



## Evaluation Unit (EVAL)

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A project co-financed by the  
**European Commission's Programme**

co-ordinated by the  
**ILO - International Labour Organisation**

***Regulating Labour Migration as an  
Instrument of Development and Regional Cooperation  
in Central Asia***

***Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan***

**Final Independent Evaluation Report**

**Anna Lucia Colleo and Blanka Hancilova**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background and context

Between March 2008 and May 2011, the project *Regulating Labour Migration as an Instrument of Development and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia*, co-financed by the European Union through the AENEAS Program and co-ordinated by the ILO, has aimed at promoting the development of more comprehensive labour migration strategies and initiatives in Central Asia, an area of increasingly intensive labour migration flows, with a view to support the efforts of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in addressing national and regional labour migration challenges more effectively.

The project concept sponsored a participatory approach, in which key stakeholders in the management of labour migration are engaged and mobilised: the employers who need and hire migrant labour and skills, the trade unions that represent workers, and the government bodies responsible for regulating labour markets, employment and decent work. Its logic was to strengthen institutional structures within target countries; build the knowledge base and the capacity of key stakeholders to effectively participate in labour migration policy and administration; and reinforce regional dialogue and cooperative mechanisms for regulating labour migration in Central Asia.

The project's design capitalized the achievements of previous ILO initiatives in the region, including the EU co-financed project *Towards Sustainable Partnerships for the Effective Governance of Labour Migration in the Russian Federation, the Caucasus and Central Asia*, completed in 2009 and co-ordinated by the Moscow Sub-regional Office of the ILO. Moreover, it took into account the mid-term goals and implementation strategies of the current Decent Work Country Programs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The prospects of the project to achieve its specific objective, i.e. to develop shared policies, legislation and administrative tools for the management of labour migration in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, were realistic, especially in light of ILO's previous achievements in the region, its good contacts with key partners, and the original project duration. The findings of this independent evaluation show that there have been both limitations and positive features in its actual accomplishments.

### *Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation*

The evaluation exercise has been carried out in the course of November and December 2011 and covered the project as a whole from 2008 through 2011.

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which the outcomes of the project have been achieved, what kind of changes produced, what are the intended or unintended effects of the project; obtain feedback from the national partners: what is working, what is not and why; provide suggestions, recommendations to better target the next steps, future strategies and new areas of technical cooperation

Direct beneficiaries are ILO specialists and managers in ILO MIGRANT and ILO DWT/CO Moscow; the ILO Evaluation Unit; ILO tripartite constituents and project implementing partners in the three beneficiary countries; staff involved in the project; and the project donor.

### *Methodology of the evaluation*

The evaluation is based on the review of relevant project documents, and on the outcomes of individual phone interviews with: national stakeholders and external experts involved in the project; the Task Manager at the EC Delegation to Kazakhstan; the latest project's Chief Technical Advisor; current ILO country staff, and ILO staff responsible for the project at ILO Headquarters in Geneva. The draft evaluation report was

circulated by the ILO to colleagues serving at Headquarters, in Moscow and in the project's beneficiary countries, who have provided feedback and in some cases, additional information to finalise the report.

In general terms, the collection of direct information for the evaluation has proved challenging. The turnover of staff at the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment in Kyrgyzstan, as well as in the agencies dealing with migration issues in Tajikistan, in addition to the changes in project staff that have occurred over the project's period, have limited the possibility to collect information in beneficiary countries. This notwithstanding, available documentary and direct information points to some concurring evidence.

## **Main Findings and Conclusions**

The project's success was hampered by serious external impediments, i.e. political turmoil in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 and the reorganization of competences on labour migration in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In addition to these, interviewees agree that the project was under-performing over the initial two years, as the resulting combination of a number of factors: the limited managerial and technical capacity of the first CTA who was selected for coordinating the project in Central Asia, in charge until May 2010; conflicting discrepancies between ILO financial regulations and EC requirements for the management of grants; a complex administrative set up, with activities coordinated in Central Asia, administrative back-up based in Moscow and payment authorisations coming from Geneva; finally, limitations in the effectiveness of the project monitoring system to detect and report openly on project constraints, and address them with timely corrective measures.

On the positive side, the appointment of new executive staff in the summer of 2010 soon resulted in improved relationships with project stakeholders and in an accelerated progress of activities. The increased sense of project ownership by country stakeholders prompted formal requests for technical support, with the ILO providing quality advice to governments on legislative matters. By developing the results of previous EU projects coordinated by the ILO, regional cooperation among trade unions was reinforced, leading to a formal multi-country agreement concerning the protection of migrant workers. In more general terms, over the last eight months of operations, the project attained most of the project outputs that were foreseen in the initial project plan. Constituents have also mentioned that appreciation for the latest project activeness has ensured continuity to previous esteemed ILO work in the region, despite the fact that the latest project period could not fully compensate for achieving goals that had been deemed realistic for a 36 months period.

Local stakeholders have also repeatedly affirmed the outstanding need in Central Asia for external technical support, especially as it concerns the promotion and impetus to regional dialogue and cooperation, and the important role of the ILO in its delivery, while also pointing out the importance of improving inter-agencies coordination to avoid duplication of efforts and outputs.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations for the future include:

1. Ensuring the appointment of project staff with adequate managerial competences and technical qualifications, especially when this concerns project executive positions;
2. Establishing effective provisions at project level for monitoring progress, detecting criticalities, and taking timely corrective measures as needed;
3. Securing familiarity of project staff with the PCM concept and requirements;
4. A review of the pros and cons of centralising coordination of technical assistance projects at Headquarters or decentralising it to regional offices;

5. Addressing the issue of conflicting provisions on financial management between the ILO and the EU to ensure a smoother implementation of EU co-financed actions in the future;
6. Continuing support to key institutional and social stakeholders in Central Asia with a view to improving their national and regional efforts for an effective and rights-based management of labour migration flows.

### **Lessons learned**

Despite external and internal difficulties that hampered the implementation of this particular project, available information allows for the identification of a number of features concerning the project's logic and design, which can be regarded as positive features for similar initiatives in the future:

1. the alignment of its objectives with the broader goals of the DWCPs;
2. its latest participatory approach, based on the active involvement of key national counterparts, allows for structured cooperation among entities with a stake in labour migration;
3. the improvement of coordination among stakeholders at national level, among government structures, and at regional level, between key institutional and social stakeholders operating in countries that are connected by transnational migration routes;
4. the structured plan of meetings at national and regional level to exchange views and fine-tune evolving needs, approaches, methodologies and ways of operation;
5. focus on building or strengthening the internal set-up and capacity of institutional structures dealing with labour migration;
6. the investment in a solid knowledge-base to support appropriate policy-making;
7. its attention to the wide circulation of project outputs, so that they become common references and allow for future capitalisation of project work.

## I. INTRODUCING THE PROJECT

### I.1 The project background and context

The region of Central Asia is an area of intensive flows of labour migration, both legal and undocumented. Organised labour migration is however a relatively new policy area; migration flows mainly take place along informal networks, thanks also to the existence of visa free regimes between most countries in the region.

Over the last decades, the national governments and international institutions have engaged in addressing the need for better policies and systems in order to better regulate labour migration and protect migrant workers.

The design of this project capitalizes the achievements of previous initiatives, and builds on the explicit identification of needs by concerned governments and social partner organizations in the target countries. This includes the recommendations for following-up to the project *Towards Sustainable Partnerships for the Effective Governance of Labour Migration in the Russian Federation, the Caucasus and Central Asia*, co-financed by the European Union and co-ordinated by the Moscow Sub-regional Office of the ILO, which was completed in 2009.

Moreover, the project takes into account the mid-term goals and implementation strategies of the current Decent Work Country Programs established in partnership between governments, the ILO and social partners in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The wording “Decent Work” refers to the opportunities of having employment, which should be safe and secure, be decently remunerated, ensure social protection of the family and equal opportunities and treatment for all. Among the expected outcomes of DWCPs in the three countries are: the strengthening of social dialogue as a tool to secure the implementation of international labour standards; preventing irregular migration and exploitation of labour; the promotion of dialogue, exchange and cooperation among neighbouring countries with common interests. Among the main challenges, the DWCPs identify limited institutional capacity to implement effective labour migration policies, and the lack of specialized bodies to provide coherent attention to labour migration administration.

Finally, the Conclusions and Recommendations adopted by the four conferences and meetings conducted in the “Issyk-Kul Process of International Migration Policy Dialogue for Central Asia, Caucasus and Neighbouring States” have emphasized a quest for regional approaches and inter-State cooperation on migration, which the project has addressed. Seven pillars were identified to develop a comprehensive approach to labour migration, including 1) establishing a standards-based approach to migration; 2) professionalizing collection and analysis of relevant migration and labour market data; 3) putting in place an informed and transparent labour migration system; 4) enforcing minimum national employment condition standards; 5) consolidation of institutional mechanisms for policy formulation and administration of labour migration; 6) enacting and implementing strategies to counter discrimination and xenophobia; and 7) engaging social partners – employers and worker organisations – in migration policy and administration.

## **I.2 Partnership**

*Lead partner:*

- International Labour Organisation

*Other partners:*

- ILO International Training Centre (ITC)

## **I.3 Project period and duration**

1 March 2008 – 31 May 2011.

The initial project period was 36 months, beginning in March 2008. A no-cost extension was approved until 31 May 2011.

## **I.4 Sources of finance**

The total costs of the action amount to EUR 1.199.578,45. The European Union, through the AENEAS Programme, has undertaken to finance 80% of the Action (i.e. EUR 959.662,76).

## **I.5 Target groups and beneficiaries**

Target groups were here defined as the groups or entities directly affected by the project, while final beneficiaries were those who would benefit from the project in the longer term.

### *I.5.1 Target groups:*

Target groups in the different countries were selected to represent key national stakeholders in the field of labour migration.

The project concept sponsored a participatory approach, in which concerned target groups, as government agencies, national and regional employers' organisations, national and regional trade union organisations, and local research centres, were meant to be actively participating in project activities and contributing to the achievement of results. Representatives of these entities were involved in project consultations and capacity building. Moreover, designated focal points had advisory functions for project operations.

In more details, target groups included:

- Governmental structures: Ministries of Labour of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and other concerned Ministries and Agencies;
- Employers' and Workers' Organisations in the 3 countries;
- NGOs concerned with the protection of migrants' rights
- Migration Experts and Research Institutes.

### *I.5.2 Final beneficiaries:*

Female and male migrant workers; low-skilled and vulnerable workers; migrant communities in countries of origin and destination.



## **I.6 Global and specific objectives**

The overall goal of the project was to ensure the development of a more comprehensive strategy for labour migration and more effective regulation of migration flows in Central Asia.

Its specific objective was to develop shared policies, legislation and administrative tools for the management of labour migration in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, building on participation and engagement of relevant stakeholders at the country and regional levels.

The approach proposed for realising the project objectives was to engage and mobilise key stakeholders of labour migration: the employers who need and hire migrant labour and skills, the trade unions that represent workers, and the government bodies responsible for regulating labour markets, employment and decent work.

## **I.7 Expected results**

As a regional initiative, the objectives and expected results of the project were common to all 3 beneficiary countries. The project logic was to strengthen institutional structures within target countries; build the knowledge base and the capacity of key stakeholders to effectively participate in labour migration policy and administration; and reinforce regional dialogue and cooperative mechanisms for regulating labour migration in Central Asia. In order to define further the project's expected progress towards achieving these ambitious goals, the project document identified 5 project outcomes:

Result 1. Institutions are built/strengthened

Result 2. Harmonisation of policies/legislation is promoted

Result 3. Consultative mechanisms are organised

Result 4. Capacity is built and stakeholders trained

Result 5. Knowledge base is built

## **I.8 Activities and outputs**

Activities proposed were tailored to achieve the five main inter-related results above. The focus of initial project activities was on training stakeholder focal points and refining priority actions by country, based on data, legislation and policy assessment surveys. Following these, the project was to carry out a similar set of activities for the 3 countries.

The list below links individual activities to the main expected results as formulated in the project document:

### *Result 1 - Institutions are built/strengthened*

Support is provided to the Ministries of Labour in each country for the establishment/strengthening of working units capable of elaborating, applying and administering labour migration policy. More specifically:

- Specialised advisory packages on policy and organisation are provided to each of the Labour Ministries in the three countries. The advisory packages will be developed and implemented through a four-stage process, i.e. 1) assessment and needs identification; 2) formulation of proposal and discussion/modification of proposal with concerned Ministries; 3) participation/support in implementation of the agreed set-up; 4) monitoring;
- Targeted training sessions are organised. During the four stages, the ILO will design and organise targeted training sessions for designated officials and staff of specialised units in each of the Labour Ministries in the three countries.

Specific outputs:

- Assessment and needs identification document in cooperation with Ministries of Labour in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan;
- Training and organisational set up proposal in cooperation with the Ministries of Labour in the 3 countries;
- Revised set up of Ministries of Labour;
- At least 90% of designated officials in the 3 Ministries of Labour actively participate in the targeted training sessions.

#### *Result 2 - Harmonisation of policies/legislation is promoted*

Activities related to Result 2 are mainly designed to ensure that concrete recommendations are issued and commitment continues towards the harmonisation of labour migration policies, in conformity with relevant international standards:

- Consultations on harmonisation of labour migration policies are held by Tripartite Constituents;
- Constituents participating in the sub-regional consultations formulate at least 1 proposal/recommendation on harmonisation of labour migration policies, legislation and practices, to be published on the Central Asia interactive website;
- Consultations on harmonisation of labour migration policies are held at the sub-regional level.

Specific outputs:

- At least 1 specific consultation on labour migration policies is held both at the national and at the sub-regional level;
- Constituents participating in the sub-regional consultations prepare and present at least 1 proposal/recommendation on harmonization of labour migration policies, legislation and practices;
- The recommendation is published on the Central Asia interactive website.

#### *Result 3. Consultative mechanisms are organised*

Activities related to Result 3 are designed to consolidate stakeholders' engagement and cooperation both at the national and regional levels, through convening of tripartite consultative mechanisms on labour migration policy, implementation and evaluation:

- Focal points are designated at the national and regional levels among different stakeholders (government, employers and workers), who will form the Tripartite Committees at the national and regional levels;
- Constituents participating in the sub-regional consultations formulate proposals/recommendations on harmonisation of labour migration policies, legislation and practices;
- Tripartite consultation mechanisms are conveyed at the national and sub-regional levels and will issue recommendations for the National and Regional thematic consultations on labour migration;
- Development of an interactive Central Asia website (in collaboration between the ILO and the ITC).

Specific outputs:

- Each country appoints Focal Points for the Tripartite Committees;
- Policy papers and recommendations are prepared and presented by Focal Points at the National and Sub-Regional Seminars.

#### *Result 4. Capacity is built and stakeholders trained*

Activities related to Result 4 are mainly designed to enhance awareness and capacity of stakeholders at the national and regional levels, enabling them to competently and persistently engage in policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation:

- Specialised advisory packages and targeted training sessions are provided to the Labour Ministries in the three countries;
- 3 National Seminars are organised in each country (1 in each country every year);
- 3 Sub-Regional Seminars are organised in 3 years (Inception Sub-Regional Seminar in year 1, the following seminars in years 2 and 3). The third Sub-Regional Seminar will summarise the process, analyse accomplished results regarding implementation of plans and recommendations.

Specific outputs:

- Recommendations on data management, policy and legislation are prepared and produced by national Constituents;
- 1 CD-Rom with all of the reports on seminars, studies and related publications is published and handed to all participants

#### *Result 5. Knowledge base is built*

Activities related to Result 5 are mainly designed in order to enhance the production, updating and sharing of labour migration data, knowledge and normative standards both at the national and at the regional level for policy making purposes. To this end, efforts are undertaken to establish a system for regional exchange of statistics and the application of common policies for data collection:

- Preparation of 1 inception paper, to summarize existing research and country situations, provide a general overview of possible perspectives for regional integration in Central Asia, and propose an action plan at the national and regional levels;
- 9 national studies completed on 3 topics, i.e. 1 study/topic/country (i.e. Kazakhstan/Kyrgyz Republic/Tajikistan). The three topics which will be investigated at the national level for each country are: a) labour migration data and statistics; b) Analysis of country legislation and legal practice on labour migration/review of status of ratification and/or de facto incorporation of relevant international standards into national law and practice; c) Capacity/mechanisms to deal with labour circulation towards regional integration and development.
- 3 Sub-regional synthesis/comparative studies compiled, i.e. a) regional exchange and policy application for statistics and data collection; b) Exploration of viable harmonisation measures for national legislations, labour codes and other aspects of labour circulation; c) Potential links between labour circulation and sub-regional economic integration;
- Following the completion of national and regional studies, their results will be presented at the National Seminars and at the Sub-Regional Seminars organised in each country on a yearly basis;
- 6 final studies are published, as part of the ILO Migration Paper series;
- Proposals are formulated for the harmonisation and regional exchange of data collection systems;
- Data on Central Asia are integrated into the global International Migration Database.

Specific outputs:

- 1 inception paper produced and widely disseminated;

- Elaboration, publication and wide dissemination of 3 booklets (1 per county) including national studies on: a) data/statistics, b) country legislation and policies; c) country capacity towards regional integration and 3 synthesis booklets including sub-regional comparative studies on topics a), b), c);
- 1 Central Asia interactive website used by Constituents in Central Asia;
- 1 CD with all reports, minutes and studies produced and widely disseminated;
- Data on Central Asia are available from the International Migration Database.

## **II. THE EVALUATION PURPOSE**

### **II.1 General and specific objectives**

The overall goal of this evaluation is to carry out an independent ex-post evaluation of the project, covering its whole implementation period between March 2008 and May 2011.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Obtain feedback from the national partners: what has worked, what has not and why;
- Undertake an evidence-based assessment of the project's design, implementation, management processes and results, including with regard to its contribution to the pursuit of the Decent Work Agenda in project countries;
- Determine the extent to which the outcomes of the project have been achieved, what kind of changes produced, what are the intended or unintended effects of the project;
- Provide suggestions, recommendations to better target the next steps, future strategies and new areas of technical cooperation;
- Assess the grounds for improving performance and effectiveness in project management.

### **II.2 Beneficiaries of the evaluation**

It will serve the following external and internal constituencies:

- ILO specialists and managers in ILO MIGRANT and ILO DWT/CO Moscow;
- ILO Evaluation Unit;
- ILO tripartite constituents and project implementing partners in the three beneficiary countries;
- Project staff;
- The project donor.

### **II.3 Evaluation methodology and questions**

The final independent evaluation of the project has been conducted in the period between November and December 2011. The evaluation process and the structure of this report follow the ILO Guidelines on Project Evaluation and the latest guidelines of the European Commission's Project Cycle Management methodology<sup>1</sup> as well as the relevant EC directives on project evaluation.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with these directives, the evaluation did not conduct a thorough appraisal of financial operations and of the state of administrative accounts related to the project.

The evaluation report has been prepared by Anna Lucia Colleo with the support of Blanka Hancilova, based on the review of all relevant project documents, i.e. the project application form, progress and final narrative reports, EU monitoring reports, the ILO Decent Work Country Programs for Kazakhstan (2007-2009 and 2010-2012), Kyrgyzstan (2006-2009), and Tajikistan (2007-2009); the DFID Multilateral Aid Review Report; project outputs and materials. The complete list of documents and materials is provided in Annex 3.

Moreover, the evaluation has drawn its findings on the outcomes of individual phone interviews which were carried out between November 7<sup>th</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup> with national stakeholders and external experts involved in the project, with the latest project's Chief Technical Advisor, with current ILO country staff and former ILO staff who managed the project from the ILO Headquarters in Geneva, and with the Task Manager at the

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<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/qsm/documents/pcm\\_manual\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/qsm/documents/pcm_manual_2004_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/evaluation/methods/index.htm>

EC Delegation to Kazakhstan. Interviews with Russian-speaking interviewees were conducted by Blanka Hancilova. The complete list of interviewees is provided in Annex 2.

Annexes will also include the Terms of Reference of this evaluation and the questionnaires that were used as additional tools for collecting information (tailored on the specific roles of different groups: ILO staff involved in the project; the project partner; project constituents).

In order to ensure that the evaluation exercise followed a fully participatory approach, a preliminary draft of this report was shared with the ILO for comments. ILO staff serving in different Headquarters units, in Moscow and in the project's beneficiary countries provided additional information and comments which were taken into account in finalising the report.

The evaluation has scrutinised the project by applying the following evaluation criteria:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Efficiency of project management and coordination</b> | This section will assess the appropriateness and efficiency of the project management and coordination.  |
| <b>Effectiveness</b>                                     | This section refers to the effectiveness of project activities and their consistency with the original work plan and its objectives. This section will assess how much of the project purpose was realised.  |
| <b>Impact</b>  | Under <i>Impact</i> , the evaluation will determine the extent to which the project has achieved its expected results, and the impact the project has produced or is likely to produce with regard to its overall goal.  |
| <b>Sustainability</b>                                    | This section considers the institutional, policy and financial sustainability of project outcomes, and thus the possibility that the project achievements are sustainable beyond the scope and life of the project.  |
| <b>Added values</b>                                      | The project review ascertained whether the project had any <i>Added values</i> , i.e. if it has achieved unplanned results, brought forward changes and innovations in the attitude and action of the institutions and the actors it involved, and the degree of its complementarity with other similar initiatives. |

## II.4 Expected results of the evaluation

The main output of the evaluation exercise is this evaluation report. The thorough collection and analysis of information that was undertaken to prepare the report is expected to allow the ILO and the project donor to assess the efficiency, the effectiveness and the sustainability of project outcomes, and their contribution to achieving its overall objective.

### III. THE EVALUATION FINDINGS<sup>3</sup>

#### III.1 Efficiency of project management and coordination

| Were the management, organisational and coordination arrangements adequate and effective?   |
|---|
| <p>Overall efficiency in project implementation was challenged by both external impediments and criticalities in the management of the project. External constraints are mostly related to political turmoil that occurred in Kyrgyzstan in the spring 2010, and to the shuffling of competences on labour migration in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which challenged the local understanding and ownership of the project and limited the effectiveness of activities devoted to strengthen the institutional capacity of project beneficiaries.</p> <p>Political unrest and subsequent ethnic violence arousing in the Kyrgyz Republic in April 2010, most likely after a scaling-up period, have seriously disrupted project activity. The project was mainly handled from Bishkek and the office was closed and staff confined to residence for over two months, until May 2010. Moreover, the appointed CTA was a person of Uzbek nationality, who was evacuated from the country in early June 2010 when persons of her ethnicity were victims of killings in the Osh region and rumours had started that they were also going to be targeted in the capital city. A substitute was appointed in August but announced his departure for reasons unrelated to the project by the end of September; stable replacement took charge in October 2010. This situation clearly contributed to delay project delivery, but as of August 2010 the project re-established activities and eventually gave factual responses to recommendations in the EU Monitoring Mission Report of March 2010.</p> <p>In addition, the project was also affected by the reorganisation of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment in Kyrgyzstan, by the fact that the project document had identified its main government stakeholder in Tajikistan in the Ministry of Labour, while when the project started core competences on labour migration policy had been shifted to a new Migration Service. Moreover, frequent staff turn-overs within relevant institutions in all three beneficiary countries contrasted project efforts to strengthen the capacity of government beneficiaries.</p> <p>In addition to these serious external constrictions, the project progress was also disrupted by internal challenges and criticalities. As it started, the project was impacted by protracted staff recruitment processes: the first CTA was appointed in September 2008, and it allegedly took another 4 to 6 weeks to open a budget line in ILO accounts dedicated to this project. From September to December the project recruited national staff and identified the premises for three national offices, although the task was facilitated by “incorporating staff and office premises from previous, overlapping projects”. The project official kick-off took place in December 2008, with a conference open to participants from all beneficiary countries in Issyk-Kul. Quoting from a detailed written feedback from ILO staff: “... <i>each step can –and did-- take from one week to several: writing to EU to request first disbursement, waiting for EU processing and transfer of payment, preparing internal ILO “BPS” disbursement budget for first instalment, waiting until overloaded budget staff got to review and authorization of internal budget after funds registered in an ILO account, then submitting request for funding commitment for CTA post and waiting for it to be processed; when commitment established, requesting (in this case) Moscow ILO office to generate personnel action to send to ILO Europe office to establish CTA position, then ensuring the request is endorsed by Europe official and MIGRANT branch director, then accompanying and providing supportive data for HR department processing of personnel action to grade and classify post and issue approval for hiring, only then being able to post and circulate advertisements of job availability, then granting time period for submission of candidate applications, then reviewing applications and CVs to establish a short list, then setting and</i></p> |

<sup>3</sup> OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance have been used to interpret the answers to the evaluation questions

*conducting interviews, then making a selection, then allowing time for the chosen appointee to give notice to employer and start visa proceedings”.*

Available information is homogeneous in indicating that project performance did not improve until the summer of 2010. A number of factors have allegedly concurred to this long impasse:

- most interviewees question the technical competence and managerial capacity of the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) who was initially appointed for the project, an aspect which in their views have also affected the project's relationship with its beneficiaries;
- the CTA focused on the domestic situation in the Kyrgyz Republic, allegedly overshadowing responsibility to supervise and support activity in the other two project beneficiary countries and to ensure a regional approach; quoting: *“this also undermined the national project officer in Kyrgyzstan, leading to his angry resignation in March 2010”*;
- in the same month, also the ILO national coordinator in Kazakhstan left the project, for different reasons but concurrent in criticising the way the project was conducted in Central Asia and administered at Headquarters;
- efficiency at field level was also allegedly hampered by an unclear division of tasks and a limited understanding of project management requirements. The first EU Monitoring Mission Report of March 2010 clearly points out that the Logical Framework Matrix was never used to measure project progress and achievements. Internal procedures for planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation were only established in October 2010;
- in addition, the administrative set up was very complex: the project financial and administrative management was centralised in Geneva, with the sub-regional office in Moscow providing back-up on administrative and financial matters, and activities being coordinated and implemented in the field<sup>4</sup>;
- Finally, financial management is deemed unsatisfactory by both project partners and ILO staff, at Headquarters as well as in beneficiary countries. The EU Monitoring Report of March 2010 identified financial and administrative difficulties as major risks for the project. Please see more information on this aspect in the section below dedicated to financial management.

Documentary evidence points out that information on the difficulties that the project was undergoing had reached the ILO Regional Office in Moscow in November 2009, when the Kyrgyz Ministry of Labour sent a written complaint about the way the project was managed; and in addition, the project donor undertook a Monitoring Mission in March 2010 and issued a negative report which pointed out different criticalities in project management and progress. However, project staff agree that most of these concerns were known from early on, as country offices and officers in Geneva were in regular telephone and email consultations.

In response to the letter sent by the Ministry of Labour and following consultation with ILO Europe, ILO Moscow, the CTA, and government officials, a week-long project monitoring mission from Headquarters was arranged to Bishkek in March 2010, the same month in which the EU issued its monitoring report.

After the report was received and the ILO monitoring mission undertaken in the same March 2010, it took some time to the Lead partner to address its recommendations.

Available information points out to a number of criticalities that have intersected in a negative way (1) external project environment; (2) critical aspects in administrative and financial management and (3) issues related to the performance of the first CTA. Due to these intersecting influences, it allegedly proved difficult for the ILO to analyse what were the drivers for the under-performance of the project and to address them.

Clearly, the external project environment could not be controlled by the project as well as the project did not

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<sup>4</sup> Quoting: *“In many years of professional experience, I never faced such a combination of Kafkaesque administrative barriers. The effect of rules, procedures and specific constraints applied to this project ensured delays and disruptions in project implementation and activity well beyond the control of persons directly responsible for implementation. Poor performance in keeping to schedule of project activity and product delivery inevitably resulted”*



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| <p>have power to change the ILO/EC procedures on financial management. However, external constraints have not been the only factor behind the delay in project implementation. More structural reasons seem to be at stake, namely the internal monitoring system in place for this project and its capacity to analyse the situation and take timely corrective actions should be strengthened.</p> <p>The assessment concerning the capacities of the first CTA seems to find confirmation by the improvement in project performance and results following change of project leadership in August 2010, when a senior expert with sound international migration competence and managerial skills was appointed as the project CTA; following his departure for personal reasons in September 2010, the next appointed CTA followed on this positive pattern. As of October 2010, with the new CTA and national coordinators in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan appointed, the overall management and coordination of the project was significantly improved, and this immediately reflected on the satisfaction of project stakeholders and in the progress of activities.</p> <p>A clearer allocation of responsibilities between the CTA and the project country offices improved project coordination and overall efficiency. Contacts with stakeholders and beneficiaries in the three countries were resumed, and the team was able to ensure a better level of cooperation and commitment from them. Meetings were carried out with high level political and technical personnel at the Ministries of Labour, representatives of Trade Unions, Employers and the EU Delegations to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. An updated needs analysis of target beneficiaries was undertaken, and the country Action Plans revised accordingly, with a clear allocation of resources for individual activities, which allowed the project teams to work with a result-oriented approach, and made planning transparent for all the actors involved in project implementation. Because a number of activities were still outstanding and the project was close to its end, the ILO applied for a no cost extension, which was approved until 31 May 2011. During the course of the second EU Monitoring Mission which took place in March 14-25, 2011, the project progresses were duly noted, and these concerned both project management tools and the realisation of activities. In fact, over its last 8 months of activity the project managed to deliver almost all outputs that were initially planned for.</p> <p>In the words of interviewed constituents, appreciation for the latest project activeness has ensured continuity to previous ILO work in the region. Still, they have also pointed out that their main concern does not lie in the implementation of the plan of action of a particular project, but rather in the continuity of support received to improving the regulation and management of labour migration in and among the countries of Central Asia.</p> |
| <p><b>Has the project received adequate backstopping and administrative support from the ILO?</b></p> <p>The initial delays suffered by the action reflected lengthy selection processes but also the difficulties embedded in different and conflicting procedures between EU funding management requirements and ILO internal rules. Administrative support, on its side, worked along a complex chain of approval steps from Headquarters in Geneva through the ILO Regional Office in Moscow to country project offices. Moreover, in accordance to ILO directives received after the establishment of a new Financial and Administrative system (IRIS), the project's financial and administrative management was centralised, resulting in a CTA based in Central Asia and authorisations for any expenses coming from Geneva.</p>   |
| <p><b>Was financial management appropriate, and project resources used in an efficient manner?</b></p> <p>Service providers and national counterparts resented the lengthiness of financial procedures and disbursements. Country staff claim that they were not given any instructions about administrative and financial requirements and procedures, and that disbursements of project funds to the field was lengthy even when project funds were made available to the ILO by the project partner.</p> <p>The main cause for disruption in financial management has allegedly been the fact that, although cooperation between the two organisations has been on-going for a number of years now, conflicting rules regulate EU funding and ILO provisions on financial management. EU provisions for disbursement of grant funding foresee that all instalments following the first are disbursed after 70% of the previous amount received is spent, and after narrative and financial reports are approved by the EU. On the ILO side, an</p>  |

internal rule requires that donor funds be transferred to the ILO before any expenditure commitment can be made. Despite ILO's co-financing of the project, this resulted in the postponement of activities for substantial periods of time. Quoting: *"From December 2008 to April 2009, financial paralysis of operations and deferral of scheduled actions as ILO rules prevented any further disbursement of funds for project activity. The result of paralysis of disbursements meant that no commitments could be established for project costs and activities during this period. For example, to contract research studies in each country, sequenced to follow the launch seminar to provide data for national working groups and the subsequent regional consultation within a year of the first. The de facto suspension of normal activity flow had an impact on staff motivation and morale. From July to October 2009, this interruption cycle repeated since most of the second EU funds instalment had to be allocated to cover the full year extension of contract for the CTA and national staff prior to September. That being the biggest single project cost, it comprised a large proportion of the instalment received. Meaning that once backlogged costs/disbursements and these staff costs were covered, nearly all of the instalment had been committed. Meaning once again a three month cycle of preparing, documenting, submitting request, waiting for processing, then crediting of next transfer, then setting up revised allocations budget for expenditure of instalment amount. And during this three month period, impossibility of disbursing funds for on-going project operation and activity costs. Combined with long delayed research, it also meant impossibility to schedule and prepare the second annual regional conference. A third cycle with similar conditions occurred in mid-2010, following expenditure of third instalment. When contract renewals for national staff came due and there were no EU funds in account, ILO Moscow issued notification of termination. ILO MIGRANT agreed on an internal 'loan guarantee' of funds to cover the amount of staff cost commitment, just in time to avoid staff actually being terminated. Not so good for job security or morale. Between February to April 2011, a request for no-cost extension of the project until May 31 was approved by the EC but the original project budget needed to be reviewed before approval. Meaning that no expenditure differing from original amounts set in 2007 could be made by ILO. Which again meant inability to make a number of outstanding payments as of January until April when EU agreement came in writing to the budget revision"*.

**Has the choice of partners and project counterparts been appropriate, in terms of them being in a position to support the project and promote its results and outputs?**

The selection of country stakeholders and counterparts has been appropriate and in line with the ILO tripartite approach. The quality of their involvement in the project has followed the up-down phases of project activeness described above. Nevertheless, country stakeholders have mentioned on several occasions that they find the project design appropriate and useful. In particular, the gathering of representatives from key stakeholders on labour migration in responsive country structures, the Country Project Advisory Groups (CAGs), and their direct commitment to achieving the project results, and to engage in national and regional dialogue, is seen as a very positive feature of ILO activities in the beneficiary countries and in the region. Migration experts and researchers have been selected among local resources, thus reinforcing the local capacity to contribute to build the necessary knowledge base for an effective management of labour migration. Since August 2010, project partners were consulted, and the project could build on the active involvement of governmental structures, workers' and employer's organisations, thus strengthening national ownership of project outputs and results, which is essential for long-term sustainability. The exact contribution of the ITC as the project partner could not be ascertained in the course of this project evaluation, but has certainly included the design, development and management of the Central Asia Website.

**The degree of completion of project activities, in comparison with the initial action plan**

Provisions in the initial application envisaged the establishment of CAGs with a view to establish a direct collaboration line with the group of leading stakeholders in the target countries; promote horizontal dialogue and cooperation among the country's constituents, and strengthen their commitment towards the project's

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| <p>goals; build a solid local ownership of the project's achievements.</p> <p>However, although CAGs were established in the inception phase of the project, a number of stakeholders have pointed out that they have rarely been convened until October 2010. Moreover, constituents claim to have lacked a clear idea of the specific goals of the project. By March 2010, 2 years after the project's start, the third national seminars, the launch of two (out of three) sub-regional synthesis studies in 2 countries, and the launch of the project website and targeted training sessions for designated officials and staff in the Ministries of Labour had not yet been implemented. As a result, the country stakeholders' contribution has been rather limited for long periods of time.</p> <p>Notwithstanding these long delays, the project has produced most of its expected outputs over its last 8 months of life: an Advisory Package which included a set of publications, working papers and seminar hand-outs. National and regional studies on legislative provisions were realised and subsequently updated in early 2011, to ensure the presentation of appropriate recommendations on legislation during the sub-regional seminar in March 2011 in Astana. The results of the second studies on statistical data collection from the three countries were presented in the second sub-regional seminar in Dushanbe in April 2011. Although the studies were not published and did not become part of the ILO official series as initially planned, project stakeholders have widely pointed out that improving data collection is an outstanding knowledge need in their countries.</p> <p>Both in Kazakhstan and in Kyrgyzstan Project Advisory Groups (PAGs) were re-established after the new CTA was appointed. The PAG members were closely involved in the elaboration of the new action plans. The content of activities was in a number of cases reshaped based on the needs and specific requests of country partners; this included the content of Specialised Advisory Packages (SAPs), and publications (despite a concern that documents were made available only in Russian, limiting their usability in the region). Two national studies for each country were completed and the project beneficiaries' recommendations were presented and distributed to participants at the Sub-Regional Seminars in Astana (March 2011) and Dushanbe (April 2011).</p> <p>In Kazakhstan, training sessions were held in early April for the Academy of Public Administration and the Commission for Women and Family, and the ILO provided technical comments on the draft law on migration following a formal request from the Ministry of Labour. In Kyrgyzstan, the revised plan also includes advice on the latest draft law on 'Private Employment Agencies' (PEA), which is due for submission to the new parliament for adoption at the end of 2011. In the period November 2010 - February 2011 a number of targeted training sessions have also been provided for the representatives of different beneficiaries in both countries.</p> <p>In Tajikistan, the implementation of project activities has been slower than in KA and KZ. From the beginning of 2010 to September 2010, project activities in the country were suspended for lack of available project funds. The implementation of activities restarted in October 2010 after the visit of the new regional coordinator; following meetings with the project stakeholders, the partners confirmed their participation in seminars and in PAG meetings.</p> |
| <p><b>Were internal and external monitoring and evaluation procedures established and respected?</b></p>  |
| <p>The internal management of the project was improved in October 2011, by establishing an operational procedure for project planning, monitoring, and reporting.</p>   |
| <p><b>Have sharing of information and dissemination of outputs been adequate?</b></p>   |
| <p>Project outputs were adequately disseminated through the project website, CDs with the project Advisory Packages handed out to constituents and participants in national and regional consultations, the availability of data about migration in Central Asia in the International Migration Database, and a number of media issuances. It is interesting to note that the exchange of information among national stakeholders and across the region was part of the approach of this project, which paid great attention to policy dialogue.</p>  |

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| <b>Were EU visibility requirements respected?</b>  |
| All public materials and documents of the project feature the EU logo, parallel with the ILO's. The research outputs that could be reviewed have the EU logo on their cover page, together with the ILO's, and acknowledge that they were carried out in the context of a EU funded project. More generally, research outputs are allegedly copyrighted by the International Labour Organisation. Country stakeholders refer to the project as an ILO project. |

### III.2 Effectiveness of the project

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| <b>What progress has the project made towards achieving its expected results, as defined in the project application?</b>   |
| <p>The prospects for the achievement of the project's specific objective, i.e. to develop shared policies, legislation and administrative tools for the management of labour migration in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, were realistic, especially in light of the ILO's previous achievements in the region, its good contact with key partners, and the original project duration. However, the combination of external and internal constraints that were mentioned in previous sections of the report has affected the project achievements. Although over its last 8 months the project was very active, the ambitious results that were set for a 36 months period could not be fully achieved. This said, it should also be noted that in its final phase, the project did move forward in the direction of "developing shared policies, legislation and administrative tools for the management of labour migration in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan", implementing activities that can be considered as partial but relevant contributions to the attainment of its results.</p> <p>More specifically, activities which contributed to the achievement of specific results are:</p> <p><i>Result 1. Institutions are built/strengthened.</i> The project provided support for structuring the internal set-up of the new Migration Service in Tajikistan, and provided training to the its staff and to representatives of PEA on administrative and legal mechanisms of collaboration; it made its technical expertise available to the Committee for Migration Police in Kazakhstan; and organised trainings sessions for the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration in Kyrgyzstan on labour migration management and gender issues in labour migration.</p> <p><i>Result 2 - Harmonisation of policies/legislation is promoted.</i> The draft Law on Migration in Kazakhstan and the preliminary version of the draft Law on External Labour Migration in Tajikistan received technical comments from specialised units at ILO Headquarters, while national CAG meetings were convened to provide inputs to the government on the National Labour Migration Strategy 2011-2015 in Tajikistan, and on the draft Law on Private Employment Agencies in Kyrgyzstan, pending the provision of technical comments from the Geneva Headquarters.</p> <p><i>Result 3 - Consultative mechanisms are organised.</i> Trade Unions in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have signed bilateral agreements to reinforce protection of migrant worker rights. Despite earlier reluctances on cooperation, key stakeholders in Kazakhstan responded enthusiastically to support the organisation of a three-day regional consultation meeting in Astana to discuss the legislation in participating countries and define common areas for future harmonisation; the seminar ended with the definition of several priorities for regional work, and so did the second regional seminar on statistical data collection. The biggest concern among the partners today is the follow up actions on these priorities and recommendations which, without external support, stakeholders in the region feel to be not in a position to complete.</p> <p><i>Result 4 - Capacity is built.</i> The number of training sessions delivered by the project was more limited than initially planned, and staff reshuffling among ministries challenged any efforts to reinforce internal capacities. The need for capacity building is still perceived as high in the beneficiary countries. The availability of the materials in the Advisory Packages was appreciated by the project beneficiaries.</p> |

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| <p><i>Result 5 – The knowledge base is built.</i> The objective to share a common, comparative data management system among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the establishment of a consultative mechanism at the sub-regional level have not progressed noticeably, as it required more intensive work between the countries than what the project managed to do.</p>  |
| <p><b>To what extent has the project contributed to the improvement of strategies and systems pertaining to the governance of labour migration in the target countries and region?</b></p>   |
| <p>Notwithstanding the limitations highlighted in the previous section, the resulting impression from a number of key project stakeholders and partners is that the project has provided them with appreciated support from the ILO in the region. The last project team has managed to keep labour migration issues in the focus of key national actors in the region. The endorsement of the Law on Migration in Kazakhstan is a sign of the positive contribution of this project to improving the regulation of labour migration in the region. Similarly, the project has substantially contributed through stimulating national Trade Unions to conclude bilateral agreements for strengthening their cooperation in protecting the rights of labour migrants.</p> <p>Project and country coordinators in place from October 2010 have shown a remarkable capacity of managing the project creatively, remaining within given management rules. They gave proof of an extensive capacity to adapt the programme to modifications in the context, and to inputs received from beneficiaries. Work programs were adjusted to take into account existing conditions, and gained full support from country constituents and stakeholders. This allowed the mainstreaming of project outcomes and a more active support by national stakeholders to achieving project results, as well as the appropriate organisation of dissemination and policy dialogue events with high-level agendas, which facilitated media interest in the project.</p> <p>The final acceleration of efforts to realise outstanding project activities did allow for progressing with the implementation of activities but could not fully ensure that its regional seminars fed the solid process of regional cooperation that the project document indicates as a key expected result of the project; two out of three foreseen sub-regional seminars could only be held in the spring of 2011, one following the other and next to project closure. Timing did not allow the project to support the seminar's follow-up, and makes it difficult to predict how far the recommendations will be accepted and actively implemented by stakeholders.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the demand for regional dialogue has remained high, and stakeholders made it clear that they have come to recognise the relevance of regional dialogue for an effective and appropriate management of labour migration thanks to their work with international organisations in recent years and of the ILO in particular, whom they recognise as their main partner on labour migration. They also pointed out that external support is key to foster the regional dimension, not only to bear related costs but mainly to steer and encourage the process.</p> |

### III.3 Impact of the project

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| <p><b>To what extent did the project attain its specific objectives?</b></p>  |
| <p>The project did not accomplish its expected results in full, but it has contributed to progress in developing shared policies, legislation and administrative tools for the management of labour migration in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Activities implemented during the last 8 months of the project have allowed to make some good progress towards achieving the project goal and expected results.</p> |
| <p><b>Did the specific objectives achieved by the project contribute to realise its overall goal?</b></p>   |
| <p>The project overall goal is wide enough to include contributions from this action. The project has supported the identification of policy gaps and training needs of the constituents; it continued the involvement of Country Project Advisory Group members in a cooperative process in and across countries in the region,</p>  |

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| following up with previous EU funded ILO initiatives in the region; the quality of studies and technical advice provided by the project is positively judged by project beneficiaries. Most importantly, the project has confirmed the possibilities for national commitment and sub-regional cooperation to actually produce positive practices and collaborations towards effective migration management.  |
| <b>To which extent the achievement of specific objectives was a direct consequence of this project?</b>  |
| The attainments of the project built on previous achievements of the ILO in the region, and to complementary and on-going efforts of other international organisations and regional initiatives (i.e. CIS) to improving the legislative and institutional framework on migration management. Therefore, the project could capitalise on consolidated outcomes and can be seen as a part of the overall technical assistance work on migration that is being carried out in the region for almost a decade now. |

### III.4 Sustainability of outcomes

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| <b>Financial sustainability: are outputs and results financially sustainable?</b>  |
| Financially, beneficiary countries seem to rely extensively on donor support to continue work on labour migration.   |
| <b>Institutional sustainability: have project outcomes gained institutional support that will ensure their sustainability beyond the life of the project?</b>  |
| <p>The action was conceived to encourage and support national initiatives, aiming at promoting the insurgence of locally owned processes, regardless of the availability of external assistance. Although challenged by massive turnovers of internal staff, critical efforts were devoted to enhance the capacity of the different national actors with regard to relevant features of labour migration. A number of interviewees point out that the multi-stakeholder approach of the project is a solid step forward to improving migration management at both the country and the regional levels. Moreover, the project made it possible for national institutions in the region to enter into transnational agreements, and to reinforce regional exchanges and cooperation.</p> <p>It is a fact, however, that structural reorganisation in the migration sector frequently taking place in the beneficiary countries, which involve the transfer and loss of trained people, slow down progress with the follow-up of recommendations and priorities defined in sub-regional seminars.</p> |
| <b>Have project outcomes had an impact at policy level?</b>  |
| The action has contributed to the formulation of legislation in line with international standards, has promoted bilateral agreements between Trade Unions across the regions, and has critically supported multi-stakeholder discussions of institutional and legislative set-ups for the management of labour migration. In more practical terms, it has incorporated provisions on labour migration in the current DWCP in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and provisions for the protection of migrant workers from different forms of exploitation in the new action plan on combating human trafficking and forced labour in Tajikistan. In Kazakhstan, the project was closely involved in the drafting of the Law on Migration, which gave the team a platform for promoting international standards and ILO Conventions. In Kyrgyzstan, the prospects for impact became more limited following turbulences in April 2010. In Tajikistan, the shifting of relevant competences from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection affected the project's potential policy impact.                 |

### III.5 The project's added value

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| <b>Which project elements can be regarded as added values?</b>   |
| In the opinion of most interviewees, clear added values of the project have been the systematic involvement of national constituents (its own target groups) as active partners in the implementation of the action, and |

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| <p>the commitment to improving transnational dialogue and cooperation.</p> <p>Moreover, improvements in the cooperation between the Trade Union Federations in the three beneficiary countries is regarded as an important step to labour migration governance and a more effective protection of migrant rights. Additionally, indications were given that the project positively contributed establishment by the government in Tajikistan of a new distinct administrative department on migration directly reporting to the Presidency and comprising responsibilities, staff and direct coordination of both the existing Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Interior. Finally, the technical comments provided to new legislation in Kazakhstan were taken into consideration to ensure provisions for migrant rights' protection.</p>   |
| <p><b>Was the project complementary to other initiatives in the target region?</b></p>   |
| <p>The proposed action is a complementary intervention to the AENEAS funded project <i>Towards Sustainable Partnerships for the Effective Governance of Labour Migration in the Russian Federation, the Caucasus and Central Asia</i>, implemented in the Russian Federation, Armenia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. The CGAs in beneficiary countries were established by this previous project, which had also strengthened their capacity and consultative mechanisms.</p> <p>Moreover, the efforts to establish a system for regional exchange of statistics and the application of common policies for data collection are common to other initiatives in the region by other international agencies, such as OSCE, IOM, ACTED and the WB. The risk for possible overlaps was addressed in different occasions, including at the coordination meeting convened by the EU Delegation in Bishkek on 30 November 2009, and the donor coordination meeting convened by the Eurasia Foundation in Central Asia on 27 January 2010, in which the project highlighted areas for duplication of the actions with other international organizations. According to different interviewees, some duplications of efforts with the projects of other international agencies have actually occurred.</p> |

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **IV.1 Conclusions**

Political turmoil in Kyrgyzstan in the spring of 2010 and the reshuffling of institutional competences on labour migration in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have clearly affected project implementation.

However, available information points out that the project success was also impacted by internal criticalities. For over two years, the project was under-performing, and the reasons indicated by interviewed stakeholders and staff help explain why this long stalemate has occurred. They have identified the main constraint in the limited managerial and technical capacity of the CTA who was initially selected for coordinating the project, who remained in charge until May 2010. The evaluation findings also point to a complex administrative set up: in accordance to ILO directives received after the establishment of a new Financial and Administrative system (IRIS), the financial and administrative management was centralised, so that the CTA was based in Central Asia, while authorisations for any expenses were coming from Geneva. In addition, delays in financial disbursements were also due to internal ILO regulations conflicting with EC requirements for the management of grants. In addition, these criticalities were not properly detected and addressed by the project: the internal monitoring system of the project has proved limited in openly identifying project constraints, and in addressing those with timely corrective measures when information was made available.

Project efficiency and effectiveness clearly improved following new staff appointments in the summer and fall of 2010, when most EU disbursements had also been issued. The project has successfully managed to re-establish contact with its key target beneficiaries, and to regain their collaborative attitude towards the project. Local constituents have repeatedly pointed out their need for external support, both financial and technical, especially as it concerns regional dialogue and cooperation. There is however a persistent need to strengthen coordination among donors and implementing agencies to avoid duplication of resources and efforts.

### **IV.2 Lessons learned**

Despite external and internal difficulties that hampered the implementation of this particular project, available information allows for the identification of a number of features concerning the project's logic and design, which can be regarded as positive features for similar initiatives in the future:

1. the alignment of its objectives with the broader goals of the DWCPs;
2. its latest participatory approach, based on the active involvement of key national counterparts, allows for structured cooperation among entities with a stake in labour migration;
3. the improvement of coordination among stakeholders at national level, among government structures, and at regional level, between key institutional and social stakeholders operating in countries that are connected by transnational migration routes;
4. the structured plan of meetings at national and regional level to exchange views and fine-tune evolving needs, approaches, methodologies and ways of operation;
5. focus on building or strengthening the internal set-up and capacity of institutional structures dealing with labour migration;
6. the investment in a solid knowledge-base to support appropriate policy-making;
7. its attention to the wide circulation of project outputs, so that they become common references and allow for future capitalisation of project work.



### IV.3 Recommendations

Experience from this project allows for drawing a number of recommendations:

1. The selection and appointment of project personnel whose competences and qualifications are adequate for their responsibilities in the project are key assets for the successful implementation of any project initiative. This is particularly critical when it concerns staff in managerial positions;
2. The PCM concept and requirements should be clear to all involved staff, at any levels;
3. Provisions for internal and external monitoring and evaluation should be appropriately defined from the early stages of project development. This includes the definition of OVIs in the project design, and their use as key means for monitoring the project's progress; the clear allocation of responsibilities for project monitoring and evaluation, and the definition of measures for ensuring timely, effective and adequate detection of information and corrective action if a need arises;
4. Since funding is allocated to implement a specific action, with defined goals, expected results and activities, it is important that any changes in the initial plan of action are appropriately shared with both project partners and beneficiaries, and the project donor as appropriate;
5. A review of the administrative set-up that was put in place for this project would allow for improving efficiency in project management. The review may also address the pros and cons of centralising versus decentralising the administrative and technical coordination of projects co-funded by the EC;
6. Financial management is a key aspect in terms of both project efficiency and effectiveness. It is important that provisions in place are functional to project implementation. The ILO and its project donor may want to consider addressing the issue of conflicting provisions on important financial management aspects in the context of the overall relationship between the two organisations, since these cannot be solved in the limited context of a project initiative;
7. Coordination with other agencies working on labour migration in Central Asia should be strengthened, with a view to avoid duplication of resources and outputs, and to identify possible synergies. The ILO may consider submitting a request to promote coordination efforts to the project donor, which supports different initiatives in the region;
8. Regarding specific follow-up actions to this project, recommendations have been formulated in the framework of regional consultations which have been organised by the project. Since these are based on technical inputs, have been revised by CAGs and have been presented in participatory consultations, they can be believed to correspond to actual needs, and to be owned by constituents.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

EC – European Commission

ILO – International Labour Organisation

DWCP - Decent Work Country Programs

SO - Specific Objective

CAGs - Country Advisory Groups

PEA - Private Employment Agencies

CTA - Chief Technical Advisor

PCM – Project Cycle Management

LF - Logical Framework

LFM - Logical Framework Matrix

OVI – Objectively Verifiable Indicators

## ANNEXES

Annex 1. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

Annex 2. List of persons interviewed

Annex 3. List of mentioned publications and documents, including relevant country information

Annex 4. Questionnaires for collecting information about the project

### Annex 1. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

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| Project Title:    | <b>Regulating Labour Migration as an Instrument of Development and Regional Cooperation in Central Asia - Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan</b> |
| Sub-region:       | Eastern Europe and Central Asia  |
| Lead Office:      | ILO International Migration Programme (MIGRANT)  |
| Duration:         | <b>36 months; 2009-2011 (prolonged to end May 2011)</b>  |
| Target countries: | Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan   |
| Donor agency:     | the European Commission  |
| Budget:           | EUR 1,199,000' (80% contributed by EU)   |

National Counterparts: National authorities responsible for labour migration governance, trade unions, employers' organizations, migration research institutions, and civil society organizations working with migrants in three target countries

## I. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR EVALUATION

The final independent evaluation of the project is undertaken in accordance with the ILO Evaluation Policy adopted by the Governing Body in November 2005, which provides for systematic evaluation of programmes and projects in order to improve quality, accountability, transparency of the ILO's work, strengthen the decision-making and support constituents in forwarding decent work and social justice.

## II. BRIEF BACKGROUND ON PROJECT AND CONTEXT

### Migration as an issue

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the region of Central Asia has become an area of intensive labour migration, both legal and undocumented, seasonal and long-term, skilled and unskilled. Since migrant workers are especially vulnerable to employment-related discrimination, exploitation and abuse, the national governments and international institutions have been making efforts to address the need for better policies and systems in order to better regulate labour migration and protect migrant workers. It is with this purpose in mind that the ILO, EU and tripartite constituents in the three focus countries of Central Asia embarked on this collaborative project

## **Development objective of the project**

Overall objective(s): To ensure the development of a more comprehensive strategy for labour migration and more effective regulation of migration flows in Central Asia.

Specific objective: To develop shared policies, legislation and administrative tools for the management of labour migration in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, building on participation and engagement of relevant stakeholders at the country and regional levels

### **The project has five specific objectives:**

1. **INSTITUTIONS ARE BUILT/STRENGTHENED:** Support is provided to the Ministries of Labour in each country for the establishment/strengthening of working units capable of elaborating, applying and administering national labour migration policy.
2. **HARMONISATION OF POLICIES/LEGISLATION IS PROMOTED:** Recommendations for the harmonization of labour migration policies and practices in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan are formulated through tripartite regional consultative mechanisms
3. **CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS ARE ORGANISED** Stakeholders' engagement and co-operation both at the national and regional levels are consolidated through the establishment of tripartite mechanisms on labour migration.
4. **CAPACITY IS BUILT AND STAKEHOLDERS TRAINED** Awareness and capacity of stakeholders at the national and regional levels are enhanced to enable their competent and sustained engagement in policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation aimed at promoting decent work and enhancing the protection of migrant workers' rights;
5. **KNOWLEDGE BASE IS BUILT** Production, updating and sharing of labour migration data, knowledge and normative standards are enhanced, both at the national and regional levels.

### **Principles of implementation**

In undertaking migration management projects, the ILO is guided by its own Constitution that refers to the duty to protect the interests of workers employed in countries other than their own. In the implementation of the project the ILO and national partners' action is guided by the following key principles:

- 1) a participatory approach with active involvement of national partners, i.e. through tripartite national steering committees;
- 2) integration and coordination of stakeholder activities: horizontally, among the national implementing partners, and vertically, between the national and regional level;
- 3) multi level interventions, including national and regional levels
- 4) extension of the knowledge-base and adaptation of activities on the basis of feedback from national and community level implementing agencies ;
- 5) gender mainstreaming, including the provision of differentiated services for women and men in project activities and outputs.

## **III. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND CLIENTS OF THE EVALUATION**

The purpose of the evaluation is to:

- a) Determine the extent to which the outcomes of the project have been achieved, what kind of changes produced, what are the intended or unintended effects of the project;
- b) Obtain feedback from the national partners: what is working, what is not and why;

- c) Provide suggestions, recommendations to better target the next steps, future strategies and new areas of technical cooperation.

The evaluation covers the project over its full implementation period of 2009-2011. It will serve the following external and internal constituencies:

- ILO tripartite constituents and project implementing partners in three countries;
- Ultimate beneficiaries of the project – labour migrants and their families;
- The donor partner;
- ILO specialists and managers in ILO MIGRANT and ILO DWT/CO Moscow;
- Project staff.

#### IV. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation will address the following aspects of the project:

##### 1) Effectiveness of the project (outcomes):

- What progress has the project made towards achieving its outcomes?
- How does the project approach fit the on-going trends and patterns of labour migration in the region?
- How did the project contribute to the improvement of strategies and systems pertaining to labour migration governance?
- To what extent did the project support information and training needs of the constituents?
- How have constituents been involved in the implementation? Have the project Advisory Groups been instrumental? Are the constituents satisfied with the quality of tools, technical advice, training and other activities, delivered by the project? Have there been any resulting changes in constituents' capacities?
- How many communities were reached by training, and/or benefited from the improved migration policies and systems?

##### 2) Effectiveness of the overall project management approach<sup>5</sup>:

- Were the management arrangements effective? Has the division of work tasks and use of local skills been effective?
- Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support from the ILO and partners?
- Has the choice of partners been effective in terms of them being in a position to support the project and promote its products/results?

##### 3) Efficiency:

- How the resources (staffing, time, skills and knowledge) were used? Have they been used in an efficient manner?

##### 4) Sustainability:

2.4.1 The financial aspect (how will activities and/or management structures be financed when the grant ends?)

2.4.2 Institutional level (Will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local "ownership" of action outcomes?)

2.4.3 Policy level where applicable (What structural impact will the action have - e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?)

- What was done to promote sustainability?
- What is the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes?

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<sup>5</sup> Personnel evaluation is not part of the scope of work under this TOR.

- Are the national partners able to continue implementing the adopted strategies and initiatives after the project completion? (Existing capacity of people and institutions; presence of enabling laws, policies, regulations, etc.)
- What more should be done to improve sustainability?

**5) Lessons learned:**

- What are the main lessons learned, good practices, innovations?
- To what extent are the best practices documented and shared with the broader community?
- Are there any areas where difficulties have been experienced? What are the reasons?
- Are there any alternative strategies which would have been more effective?

**6) Recommendations:**

- Are there any suggestions, recommendations for the follow up activities?
- What would be the most appropriate next steps?

Note: OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance will be used to interpret the answers to the evaluation questions.

## **V. METHODOLOGY**

### **Desk Review:**

The evaluator will review the following project materials:

- National policy documents
- ILO Decent Work Country Programs for Kazakhstan (2007-2009) and (2010-2012); Kyrgyzstan (2006-2009); Tajikistan (2007-2009)
- Project Document
- Work plans
- TORs
- Progress reports
- Reports on specific activities, events, seminars
- Research, studies, analytical papers produced
- Publications and promo materials
- Policies, regulations, legislation developed as a result of project interventions

**Individual Interviews and/or Group Interviews** by SKYPE or phone): Individual or group interviews will be conducted with the following:

- a. Project CTA, Project Staff, ILO Specialists, ILO National Coordinators in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan
- b. Representatives from the following groups:
  - ILO Headquarters technical department (phone interviews)
  - Representatives of EC delegations in the target countries (Kazakhstan)
  - Project Advisory Groups members
  - Government staff who have worked with the project
  - Employers' groups, unions, NGO's, experts working with the project

## **VI. MAIN OUTPUTS (DELIVERABLES)**

A. Initial Draft Report in English (in electronic format);

B. Final Report in English (in electronic format);

#### **SUGGESTED REPORT FORMAT**

The final version of the report should follow the format below and be no more than 20-25 pages in length, excluding annexes:

1. Title page
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
4. Acronyms
5. Background and Project Description
6. Purpose of Evaluation
7. Evaluation Methodology and Evaluation Questions
8. Status of outcomes
9. Overall findings, conclusions and recommendations
10. Annexes (list of interviews, meetings' notes, relevant country information, policies, regulations or any other documents demonstrating the impact of the project)

#### **VII. TIME FRAME: 18 DAYS**

The work will be divided between two consultants:

1. Ms. Anna Lucia Colleo who will be preparing the desk review and developing a questionnaire, plus preparing the initial draft report and the final report (11 workdays).
2. Ms. Blanka Hancilova who will be carrying out the interviews and preparing an Information Note based on the replies to the questionnaire (7 workdays).

Starting period: 7th November 2011

Submission of Information Note: 21st November, 2011

Submission of First draft report on 25th November 2011 that will receive comments by 28th November

Submission of Final Report : 30th November, 2011

|   |        |                |
|---|--------|----------------|
| Desk Review- Preparatory Research   | 3 days | done by Anna   |
| Development of a questionnaire  | 1 day  | done by Anna   |
| Interviews carried out by phone or SKYPE based on a questionnaire and drafting of an Information Note comprising the compiled information | 7 days | done by Blanka |
| Initial Draft Report  | 4 days | done by Anna   |
| Finalization of the report  | 3 days | done by Anna   |

Total: 18 days

## **Annex 2. List of persons interviewed**

The list includes project stakeholders who were interviewed by telephone and/or using structured questionnaires in the period November 30 – December 2<sup>nd</sup>:

### **In Kyrgyzstan**

- Mr. Dyachenko Valeryi Nikolaevich, National Confederation of Employers of Kyrgyzstan
- Ms. Semenova Svetlana Fedorovna, Federation of the Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan, Deputy Head, Department for the Social Protection of Workers
- Ms. Jaylobaeva Gulnara Jylkychievna, National Statistical Committee, Deputy Head, Department for Labour Statistics
- Luksina Tikeeva, National Statistical Committee, Director, Department for Labour Statistics
- Mr. Tynaev Nurdin, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic, Director, Overseas Employment Centre
- Mr. Beishenaliev Adilet Saparbekovich, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic, Deputy Head of Department of Managing Migration

### **In Kazakhstan**

- Mr. Daulet Argandykov, Ministry of Labour, Director, Employment Department
- Ms. Gulnara Zhumageldiyeva, Federation of Trade Unions, Deputy Chair
- Ms. Asiya Akhmetova, National Consultant (Legislation)
- Mr. Vadim Nee, Migration expert, Consultant for Legislation Synthesis

### **In Tajikistan**

- Mr. Ismatov Nuriddin, Executive Office of the President, Senior Specialist, Department of Employment, Social Protection and Migration
- Mr. Qulov Abduwali, Agency for Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Head, Department of Demography
- Mr. Rajabov Rajabali, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, Head of Analytical Department

### **ILO staff involved in the project**

- Talgat Umirzhanov ILO National Correspondent, Kazakhstan
- Bolotbek Orovov, ILO National Correspondent, Kyrgyzstan
- Sobir Aminov, ILO National Correspondent, Tajikistan
- Jana Costachi, project CTA for the period October 2010 and May 2011
- Nilim Baruah, project CTA for the period August – September 2010
- Patrick Taran, Senior Migration Specialist in charge of the project at ILO Headquarters in Geneva

### **Project donor**

- Ms. Gulnara Dusupova, Project Manager, Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan



### **Annex 3. List of mentioned publications and documents, including relevant country information**

- Full Application Form of the project
- ILO Interim Narrative Report to the EU, reporting period 1 March 2008 – 28 February 2009
- ILO Final Narrative Report to the EU, reporting period 1 March 2008 – 31 May 2011
- Notes from ILO high-level evaluation mission of the DWCP in Kyrgyzstan, 13-25 Oct. 2009
- Press releases concerning project events
- Agendas of Sub-regional seminars:
  - ✓ Improving Systems of Accumulation and Exchange of Labor Migration Data and Statistics in Central Asia, Regional Seminar, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 3-4 May, 2011
  - ✓ Improving Governance of Labor Migration through Tripartite Policy, Practice and Coordination, Astana, Kazakhstan, 29-31 March 2011
- Follow-up reports on sub-regional seminars
- Comparative Analysis for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the *Improvement of Systems for Data Collection and Exchange of Information on Labor Migration in Central Asia*
- A new policy and strategic framework for evaluation at the ILO Geneva, GB.294/PFA/8/4, November 2005
- EU RELEX 2009 Annual Report on Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM)
- EU Results Oriented Monitoring, Regulating labor migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation, 131820.01 Country Monitoring Report on Kazakhstan, 22/04/2010
- EU Results Oriented Monitoring, Regulating labor migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation, 131820.02 Country Monitoring Report on Kyrgyzstan, 22/04/2010
- EU Results Oriented Monitoring, Regulating labor migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation, 131820.03 Country Monitoring Report on Tajikistan, 22/04/2010
- EU Results Oriented Monitoring, Regulating labor migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation, 131820.04 Horizontal Report, 22/04/2010
- EU Results Oriented Monitoring, Regulating labor migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation, 131820.07, Country Monitoring Report on Tajikistan, 13/04/2011
- EU Results Oriented Monitoring, Regulating labor migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation, 131820.08, Horizontal Monitoring Report, 13/04/2011
- EU Results Oriented Monitoring, Regulating labor migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation, 131820.05, Country Monitoring Report on Kazakhstan, 13/04/2011
- EU Results Oriented Monitoring, Regulating labor migration as an instrument of development and regional cooperation, 131820.06, Country Monitoring Report on the Kyrgyz Republic, 13/04/2011

- Decent Work Country Programs:
  - ✓ DWCP of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2007-2009
  - ✓ DWCP of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2010-2012
  - ✓ DWCP of the Kyrgyz Republic 2006-2006
  - ✓ Program of Cooperation between the Tripartite Constituents of the Republic of Tajikistan and the ILO on Decent Work for 2007-2009
- UK Aid, Department for International Development, Multilateral Aid Review Report: Ensuring maximum value for money for UK aid through multilateral organizations, March 2011
- DFIF Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of the International Labor Organization (ILO)
- Response by the ILO to the UK-DFID Multilateral Aid Review Report

## Annex 4. Questionnaires for collecting information about the project

### Section 1 - Questions on project management and coordination

**How do you assess the management of this project, including day-to-day management?**

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**Was financial management timely and appropriate?**

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**Did you receive clear instructions at the start of the project about administrative and financial requirements to manage the project?**

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**Were you requested to produce regular reports on the implementation of project activities?**

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**Did you receive regular information about the implementation of activities in which you were not involved?**

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**How do you assess the project relationship with stakeholders in your country?**

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**Factors that in your view have affected appropriate project coordination and financial management**

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### Section 2 - Questions on project activities

**Can you point out which activities have been completed in your country (please add a very brief explanation of what was done with regard to each of them)?**

a. *Establish/reinforce Working Units on Labor Migration Policy at national governments*

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| This may include: 1. Specialized advisory packages on policy and organizational issues, 2. Training sessions for internal staff in the beneficiary administrations, 3. ... |
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b. *Research studies on labor migration data and on the rights of labor migrants*

This may include: 1. Availability of statistical data on labor migration; 2. Establishing a system for regional exchange of data and the application of common methods for data collection; 3. National studies on available data and on gaps in information; 4. ...

*c. Consultative mechanisms among national stakeholders to foster cooperation*

This may include: 1. Focal points designated among different national stakeholders; 2. National consultations are held; 3. National committees assume an active role in labor migration policy at national level; 4. ...

*d. Regional platforms for policy dialogue in the Central Asia region*

This may include: 1. Recommendations for the development of cooperative regional initiatives on labor migration; 2. Regional consultations on harmonization of labor migration policies; 3. ...

*e. Training of stakeholders*

This may include: 1. National seminars; 2. Training of staff on specific subjects; 3. Dissemination of guides and other training materials; 4. ...

### Section 3 - Questions on the achievements of the project

**What are the key outcomes of the project in your view?**

**To what extent you think that the project has been relevant to improve capacity with regard to labor migration policy and legislation in beneficiary countries?**

**To what extent the project has improved cooperation among different countries in the Central Asia region?**

**To your knowledge, did the project cooperate with other projects or other relevant initiatives?**

**Factors that have affected the achievement of project outcomes in your view**

### Section 4 – Questions on project sustainability

- **Is there any lessons learned from this project that you would like to point out?**

- **What are your recommendations about future projects on labor migration in your country and in the Central Asia region?**

- **In particular, what are the achievements of the project that can be regarded as good practices for the future?**