B53, B79, B2, B10, B29, B90, B18, B92, B69, B19, B86, B31, B55, B20, B11, B26, B13, B91, B17

This trend was also seen in six of the eight businesses that reported that their sales had increased since the start of the pandemic. These businesses all have e-commerce platforms or target people online through mobile applications or social media channels. They are also providing services in areas that have seen high demand because of the pandemic, specifically:

- **EdTech**, which has been positively impacted by school closures and by people spending more time at home⁷⁰
- **a cloud-based food bank system** that has responded to people's increased food insecurity⁷¹
- **a local produce provider⁷², and digital health platforms⁷³**, both of which have seen increased use due to people's nervousness about visiting physical sites, with the latter also providing sought-after information about the pandemic.

"The pandemic actually really accelerated the role of EdTech. The first thing we had to do was cater to a larger volume of students who were coming onto the platform, very organically. We have a YouTube channel that SPRING accelerator initiated during our time at SPRING. [There was] huge growth there – a lot of students flocked to the YouTube channel and also the live teaching platform." (EDKASA)

In addition, four businesses reported that Covid-19 helped them to gain new or reinforce existing **partnerships** with the government⁷⁴. This was done by taking on new government contracts to contribute to the Covid-19 response.⁷⁵ Another business reported that the pandemic has helped them to accelerate the development of a new product in partnership with a bank. Due to a slowdown in the bank's business, caused by the pandemic, space and time needed to negotiate this new partnership was created.⁷⁶

Four businesses reported that the pandemic had catalysed improvements to their **internal ways of working** as a result of Covid-19, namely that the pandemic "woke us up" about how to deal with shocks⁷⁷, sharpened businesses' focus on strategy and streamlining their offering⁷⁸ and helped businesses to accelerate their own adoption of technology⁷⁹.

2.4. The Sustainability of SPRING Businesses' Implementation of Human Centred Design

This section presents the EP's findings in response to the second research question: "*to what extent are businesses still using HCD principles?*".

Specifically, it presents the how and why HCD principles are being used across the SPRING business portfolio; the extent to which HCD principles have been used to respond to external shocks, such as Covid-19; and the reasons why some businesses are not using human-centred design.

Finding 16: A large majority of SPRING businesses are still using HCD principles, albeit not the full HCD methodology.

All the businesses interviewed had used HCD in some form since the end of the SPRING programme. And, 47 of the 51 operational businesses that were interviewed, are still doing so. This application ranges from a short feedback process to evidence of the more extensive human-centred design methodology being applied.

Businesses that have discontinued or paused their SPRING prototypes reported that they are using HCD, although in other areas of their business. For example, Daktari have paused their SPRING prototype due to a lack of available funding but explained how they have continued to use HCD in other parts of their business (see quote, right).

Of the four businesses that reported that they had stopped using HCD, three cited that they had paused doing so to

"HCD is something we picked up at SPRING and are not going to let go of any time soon because it just makes sense. – Take something out to the user, test it, use the journey, make [the product] more engaging. I think everything should be done through HCD" (Daktari)

⁷⁰ B79 B88

⁷¹ B92

⁷² B20

⁷³ B17, B84

⁷⁴ B53, B92, B17

⁷⁵ B53, B92, B3, B17, B19

⁷⁶ B3

⁷⁷ B2

⁷⁸ B69, B93

⁷⁹ B7, B69, and B55

respond quickly to the fast-changing context of the Covid-19 pandemic, and as such needed to make quick decisions to survive.⁸⁰

Finding 17: 34 businesses reported that they have applied HCD to parts of their business beyond the SPRING prototype, including in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Finding 16 above describes that the overwhelming majority of businesses have continued to use HCD after the end of the SPRING programme. 34 of these also demonstrated that they are using HCD in other parts of the business as well for example to help pivot in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and in the development and iteration of other products and services beyond their SPRING prototypes, as shown by Figure 5 (right). This suggests that HCD use has not only been sustained beyond the SPRING programme, but also that in some instances it has been mainstreamed into broader business operations, which could indicate a more permanent shift or change to which SPRING has contributed. A specific example of how businesses have used HCD to solve problems and develop new products is explained in the quote on the next page.

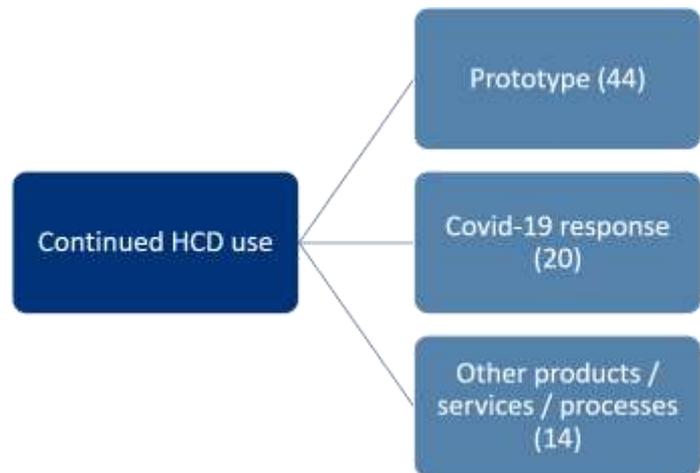


Figure 5: shows the different ways that businesses continued to use HCD and the number of businesses that reported each type of use

“From the ideas I got from SPRING I went back to my supply chain and asked, ‘how can I build a very strong relationship with my farmers?’. From there, I got a good idea where I can use this human-centred design to help our community to get health insurance. We spoke to the farmers and in the end, we printed a small booklet where we register and track the harvest. [Using this booklet] we helped the farmers to keep a certain percentage of their income so that at the end of the year they can afford healthcare without struggling” (Shekina)

Businesses use HCD for monitoring and iteration, indicating the continuation of HCD principles beyond the product design and development stage. The most cited example of businesses using HCD for iteration was holding product development workshops with clients to listen to their needs and then again to receive their feedback on the prototype.

In response to Covid-19, 17 businesses mentioned using HCD to adapt their prototypes or by to help them pivot into new products or markets.

Finding 18: Businesses consistently reported that the time and resource demands are the biggest challenges of using HCD, especially for small businesses. However, businesses also consistently recognised that there is a long-term saving and benefit to the upfront investment of HCD.

The primary advantages of HCD which businesses reported was during the product development phase. 22 businesses reported that, by using HCD, they can develop a product that is more user-relevant and tailored to their client’s needs by receiving customer feedback throughout the process. Six businesses also highlighted the long-term time financial benefit of using HCD. Through client feedback and iteration, businesses understand whether their product/services ‘work’ or not and can continuously improve to meet client needs. As reported under **finding 11**, having a product that is relevant to the target market was identified by 22 businesses as a primary driver for making adaptations to their product, to help them to expand to new markets and scale up their prototypes.

⁸⁰ B66, B57, B76

The drawback to using HCD that was most often cited by businesses was the resource- and time-intensive nature of the methodology, as mentioned by 35 businesses. In addition, six businesses mentioned contextual or cultural factors that made implementing HCD difficult. For example, respondents from businesses in Nepal, Pakistan and Kenya explained that the use of customer consultation in product design is not common business practice. This provided challenges in two different ways: firstly, internal staff in some businesses struggled with the methodology, particularly when the concept that the customer should inform design rather than the business owners being the expert. This challenged the business' usual way of operating⁸¹. Secondly, the novelty of HCD provided some challenges in engaging end-users in consultations as they are not used to being consulted and, in some cases, were suspicious of the questions (see quote, right).

“HCD is a new tool in our country so when we tried to find out the pain points then sometimes vendors are not so open – we asked vendors for example about problems and no one said the credit is a problem but we know that this is a problem as there is no guarantee of payment and this is [a] risk to vendors. But when we asked ‘is there any problem with the credit’ then they would say ‘oh yes, it is the biggest issue’ so sometimes we need to really dig the information out of them. People are not so open to express their challenges or problems, so this would be the only disadvantage [of HCD] I think.” (R&D Solutions)

Finding 19: 48% of businesses reported continued use of other SPRING methods and lessons beyond HCD. The two most reported examples were brand positioning and a gender-focused approach to product development.

The uptake of other SPRING methods and lessons, other than HCD, were reported by 48% of interviewed businesses, demonstrating the sustainability of the support that SPRING provided. The most frequently reported methods that businesses reported continued use of were brand positioning and a gender-focused approach to product development. Four businesses⁸² stated that they have continued to apply the **brand positioning** lessons and technique that they learned during SPRING and that these have continued to influence their branding decisions beyond the end of the programme.

Seven businesses⁸³ explained how gender workshops that they participated in during their SPRING cohort taught them to apply a **gender lens to product development**. This aligns with Finding 8, which explains how businesses have mainstreamed gender-approaches.

“We still use a lot of the templates they gave us ... every time we feel stuck somewhere, we bring out those blueprints, it [also] helps with scaling.” (EDKASA)

Six businesses⁸⁴ also highlighted their continued use of **templates and resources** they received during SPRING, such as the service design blueprint and stakeholder journey process.

⁸¹ B69, B2, B42

⁸² B86, B90, B21, B20

⁸³ B80, B57, B12, B55, B77, B49, B5

⁸⁴ B86, B57, B93, B76, B92, B10

3. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

3.1. Conclusions

SPRING businesses are continuing to reach and target adolescent girls one to four years after their participation in the programme. There is anecdotal evidence that some businesses have taken this a step further and have started to make more sustained changes to mainstream girls and women into their businesses.

The barriers to adolescent girls' access identified in the BPE report have continued beyond the SPRING programme and have been exacerbated by Covid-19, which has made it more difficult for many businesses to target this demographic. Despite this, most businesses are continuing – and succeeding – to reach adolescent girls.

Businesses that target adolescent girls are often driven by altruism and a desire to contribute to social impact. This aligns with findings from the Business Performance Evaluation. 46 SPRING businesses' prototypes have remained operational, and over half have increased their sales since the end of the programme, demonstrating that the prototypes have largely proven sustainable. However, many businesses are achieving growth and scale by supporting their adolescent girl-targeted products and services with additional products that target a broader audience.

SPRING businesses proved agile in responding to Covid-19 and were able to employ a range of strategies to continue their operations. SPRING businesses have continued to use HCD and have also demonstrated that they are adapting the HCD methods to apply and tailor them to their specific needs. This suggests that HCD methods have remained relevant to SPRING businesses and that they perceive a benefit of HCD to their business. HCD has also been useful in helping businesses to navigate the changing context created by the Covid-19 pandemic, as shown by the businesses continued use of the method to problem solve throughout 2020.

3.2. Lessons

This section offers the following lessons learned about the sustainability of the SPRING programme, framed by the study's research questions. These reinforce some of the lessons that Tetra Tech have reported in other SPRING evaluation activities, namely the Summative Business Performance Evaluation report, submitted in June 2020.

Lesson 1: Accelerator support can facilitate businesses to create sustainable prototypes that reach adolescent girls. Girl reach is possible through accelerator support; however, adolescent girl targeting is more difficult to incentivise because of the limited capacity of girls to interact as direct end users, especially in rural areas where they may have limited access to money and technology. When designing and implementing similar future programmes, donors and programme designers should be aware that girls' limited capacity to engage with businesses makes it difficult for businesses to achieve commercial sustainability with a **direct** girl *targeting* business model.⁸⁵

Lesson 2: Covid-19 has exacerbated the exclusion of girls from some SPRING products and services, especially ones that pivoted to online offerings. We know that with a move to online offering, some people have been left behind. Covid-19 demonstrated again what we already knew that adolescent girls will be further marginalised by this. Businesses and donors should take care to address this when planning.

Lesson 3: Businesses that target girls are largely driven by social impact, but this does not discount the business incentives for targeting adolescent girls, especially in countries where they make up a large proportion of the population. There is also an important distinction between businesses who have one product or service line that provides their primary revenue stream and businesses that can support a service that targets adolescent girls through other products and service lines that have a broader audience. The former needs to achieve commercial sustainability solely through adolescent girl-targeting products which is difficult to attain in isolation. The latter can pursue adolescent girl-targeted products and services with the primary driver of achieving social impact and support these activities financially through other parts of their business.

Lesson 4: Training in human-centred design was valuable to SPRING businesses and provided a skill/ benefit that businesses may not have had access to this training without international development support. HCD support has facilitated a sustained change in the way businesses interact with their customers and design their products, and the perceived benefits of the method have been clearly shown by this study. Programme designers and

⁸⁵ To overcome this, many SPRING businesses engaged directly with "gatekeepers" as evidenced in the Business Performance Evaluation Report.

business accelerators should consider the potential benefits of similar support, especially in countries where HCD is not commonly used as there is a niche opportunity for international support to provide value in this area.

Annex A – Concept Note

Tetra Tech International Development

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business Sustainability Concept Note

April 2021



Bligh, Libby

OFFICIAL

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business Long-term Sustainability Study
Annex A – Concept Note

Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation

PO 7117

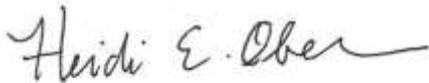
December 2020

Tetra Tech International Development Ltd

The Malthouse 1 Northfield Road Reading Berkshire RG1 8AH United Kingdom
T (+44) (0) 1189 566 066 F (+44) (0) 1189 576 066 www.tetratecheurope.com
Registered Office: 1 Northfield Road Reading Berkshire RG1 8AH United Kingdom
Registered in England No. 3799145 Vat Number: GB 724 5309 45

This document has been approved for submission by Tetra Tech International Development Project Director, based on a review of satisfactory adherence to our policies on:

- Quality management;
- HSSE and risk management;
- Financial management and Value for Money (VfM);
- Personnel recruitment and management;
- Performance Management and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)



Heidi Ober

Project Director

Disclaimer

This report is provided on the basis that it is for the use of Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), USAID, and DFAT only. Tetra Tech International Development Ltd will not be bound to discuss, explain or reply to queries raised by any agency other than the intended recipients of this report. Tetra Tech International Development Ltd disclaims all liability to any third party who may place reliance on this report and therefore does not assume responsibility for any loss or damage suffered by any such third party in reliance thereon.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AR	Annual Review
BOPs	Business Operations Forms
BPE	Business Performance Evaluation
CMs	Country Managers
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	Department for International Development
EP	Evaluation Partner
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
HCD	Human Centred Design
IP	Implementing Partner
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
PDF	Prototype Development Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. Introduction

SPRING was a five-year programme funded by the former Department of International Development (DFID) – now Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Donors also included the Nike Foundation, which funded the programme until February 2018. SPRING aimed to transform the lives of adolescent girls by working with businesses to develop products and services which would help girls stay safe, learn, earn and save, and improve their wellbeing. The SPRING accelerator identified businesses which it thought could improve the lives of girls and provided mentoring, limited financial support for the development of prototypes, and expertise in business growth, design, innovation and marketing to help drive their business models forward.

The programme was implemented by a consortium of partners led by the Palladium Group. The consortium included: a SPRING CEO and core project team based in London; fuseproject, an international design and brand development firm and experts in Human-centred design (HCD), who were in charge of the overall accelerator design; a team of global thematic experts; and a range of professionals (in the legal, marketing, and financial fields) who supported participating businesses with their expertise.

The SPRING programme ran from July 2014 to September 2019. The programme supported four cohorts of businesses in nine countries in East Africa (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda) and South Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Myanmar). By the end of its last cohort, SPRING had worked with 75 businesses, and met its target of 200,000 beneficiaries², reaching 2,534,214 adolescent girls.³ Excluding Ubongo, a business in Cohort 3 which alone accounted for 64.7% of this number, SPRING still met its target, reaching 893,014 girls.

Tetra Tech International Development (formerly Coffey) is the independent Evaluation Partner (EP) for SPRING. Focusing on both learning and accountability, Tetra Tech aims to fill the gaps in the international knowledge base around what works (and what does not) and why, in reaching girls using the private sector.

1.1. Purpose and Structure of this Concept Note

In order to assess long-term sustainability for the programme, the EP was asked to undertake additional data collection with SPRING businesses to understand: i) which ones are still operating; ii) which ones are still engaging girls as end users or clients; and iii) which ones are still operating their SPRING prototype.

This document provides detail and timeframes to the sustainability analysis that the SPRING Evaluation Partner (EP) will carry out following the SPRING contract extension, approved in October 2020. The concept note provides a short overview of the SPRING sustainability approach during the lifetime of the programme (see [Section 2](#)); namely, the methods used, limitations and main findings. Second, it outlines the longer-term sustainability analysis (see [Section 3](#)) which the EP team proposes to carry out as part of the contract extension phase. It also outlines anticipated challenges and proposed mitigation strategies to carry out the sustainability analysis going forward ([Section 3](#)).

2. Background to the SPRING Sustainability Approach

2.1. Purpose of Sustainability Analysis

As part of the Business Performance Evaluation (BPE) of SPRING, which assessed the programme's impact on business performance, the EP carried out a sustainability analysis of each cohort. The BPE analysed two sustainability questions from the Evaluation Framework:

- F1: Do businesses continue to target adolescent girls beyond the accelerator's lifetime?
- F2: Has SPRING supported a growing market for products, services, or business models benefitting adolescent girls?

More specifically, the BPE sustainability analysis explored the extent to which businesses one year after the end of their SPRING 'journey' were:

- Operating their SPRING prototype;
- Continuing to use HCD principles;
- Continuing to target girls; and

- Continuing to have incentives and motives to target girls.

2.2. Methods, Limitations and Main Findings from the Previous Work on Sustainability

Reflections on this process and the lessons learned therein are shared in this section, so that they can be factored into the next phase of data collection and analysis.

2.2.1. Methods

As the EP's follow-on analysis was focused on the sustainability of the prototype itself and its girl focus, they conducted interviews with **67 SPRING businesses, 64 of which had received Prototype Development Fund (PDF) to develop their prototypes**. Wherever possible, interviews were carried out with the main SPRING participant approximately one year after the end of their participation in SPRING. Exact timelines varied by cohort and depended on the evaluation timelines. Interviews for Cohort 4 were carried out just six months after the end of their cohort activities, to allow the EP to include this data as part of the BPE Summative Report (May 2020). In a small number of cases, the main SPRING participant was no longer working within the businesses. For each cohort, the EP also analysed secondary data provided by businesses to the SPRING Implementing Partner (IP) in the form of Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting on financial and beneficiary data and Business Operation Forms (BOPs) which included some qualitative assessments and contextualisation of their performance.

Throughout the EP's research, a small number of interviews were included with businesses which did not receive PDF funding, so as to get a better understanding of why that might have been and to learn more about their trajectory after SPRING, including how they may have applied lessons learned to other business ventures. It is important to note that most of the businesses which did not receive PDF funding were not interested in taking part in follow-up interviews with the team.

The support of Country Managers (CMs) from SPRING were instrumental in contacting and following-up with SPRING businesses. As a result of this engagement strategy, the EP were able to interview **67 out of the total 75 businesses across the four Cohorts**. Four businesses were not available for a sustainability interview despite having received PDF funding.

2.2.2. Limitations

The EP's approach to assessing sustainability had some limitations. The first limitation is that it relied on businesses' self-reporting (whether through KPI forms or interviews), and it was beyond the scope of the evaluation to independently verify business' inputs and reporting. The second limitation was that KPI data was not always completed by businesses, and even where it was available, it was not always clear. Third, while businesses were informed by email that the interviews might take up to an hour and a half, many interviewees did not provide sufficient time to respond to all questions. And finally, there were some technical issues. Interviews were conducted over Skype or through WhatsApp, which meant that the quality, ease and smoothness of some of the interviews was jeopardised in cases where there was a sub-standard connection.

2.2.3. Sustainability reporting and main findings

In Cohorts 1 and 2, sustainability questions were analysed in stand-alone reports, which were submitted as part of the SPRING Annual Review (AR) process. For Cohorts 3 and 4, the EP sustainability analysis was included in the BPE Summative Report, alongside findings from the previous two Cohorts. In the BPE Summative Report, submitted in May 2020, questions relating to sustainability were analysed alongside evaluation questions assessing the sales and girl reach performance of SPRING businesses, helping to place the evaluation findings within the context of the programme and within a longer-term perspective.

Findings across the four cohorts showed that most of the businesses that launched prototypes scaled up to some extent. As explained in the BPE Summative Report, approximately 80% of the businesses interviewed as part of sustainability research reported having scaled up, either by reaching more or different types of customers, or by expanding to new geographic areas (both nationally and internationally). Factors which helped businesses achieve scale included: i) continued use of HCD for prototype refinement; ii) increased marketing and profile-raising activities; iii) new partnerships, including with government or donor initiatives; iv) revised pricing strategies to appeal more to customers; and v) investment of their own funds and resources into their prototype.

In terms of their beneficiary profile, almost half of BPE Case Study businesses reported an increase of at least 20% in their girl reach numbers in the first year after SPRING, though only two saw an increase by more than 5,000 girls in the first year. More businesses were able to further increase their girl reach over time. For most businesses that did not target girls at all before SPRING, the programme introduced girls as a potential target group and provided tools to explore this market but did not allow them to reach girls at scale yet.

3. Final Sustainability Assessment Plan

In this section, the focus of longer-term sustainability data collection and analysis is presented.

3.1. Approach

As part of the SPRING contract extension, the EP will be carrying out follow-ups with SPRING businesses that received PDF funding to develop their prototypes. This has the purpose to assess emerging trends and follow-up on findings from previous rounds of interviews, as well as explore new emerging themes such as challenges and opportunities posed by the COVID-19 context.

3.2. Methodology

The sustainability follow-up interviews will take place in February/ March 2021 (see [Annex 1](#)). **This timeframe corresponds to four, three, two and one years after participation in SPRING for Cohorts 1 to 4, respectively.**

Like previous rounds of sustainability research, sustainability interviews will be carried out on an entirely remote basis and will be preceded by a review of available data. The evaluation methodology will consist of the following phases:

- i) **Desk review of available information:** Unlike previous rounds of sustainability interviews, the EP will not have up-to-date KPI data to contextualise findings from sustainability interviews (as further explained in [Section 4](#) below). A first step will be to carry out a rapid review of the KPI and Business Operations data that was already analysed for each business, so as to place the interview in the business' journey through and after SPRING. The EP will also review the text from the specific interview carried out with the business, so as to identify emerging findings and specific insights to further probe on or follow-up on during each interview.

To gather more up-to-date information, the EP will engage with SPRING CMs which will also allow the EP to gain an on-the-ground perspective on the business trajectories since SPRING, which will help inform outreach strategies with each business. The EP will complement this with a rapid online search on each business, attempting to assess how many have an active and up-to-date online presence. Where businesses have an online presence, the EP will review any more recent updates (if available) on business operations and performance; such as news regarding new investment received or expansion of business offering.

- ii) **Planning and scheduling:** Following this first desk-based review phase, the EP will reach out to all 68 businesses which received PDF funding as part of SPRING. Following up with businesses which were unsuccessful in receiving this funding is both not relevant to the sustainability questions, and also unlikely to lead to fruitful engagement. Again, the EP team will engage with CMs to ensure having the most up-to-date contact details for all businesses and to follow-up with potential respondents using multiple communication channels.

Once businesses have confirmed their availability to take part in interviews, the EP will also ask them to share information related to their sales and client reach to help us prepare for interviews as much as possible. This data roughly corresponds to what businesses would have been reporting on through SPRING's KPI data forms. However, it is unlikely that all businesses will share this data due to the length of time since the programme's end, as further explained in [Section 4](#) below.

- iii) **Primary research:** The EP will carry out remote interviews **with businesses agreeing to take part.** Where businesses are interested and available, the EP team will ensure having sufficient time for follow-up interviews and/ or calls with others in the team. CMs will be contracted to engage with businesses as a way to hopefully encourage an interview.

3.3. Research Questions

In its follow-up sustainability interviews, the EP will respond to the evaluation questions and sub-questions outlined in [Table 1](#). These research questions are adapted from our Evaluation Framework to reflect the focus of the long-term sustainability research. Please note that Evaluation Question F2 has been removed due to the focus of the longer-term research.

Table 1. Longer-term sustainability research questions

Evaluation question	Sustainability typology	Sub-question		Judgement criteria/ indicators	
Do businesses continue to target adolescent girls beyond the accelerator's lifetime?	Sustainability of prototype	F1.1	To what extent are businesses still operating their SPRING-related products, services, or business models up to four years after graduating?	F1.1.1	# of SPRING businesses still operational in the COVID-19 context
	Sustainability of business			F1.1.2	Extent to which businesses are resilient in the face of external shocks (such as COVID-19)
				F1.1.3	Extent to which SPRING businesses have adapted and/or scaled (e.g. entered new markets) their SPRING-related products, services, or business models
				F1.1.4	# of SPRING businesses still operating their SPRING-related products, services, or business models
				F1.1.5	Reasons why SPRING businesses have discontinued, not adapted and/or not scaled their SPRING-related products, services, or business models
Sustainability of SPRING methods and principles	F1.2	To what extent are businesses still using HCD principles?	F1.2.1	Extent to which SPRING businesses are continuing to use HCD principles	
			F1.2.2	Ways in which SPRING businesses are continuing to use HCD principles (and including in the face of external shocks such as COVID-19)	
			F1.2.3	# of businesses still using HCD principles	
			F1.2.4	Reasons why SPRING businesses have not continued using HCD and/or its principles	
	Sustainability of girl targeting	F1.3	To what extent do businesses still target girls?	F1.3.1	Extent to which businesses are targeting adolescent girls

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business Long-term Sustainability Study
Annex A – Concept Note

Evaluation question	Sustainability typology	Sub-question		Judgement criteria/ indicators	
				F1.3.2	Ways in which SPRING businesses are continuing to target adolescent girls
				F1.3.3	# of businesses still targeting adolescent girls
				F1.3.4	Reasons why SPRING businesses have not continued to target adolescent girls
		F1.4	What incentives do businesses have to remain committed to girl-focused solutions in the long-run?	F1.4.1	Extent to which the business demonstrates repeated behaviour (e.g. continued focus on girls) beyond their SPRING-related product, service, or business model up
				F1.4.2	Extent to which SPRING businesses continue to mainstream 'girl-sensitive' approaches in their business
				F1.4.3	Extent to which COVID-19 has affected businesses' ability to or interest in reaching girls

Through these long-term sustainability questions, the EP will assess:

- to what extent SPRING businesses are still operational in the COVID-19 context;
- what type of operational pivoting they may have implemented and the extent to which SPRING methods and principles might have impacted this.
- to what extent businesses are continuing to operate their SPRING prototypes (or an adaptation thereof) after the programme's end;
- to what extent and how businesses are still focusing on girls and what this has meant for their profitability (for instance, if they are continuing to target them as a specific group, or if they are now reaching them as part of a broader population group); and
- to what extent businesses that took part in SPRING are continuing to apply the programme's methods and lessons, such as its HCD methodology, and what barriers they may face in doing so.

Due to their timing, the sustainability interviews will also offer an opportunity to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected SPRING businesses. In particular, the sustainability study will aim to understand how business operations and SPRING prototypes have been impacted by the pandemic and the prevention measures implemented by various governments, what strategies have been implemented to continue operations during this period, if any; and what type of pivoting or change has taken place. It is also possible that, for some businesses, the COVID-19 context offers some opportunities, for instance for the provision of mental health support using remote methods. Such opportunities will also be explored in the interviews.

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business Long-term Sustainability Study Annex A – Concept Note

The interviews will also aim to understand whether and how lessons learned from SPRING have supported the business' performance since the end of the programme, and to what extent they have been mainstreamed in business operations. The interviews will explore whether there is anything which, on the contrary, has worked less well for businesses, and as such has been removed from their structure or offering.

These question areas will be included in updated topic guides, which will be shared with FCDO prior to the primary research phase. As a bonus, the EP will carry out further capacity building with interested businesses in 2021. Additional questions about business needs and interest for topics for further need will be included in the interview guides (see more in [Section 3.3](#) on Mitigation strategies).

3.4. Potential Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

3.4.1. Limitations of the EP's approach

There are likely to be several potential limitations and challenges in this sustainability approach.

First, business engagement in the sustainability interviews proved challenging even during the lifetime of SPRING, as businesses were occupied with running their operations. Repeated engagement and outreach were needed to ensure their participation in research activities. As explained above, four businesses were not available to take part in sustainability interviews during the lifetime of the programme despite the EP's and the SPRING IP's efforts. Because these follow-up interviews are taking place following the end of the programme – in many cases, several years after – it is likely that challenges related to engagement will be further amplified. The economic, social and personal challenges posed by the COVID-19 context are likely to further compound this issue.

Very closely linked to the point above, it is likely that the businesses which will be more willing and interested in taking part in the follow-up interviews are the ones which have been more financially successful and which have more positive views of the programme that they'd like to share. Businesses which have had a more negative experience or have faced greater challenges are likely to be less willing to engage. As a result, the sample of respondents could be positively biased.

Third, due to the end of the programme, businesses are no longer contractually obliged to submit KPI data on their financial performance and beneficiary reach. This means that there is less opportunity for contextualisation of the findings from sustainability interviews and for triangulation with data on broader business performance. Although the EP team can ask businesses to share data on financial performance and client reach, it is unlikely that all will do so as it is not a requirement and they might view this as excessively sensitive information. It is also possible that businesses are no longer disaggregating beneficiary data by age or gender, in which case obtaining data on girl reach will prove challenging.

Fourth, it is possible that the main SPRING participant will no longer be with the businesses, particularly for businesses which took were part of earlier cohorts. Others within the business are likely to be less familiar with SPRING methods or processes, although they would be able to speak more generally to business trajectory and performance following participation in the programme.

Finally, interviews will be taking place again on a remote basis. As such, it is likely that issues related to connectivity will occur, as they did in previous rounds of interviews, potentially affecting the quality of the interviews conducted. Limitations of carrying out research remotely include:

- Problems with connectivity, technical issues, limited telephone or internet coverage, which may lower the quality of calls and cause loss of rapport, creating abrupt feelings in interviews and affecting the depth and quality of interview findings;
- Absence of visual or nonverbal cues, inability to observe behaviour and body language, with the risk of telephone interviews becoming mechanical and cold;
- Having little opportunity to establish rapport with respondents, and having potentially shorter times for interviews as respondents may more easily become fatigued by telephone compared to face-to-face interaction; and
- Limited engagement, low response rates and little interest in participating in the research, which might limit the breadth and depth of the interview findings;

3.4.2. Mitigation strategies

To address some of these issues, the EP will first of all be engaging with Country Managers (CMs) in all phases of the research. CMs worked on the SPRING programme throughout its implementation and had extensive one-to-one

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business Long-term Sustainability Study
Annex A – Concept Note

contacts with participating businesses. This will allow the EP team to reach out to businesses through a channel they are already familiar with, as well as have context-specific understanding of how businesses have been performing since the end of the programme. Frequent interaction with CMs will also allow the EP to have up-to-date information on the COVID-19 in specific countries that might affect participants' availability to take part in this study.

Second, the EP will also attempt to offer an incentive to take part in research activities. When reaching out to businesses, the EP team will use messaging which combines the request for sustainability interviews with the offer for technical support. This technical support will be provided by the EP as part of the contract extension. Framing the two as part of the same package of benefits to the business could increase their incentives to engage with the EP team.

Third, to minimise the risk of connectivity issues, the EP team will be adaptive to the context. Skype or Teams interviews will be favoured wherever possible, to limit the lack of nonverbal cues and to help establish rapport with respondents. However, in some cases it will not be possible to use video interviewing due to technical or connectivity issues and the EP team will utilise the technology which is most appropriate for each context.

Fourth, to minimise issues related to staff changes and institutional knowledge, interview guides will be developed to take this into account, and focus on the high-level lessons from SPRING, rather than the details of the curriculum. In cases where the SPRING participant is no longer within the business, the EP will discuss with the business team to identify who the best-placed respondent would be.

Finally, due to the COVID-19 context, the EP team will need to be particularly flexible and adaptive to potential respondents' competing demands. The team is familiar with carrying out remote interviews in the COVID-19 context, and with the scheduling challenges this entails. All scheduling will be carried out so as to minimise burdens on respondents and to be as understanding as possible of their competing demands.

Despite these mitigation strategies, the sustainability approach will ultimately rely on business' self-reported sales and girl reach performance, and on their own interest and willingness to participate. Nonetheless, it can provide a useful opportunity to gather information on the longer-term effects of SPRING and the trends observed among its participating businesses following the lifetime of the programme and in the current pandemic context.

Annex 1: High-level Workplan and Timeline

Activity	Timeline
Tool development	December 2020 -January 2021
Engagement with CMs for business outreach	December 2020 -January 2021
Communication with businesses, secondary data review and scheduling interviews	January 2021
Interviews	February 2021 –March 2021
Analysis and reporting	March 2021 – April 2021
Report submission	May 2021

Annex 2: Sustainability Strategy Risk Matrix

Risk Description			Category	Probability, Impact and Risk Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Actions / Updates	Residual Risk
Cause	Event	Impact		P	I	R		
Time passed since end of SPRING programme	Limited engagement and low willingness to participate in interviews	Respondents may be hard to contact and/ or not be interested in sharing their experience participating in SPRING due to competing concerns and lack of engagement with the SPRING prototype over time.	Data	4	4	16	Outreach to businesses through multiple channels and review of any secondary evidence available. Offer of technical support as an incentive to take part.	8
Business closures or financial challenges since SPRING	Difficulty in contacting, limited engagement and low willingness to participate in interviews	Respondents may be hard to contact and/ or not be interested in sharing their experience participating in SPRING due to competing concerns and lack of engagement with the SPRING prototype over time.	Data	4	4	16	The EP team will coordinate with CMs to receive updates on business performance since SPRING, and carry out outreach through multiple channels. Ultimately, this is like to continue to impact participation of research activities.	12
COVID-19 (Global Pandemic)	Difficulty in contacting, limited engagement and low willingness to participate in interview due to COVID-19 impact	Respondents may be hard to contact and/ or not be interested in sharing their experience participating in SPRING due to competing concerns and health issues.	Data	4	4	16	The EP team will be especially flexible and accommodating in scheduling interviews to facilitate participation despite the pandemic climate.	12

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business Long-term Sustainability Study
Annex A – Concept Note

Risk Description			Category	Probability, Impact and Risk Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Actions / Updates	Residual Risk
Cause	Event	Impact		P	I	R		
Lack of secondary data from businesses on sales and beneficiary reach performance	Businesses may not be collecting or willing to share financial and girl reach data which would help contextualise the interview findings	Limited possibility for triangulation of interview findings	Data	4	3	12	The EP will ask businesses to share financial and beneficiary reach data prior to the interview, but also attempt to triangulate information from the businesses with other sources (conversations with CMs, online searches) as much as possible	8
Connectivity issues	Connectivity issues may affect quality of remote interviews	Low-quality interviews would limit capacity to assess sustainability for SPRING businesses	Data	3	3	9	The EP will mitigate this to the extent possible by using interview platforms which are suitable to connectivity issues (i.e. telephone rather than Skype or Teams), although the preference will be for video interviews wherever possible.	6
Time passed since end of SPRING programme	Loss of institutional knowledge as SPRING participant may have left business	Respondents may not be familiar with the SPRING prototype or methods learned and applied through SPRING.	Data	3	3	9	The EP will identify the best person to speak to within the business (i.e. with the greatest familiarity with the SPRING prototype) and draft interview guides that focus on the high-level lessons from SPRING, rather than the details of the curriculum. The interviews will focus on the business' performance over time and in the current context, rather than on sustainability of the SPRING model specifically.	6

Annex B – Research Framework

Evaluation question	Sustainability typology	Sub-question		Judgement criteria/ indicators	
Do businesses continue to target adolescent girls beyond the accelerator's lifetime?	Sustainability of prototype	F1.1 To what extent are businesses still operating their SPRING-related products, services, or business models up to four years after graduating?	F1.1.1	# of SPRING businesses still operational in the Covid-19 context	
			Sustainability of business	F1.1.2	Extent to which businesses are resilient in the face of external shocks (such as Covid-19)
				F1.1.3	Extent to which SPRING businesses have adapted and/or scaled (e.g. entered new markets) their SPRING-related products, services, or business models
				F1.1.4	# of SPRING businesses still operating their SPRING-related products, services, or business models
				F1.1.5	Reasons why SPRING businesses have discontinued, not adapted and/or not scaled their SPRING-related products, services, or business models
	Sustainability of SPRING methods and principles	F1.2 To what extent are businesses still using HCD principles?	F1.2.1	Extent to which SPRING businesses are continuing to use HCD principles	
			F1.2.2	Ways in which SPRING businesses are continuing to use HCD principles (and including in the face of external shocks such as Covid-19)	
			F1.2.3	# of businesses still using HCD principles	
			F1.2.4	Reasons why SPRING businesses have not continued using HCD and/or its principles	
	Sustainability of girl targeting	F1.3 To what extent do businesses still target girls?	F1.3.1	Extent to which businesses are targeting adolescent girls	
			F1.3.2	Ways in which SPRING businesses are continuing to target adolescent girls	
			F1.3.3	# of businesses still targeting adolescent girls	

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business long-term sustainability study
Annex B – Research Framework

Evaluation question	Sustainability typology	Sub-question		Judgement criteria/ indicators
			F1.3.4	Reasons why SPRING businesses have not continued to target adolescent girls
		F1.4 What incentives do businesses have to remain committed to girl-focused solutions in the long-run?	F1.4.1	Extent to which the business demonstrates repeated behaviour (e.g. continued focus on girls) beyond their SPRING-related product, service, or business model up
			F1.4.2	Extent to which SPRING businesses continue to mainstream 'girl-sensitive' approaches in their business
			F1.4.3	Extent to which COVID-19 has affected businesses' ability to or interest in reaching girls

Annex C – List of Businesses Interviewed

Organisation	Country	Cohort	Impact Pillar
Affordable Computers and Technology Tanzania (ACTT)	Tanzania	Cohort 3	Learn
Babylon Health	Rwanda	Cohort 3	Stay Healthy
Build up Nepal	Nepal	Cohort 4	Stay Safe
Cherehani Africa	Kenya	Cohort 3	Earn
Doh Eain	Myanmar	Cohort 4	Stay Safe
Dot and Line	Pakistan	Cohort 2	Learn
Dr. Search (Daktaro, International Clinic)	Kenya	Cohort 1	Stay Healthy
DrinkWell	Bangladesh	Cohort 2	Stay Healthy
Earth Enable	Rwanda	Cohort 1	Stay Healthy
EcoFix Kenya (formerly EcoFuels)	Kenya	Cohort 3	Earn
Eden	Myanmar	Cohort 4	Earn
EDKASA	Pakistan	Cohort 4	Learn
Ejaad Tech	Pakistan	Cohort 4	Learn
Ensibuuko	Uganda	Cohort 1	Save
Haute Baso	Rwanda	Cohort 1	Earn
Illuminum Greenhouses	Kenya	Cohort 3	Earn
iSocial	Bangladesh	Cohort 2	Earn
Jeeon	Bangladesh	Cohort 4	Stay Healthy
Jeevan Bikash	Nepal	Cohort 2	Save
KadAfrica	Uganda	Cohort 1	Earn
Kasha	Rwanda	Cohort 3	Stay Healthy
KGG	Nepal	Cohort 2	Earn
Khalti	Nepal	Cohort 4	Learn
Khenz	Rwanda	Cohort 1	Earn
Kidogo	Kenya	Cohort 1	Learn
LearnOBots	Pakistan	Cohort 4	Learn

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business long-term sustainability study
Annex D – Interview Guide

Organisation	Country	Cohort	Impact Pillar
Microhealth Initiative (MHI)	Tanzania	Cohort 3	Stay Healthy
NexSource Uhealth	Pakistan	Cohort 2	Stay Healthy
Pankalay	Myanmar	Cohort 4	Stay Healthy
Paritran (Fight back)	Nepal	Cohort 2	Stay Safe
Paygo	Kenya	Cohort 3	Stay Healthy
Play Nepal	Nepal	Cohort 4	Learn
R and D Solutions	Nepal	Cohort 2	Earn
Resonate	Rwanda	Cohort 3	Learn
RIZQ	Pakistan	Cohort 4	Stay Healthy
Rooster Logic	Nepal	Cohort 2	Earn
Sabaq Multinet	Pakistan	Cohort 4	Learn
SafeBoda	Uganda	Cohort 3	Stay Safe
Sanivation	Kenya	Cohort 1	Stay Healthy
Sare Millers	Kenya	Cohort 1	Earn
Sehat Kahani	Pakistan	Cohort 2	Stay Healthy
Shekina	Rwanda	Cohort 1	Earn
Shreenagar Agro Farms	Nepal	Cohort 2	Stay Healthy
Smart Pani	Nepal	Cohort 2	Stay Healthy
Switch/ Zoya	Pakistan	Cohort 2	Stay Healthy
The Himalayan Rabbit	Nepal	Cohort 4	Earn
TotoHealth Kenya	Kenya	Cohort 1	Stay Healthy
Ubongo	Tanzania	Cohort 3	Learn
UpTrade/ Goats for Water	Pakistan	Cohort 2	Stay Healthy
Village Energy	Uganda	Cohort 1	Earn
Women in Digital	Bangladesh	Cohort 4	Learn
Wonder Tree	Pakistan	Cohort 4	Stay Healthy

Annex D – Interview Guide

SPRING Sustainability and C-19 follow-up with businesses

Introduction

“Thank you for your time. As I stated in the email, my name is X and I am a consultant at Tetra Tech. Tetra Tech is the Evaluation partner for the SPRING programme. This interview will take approximately one hour.”

1. Briefly explain the objectives of this assignment:

“As SPRING’s Evaluation Partner, we are conducting this research to understand the effects of the SPRING programme on business performance after the programme has concluded. As you know, the SPRING programme officially came to an end in July 2019. This interview will feed into our research on how sustainable the effects of the SPRING programme are on businesses, particularly in times like the COVID-19 crisis. We are reaching out to all businesses that participated in the SPRING programme.”

In this interview, we will be exploring the following key areas:

- the changes to your business and business performance since your participation in SPRING;
- the sustainability of your business’ engagement with adolescent girls and your use of HCD; and
- the wider impacts of SPRING on your business, especially in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: If the respondent is not aware of SPRING, please focus the interview on COVID, HCD use, girl reach, and the wrapping up questions.

2. Ask for consent to record

“Would it be okay if we RECORD the interview? We will not share the recording and transcript with anybody outside of the SPRING team. We will use your answers only to inform our reporting. Everything you say is anonymous and will not be attributed to you.”

If the respondent says it is not acceptable to record, you may not.

General changes to business pre-and since Covid

I would like to start off by asking you questions about your business since the end of SPRING, before asking about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic more specifically.

1. **Can you please remind us of your role in [business]? How long have you been with [business] and what was your involvement in SPRING activities? (NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: If the respondents is not aware of SPRING, please focus the interview on COVID, HCD use, girl reach, and the wrapping up questions).**

2. **What are some of the ways your business has changed since the end of SPRING? For instance, in terms of staffing? Business structure? Business model? Operational processes?**

- a. Probe: How did these aspects change before COVID-19 (between the end of SPRING until early 2020?)
- b. What about since the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your business more broadly? (NOTE TO THE INTERVIEWER: some of this content may be covered by question 2 – if so, use only the appropriate probes to link the two questions).

- a. What strategies, if any, did you implement to continue operations during this time?
- b. To what extent has the COVID-19 crisis been detrimental to your business? How did you address these challenges or mitigate their effect?
- c. Has COVID had a positive impact on your business at all? Did you pivot or change direction in order to take advantage of any new opportunities offered by the pandemic?
- d. Did you apply any lessons or methods learned from SPRING to address the challenges brought by COVID-19? If so, what was the most important and why?
- e. Were you able to leverage the SPRING network and SPRING support in any way? Why or why not?

Prototype

I would now like to ask you about your SPRING prototype and what has happened to it since the end of the programme.

4. Is the prototype your business developed as part of SPRING whether in its original form or as an adapted form still operational?

IF NO – go to Q9

- a. Could you please provide some data on your prototype sales for the past financial years? What about your overall business sales?
- b. How have your sales evolved since SPRING and in the COVID context? (Probe for: in the years until SPRING and before COVID-19, since the pandemic).

5. What main changes, if any, did you make to your prototype since the end of SPRING?

- a. Why have you decided to make these changes? What effects have they had?
- b. Are there any further changes or adaptations that your business is considering, and why?

6. Since the end of your SPRING cohort, have you been able to scale-up your SPRING prototype?

IF NO – go to 7.

- a. By how much and where? (Probe for: approximate increase in sales, new groups reached, new geographic areas reached...).
- b. Has your business scaled according to the plan you set out during SPRING? Has it scaled according to your expectations? Why or why not?
- c. What have been the main factors enabling you to scale? What have been the main challenges?
- d. Has your businesses entered into new markets with the SPRING prototype since graduating from SPRING?
- e. Has your business entered into new markets with other products or services benefiting adolescent girls?

If prototype not scaled:

7. Were you planning on scaling up your prototype?

- a. If yes, What have been some of the challenges that you faced when trying to scale up the prototype? How did these affect your plans?
- b. If no, why not?

8. How has COVID-19 affected your prototype, if at all? (If not covered in Q2).

- a. What strategies, if any, did you implement to continue operating your prototype during this time?
- b. To what extent has the COVID-19 crisis impacted on the prototype? How did you address these challenges or mitigate their effect? How did your participation in SPRING help you address those challenges, if at all? (Probe for: SPRING networks, use of HCD, general business support, other lessons learned...)
- c. Did you pivot or change direction in order to take advantage of any new opportunities offered by the pandemic?

If Prototype DISCONTINUED:

9. Why did your business decide to discontinue the SPRING prototype?

- a. Is there any additional support which could have helped you to continue operating your prototype? If so, what?

Continued use of HCD (or not):

I would now like to focus on the Human Centred Design (HCD) methodology introduced by SPRING.

10. Is your business currently using HCD methods?

IF NO, go to Q11

- a. To what extent is your business using HCD? (Probe: some use or intentions to use HCD to iterate prototype, repeated use, or strong use). Can you please provide some examples of how it's being used?
- b. Have you applied HCD to other processes or areas of your business? Please provide examples.
- c. What are some of the advantages of using HCD, in your view? Are there any disadvantages?
- d. Has your business applied HCD to address any of the COVID-19 related challenges? If yes, with what effects?

11. If not currently using HCD:

- a. In your view, why is the business not using HCD? What were some of the challenges of applying in your work?
- b. Are there any plans to use it in the future, and how?
- c. If yes, for what kinds of areas and processes do you hope to use HCD? If no, why not?

12. Are there other lessons learned and / or methods learned through SPRING that you are continuing to apply more widely?

- a. What are they and how are you applying them? What has the effect been on your business?

Targeting adolescent girls

13. Is your business continuing to reach girls as clients or beneficiaries with your SPRING prototype or other aspects of your business?

IF NO – go to Q14

- a. Do you have data on how many girls you reached in the past financial year? Roughly how has this changed since the end of SPRING? (NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Please note we will ask businesses to share girl reach data before the interview – we can tailor this question depending on whether they share data or not).
- b. How do you define “girls” in your business context? What types of girls are you reaching? (Probe: age, location, socio-economic group...) Has this changed in any way since SPRING, and if so why?
- c. Can you please tell us more about how you are targeting girls? Has this changed in any way since SPRING, and if so why?
- d. What are the main reasons for continuing to target girls (economic, social, others...?) What benefits does this bring to your business?
- e. Have you faced any difficulty in reaching adolescent girls since SPRING? Can you please provide examples? If yes, how were these challenges overcome?
- f. Has the COVID-19 crisis impacted on your ability to reach girls at all? How have you addressed these challenges?

14. If no longer targeting AG

- a. When did you decide to no longer try to reach girls and why? Would you want to try reaching girls again in the future?
- b. What were the main challenges that you faced when trying to reach girls? (Probe: commercial challenges, difficulties working with girls, difficult to reach... any other reasons)
- c. Has the COVID-19 crisis impacted on your ability to reach girls at all?

Other aspects of business development since SPRING (under General business updates for coding)

15. Has SPRING changed or affected any other aspects of your business? If so, please explain and give examples.

- a. Has it changed any cultures, norms, or processes?
- b. Has it changed how you consider or include girls in the development of new products/ services?
- c. Anything else?

Training

As you may know, as a thank you for your participation in this interview we would like to offer the opportunity of business support in the form of online capacity building trainings. There will be technical support on: data management and data use, safeguarding and other topics. We want to make this training as useful to you as possible.

16. Do you have any specific training needs that you would like us to address?

SPRING Monitoring and Evaluation: Business long-term sustainability study
Annex D – Interview Guide

16a: setting SMART objectives, setting KPIs, KPI monitoring tools, collecting market data, interpreting data, making data driven decisions, financing, etc.

16b Anything else?

17. Are there any particular platforms (e.g. Skype, Teams, Messenger, WhatsApp) that you prefer to use for conference calls? What time of the day suits you best for such a call?

Wrapping Up and next steps (under General business updates for coding)

18. Do you have any other feedback or comments you would like to add on your experience since your participation in SPRING?

19. Is there anything you'd like to ask us?

Thank you very much for your time and your participation!