



ILO EVALUATION

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Independent States

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This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has been quality controlled by the ILO Evaluation Unit

International Labour Organization

Mid-Term Independent Evaluation of the Project

Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States

Countries covered by Evaluation: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation

RER/12/01/LUK

FINAL REPORT

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ILO Office administrating the Project: Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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List of Abbreviations

ACT/EMP	ILO's Bureau on Employer's Activities
ACTRAV	ILO's Bureau on Workers' Activities
ALMP	Active Labour Market Programmes
AZ	Azerbaijan
BRICS	Group of five countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT/CO	Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office
EU	European Union
G20	The Group of Twenty
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HQ	Headquarters
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KZ	Kazakhstan
NAP YE	National Action Plan on Youth Employment
NC	National Coordinator
NPC	National Project Coordinator
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PES	Public Employment Service
RF	Russian Federation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TOR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YE	Youth Employment

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Executive Summary

Project Background

The project 'Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States' is aligned with the ILO's Decent Work agenda worldwide. The Project specifically targets two ILO global Programme outcomes: "Employment Promotion" and "Skills Development". In light of the recent changes in the new ILO Strategic Policy Framework the Project would target such Area of Critical Importance as "Jobs and Skills for youth." The project is the result of a public/private partnership between the ILO and LUKOIL Open Joint Stock Company. The LUKOIL Company is the donor and provides financial contribution of \$6 mln. The duration of the Project is 48 months (1 January 2013 – 31 December 2016).

The development objective of the project:

The development objective of the project is to contribute to the creation of decent work for youth in CIS countries.

Immediate objectives of the project:

Immediate objective 1: Policies and strategies for Decent Work for youth are adopted and/or revised as a result of priorities identified within the regional network

Immediate objective 2: Action plans and programmes promoting Decent Work for Youth are implemented in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation

The project relies on interventions at regional, national and sub-national levels.

The regional intervention constitutes the overall framework of the project. It serves to develop joint approaches to address youth employment issues common to CIS countries and to establish a mechanism for regional cooperation on youth employment.

The national components target Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia. In these countries, the project supports the development and implementation of pilot programmes and initiatives that take into account the specificities of the youth employment challenge.

The sub-national components focus on youth employment action in three pilot areas of the Russian Federation (Republic of Kalmykia, Permsky Territory and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region) with a view to creating a framework for cooperation among local institutions, the social partners and other actors. These partnerships will promote decent work for youth at the district level or other relevant local territories.

Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation

The purpose of this mid-term project evaluation is to assess the progress made in achieving the project objectives and to make recommendations on how to improve the implementation approach for the remaining duration of the project.

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the ILO Policy Guidelines on Results Based Evaluation and regulations on evaluation of projects with budgets exceeding five million USD. This is done to promote transparency, accountability and learning. The participatory approach of this evaluation exercise will help to design future interventions,

elaborate new priorities and gain necessary expertise for ILO, its constituents and young men and women, the ultimate beneficiaries.

The evaluation covers the project as a whole, from its start until the time when the evaluation missions were conducted to Baku, Azerbaijan (February 26-27, 2015), Astana, Kazakhstan (March 11-13, 2015) and Elista, Russia (March 24-26, 2015). The series of interviews with the Project Team were conducted in Moscow, Russia, on February 9-11, 2015.

The evaluation serves the following clients' groups:

- ILO management, technical specialists at the HQ and in the field
- Project staff
- Tripartite constituents in the target countries
- The Donor
- Direct beneficiaries, including policy-makers and practitioners
- Ultimate beneficiaries, including young people

The evaluation was conducted by Svetlana Bronyuk, Independent Consultant, contracted by DWT/CO Moscow. Ms. Bronyuk has had no prior involvement in the project management or its implementation.

Methodology

The project was evaluated in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance were used to interpret the answers to the evaluation questions.

The methodology included:

- a) Desk review of project reports, studies and documentation
- b) Interviews with the ILO DWT/CO–Moscow staff, including Senior Employment Specialist, Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities, Chief Technical Advisor, Associate Expert on Youth Employment, Youth Employment Officer, ILO National Coordinators in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan
- c) Interviews with the national constituents, technical experts and other stakeholders
- d) Observation of the key events of the project in Kazakhstan and Russia
- e) Visits on site of the final beneficiaries, participants of pilots in Russia, Azerbaijan

Main Findings

Relevance

- The focus of the project was chosen correctly. The project fits into the constituents' and national policy agenda in the field of youth employment;
- The project is timely and topical for the region and target countries, especially with the economic crisis followed by drop in oil prices in November 2014;
- The project's approach to use a combination of capacity building, political mobilization, inter-regional cooperation and the piloting of youth targeted active labour market programmes has proven to be relevant;

- The approach to involve all categories of the project stakeholders in project implementation with an emphasis on tripartite cooperation has been chosen correctly.

Design

- The Project design was based on an overall regional situation analysis and specific country analysis of Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. It included a review of the lessons learned, best practices and evaluation findings of previous youth employment projects. The design was flexible enough to address the current needs of the constituents;
- The Logical framework represents a well-developed matrix with properly formulated risks and assumptions. The project design lacks activities aimed at enhancing policy makers' capacity to tackle challenges of informal economy wide-spread in the region as a root problem affecting rights of certain groups of young men and women as stipulated in the Problem Analysis, although the project supported select initiatives related to this issue;
- The vulnerable groups of young men and women were identified, however, their specific needs were not addressed in the Project Activities and / or indicators;
- Data was age/sex disaggregated throughout the Project Document, but no specific activities were envisaged to tackle gender disparities in youth employment.

Effectiveness

- The project is on track and is likely to achieve its objectives and key outcomes. Understanding of challenges of youth unemployment and commitment of the government and social partners to tackle them has increased due to the project – as through the development of policies and through the implementation of Active Labour Market programmes;
- The achievement of the project at the regional level has been the development of the regional network on youth employment involving governments, trade unions and employers' organizations. The knowledge delivered to the stakeholders through study tours and inter-regional meetings is used in the development of youth policies;
- At the national level the Project is well on track and youth employment is a national priority in the target countries. The resulting knowledge and skills are already used for the development of policy and implementation measures;
- The social partners are working together in addressing youth employment, but not yet on a full scale. They were involved into the project implementation, but their involvement was not equal;
- Gender issues have been specifically taken into account during the Project Implementation to some extent.

Efficiency

- The project was managed efficiently by the DWT/CO-Moscow team. It was successful in attracting additional resources for its implementation at no cost;
- The additional expertise and knowledge for the Project was provided by the Youth Employment Unit in Geneva and technical specialists from DWT/CO-Moscow, such as Senior Employment Specialist, Senior Specialist in Workers activities and Associate Expert on Youth Employment. ILO's pool of international experts was involved to implement research activities and to ensure support in the elaboration of evidence-based policies and programming;

- The overall workload is adequately managed except for Azerbaijan where only one ILO staff member, a National Coordinator, is located and combines his regular duties with backstopping of project activities;
- Some delays in the implementation of project activities have been observed at the initial phase due to the placement of Chief Technical Advisor (due to visa procedures) and absence of a Senior Specialist on Employers' Activities in the DWT/CO Moscow, which is to be appointed soon. Also, the Project Assistant position was filled three times due to personal reasons of incumbents;
- A Monitoring and Evaluation expert was advised at the design stage, but Monitoring and Evaluation framework has not been adopted by the Project Team as a tool for tracking project results.

Sustainability

- At policy level the sustainability of the project contributions has good prospects. A Peer Review mechanism is being implemented providing opportunities for policy-makers for active and experiential learning through application of knowledge gained at capacity building activities to real-time evaluations of youth policies. This contributes to the development of evidence-based policies in youth employment;
- At the capacity building level the skills and knowledge are likely to be used without further presence of the ILO project(s) in the countries however due to on-going changes in political leadership at ministerial level there is a risk of loss of newly gained knowledge;
- At the implementation level, much will depend on the availability of public funds for the implementation of relevant plans and actions, given the fact that target countries are currently facing economic challenges and devaluation of national currencies due to the drop in oil prices.

Main recommendations

1. It is recommended to the ILO to sustain the inter-regional working group on Youth Employment and explore new formats or approaches to coordination on youth employment and development issues with other international organizations;
2. It is recommended to the project to consider a possibility to support the national partners in evaluating the results of the implementation of the Active Labour Market Programmes, for example 6 or 12 months after their start, and assist in their implementation;
3. To the project to consider a possibility to benefit from external gender expertise to develop guidelines on Youth Employment Policies Review through Gender lenses (within current Peer Review Guidelines);
4. It is advised to develop a gender mainstreaming strategy for the Project and introduce gender-relevant/sensitive indicators to the Project Log frame.
5. It is advised to the project and constituents to develop clear approaches on integrating specific vulnerable groups of youth into the National Action Plans and Policies. Also setting specific indicators on vulnerable groups of youth into the Project Design in coordination with partners is highly recommended.

6. It is recommended to the project to enhance participation of employers and trade unions in future capacity building activities and strengthen their skills in social dialogue on youth employment.
7. It is advised to the ILO to reinforce the dialogue and enhance capacity building for governments on tackling challenges of informality in youth employment.
8. It is recommended to the ILO to examine the possibility to replicate Peer Review methodology developed under the project in other countries with similar context. In this regard, it would be beneficial to evaluate Peer Review mechanism and develop Step-by-Step guidelines for sharing to encourage possible replication in other regions.
9. The methodology of preparation of national action plan on youth employment developed by ILO¹ and applied in the development of National Action Plan in Kazakhstan proved to be highly effective and is recommended for further replication within the region. Translation to Russian would be highly beneficial for the stakeholders in the region.
10. It is recommended to the project to support social partners, especially trade unions, in the development of Anti-Crisis Project strategy on youth employment, in order to preserve achieved project results.
11. It would be important for the project to make sure that the project studies are made available online in Russian and English after they are finalized, at least on the following websites: YouthPol, Work4Youth, ILO/HQ, ILO/Moscow, and are searchable online through popular search engines with relevant tags inserted into the text. Active use of social media and youth popular content is recommended for further dissemination of generated knowledge and achieved results.

Main lessons learned

1. Preparation of the stakeholders on evidence-based policy development and equipping them with knowledge on monitoring and evaluation leads to better commitment to develop evidence-based policies and measure results.
2. Study-tours and inter-regional events though being a costly measure generate better adherence to new practices and motivate stakeholders to make it work in their own country / region.

Good practice

Projects / activities involving constituents equally in joint work / project (ex. Development of National Action Plan in Kazakhstan) contribute to better ownership of the Project.

¹ Guide for Preparation of National Action Plan on Youth Employment, ILO, Geneva 2008

1. Introduction

This report is about the mid-term independent evaluation of the project ‘Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States (2013-2016)’. The evaluation has been undertaken in January - March 2015 at the request of ILO DWT/CO-Moscow in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the Terms of Reference developed for the present evaluation (see Annex 1). The evaluation report was prepared by independent consultant Svetlana Bronyuk who has had no prior involvement into the implementation of the project and has no relation to the project management.

1.1 Brief description of the project context²

The weakening of the global recovery in 2012³ and 2013 has further aggravated the youth jobs crisis. The global youth unemployment rate, estimated at 12.6 per cent in 2013, is close to its crisis peak. As many as 73 million young people are estimated to be unemployed in 2013. CIS is one of the regions in which regional youth unemployment rate didn’t increase from 2011 to 2012. The youth unemployment rate came down from a high of 20.4 per cent in 2009 to 17.9 per cent in both 2011 and 2012, and is projected to remain slightly higher (18 per cent) until 2018. Though rate decreased between 2009 and 2011 but has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels⁴ (ILO, 2012 and 2013)

In some CIS countries with a large youth population share the situation is far worse than the regional figures suggest. In Armenia, despite the economic recovery, average youth unemployment in 2010 stayed at 39.1 per cent, and remained even higher for young women. The unemployment rate for females aged 16–24 was 48.2 per cent, compared with 32.2 per cent for males (ILO, 2012).

In contrast, Azerbaijan benefited from a decline in the youth unemployment rate from 18.4 per cent in 1999 to 11.0 per cent in 2010. In the Russian Federation, the youth unemployment rate in July 2012 stood at 15.8 per cent, which was four times higher than the unemployment rate for those aged 30–49. National figures conceal large regional disparities, with youth unemployment rates ranging from 5 per cent in Moscow to 51.3 per cent and 86.7 per cent in Chechnya and Ingushetia, respectively (ILO, 2012).

In 2013 *according to the data of CIS Statistical Committee* the level of youth unemployment varies greatly from country to country – from 4 per cent in Kazakhstan to 36 per cent in Armenia. The share of young people (15-29 years old) among unemployed men and women varies from 33 per cent in Kazakhstan to 53 per cent in Tajikistan and 52 per cent in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. Among unemployed women, the share of unemployed young women (15-29 years old) is less than unemployed young men, except for Belorussia (share of unemployed young women 15-29 years old is 47 per cent vs. 40 per cent of unemployed

²**Important notice: The data provided in this chapter on youth employment is from different sources to outline major regional trends but due to various methodology of data collection it can’t be used for comparison or as a baseline / target data in the context of the Project**

³ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012, Geneva. If not referred to otherwise, data on regional trends presented in this section refer to Eastern Europe (non-EU countries) and Central Asia.

⁴ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013, Geneva. If not referred to otherwise, data on regional trends presented in this section refer to Eastern Europe (non-EU countries) and Central Asia.

young men 15-29 years old), Russia, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan, where shares of youth among unemployed men and women are approximately the same⁵ (CIS Stat, 2013).

At the same time, informal employment among young people remains pervasive and transitions to decent work are slow and difficult. The economic and social costs of unemployment, long-term unemployment, discouragement and widespread low-quality jobs for young people continue to rise and undermine economies 'growth potential'⁶. An analysis of informality among youth living in the selected countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus shows that, in 2009, one-third of total youth employment was in the informal economy (ILO, 2013).

Skills mismatches are substantial in the Russian Federation's labour markets, as the unemployment rate for workers with an advanced education is far lower than for workers with a basic education (4.3 per cent versus 16.2 per cent; ILO, 2013). Mismatch is also a serious concern in some other countries of the region, there are not enough jobs for young university graduates and there is high and unmet demand for technicians of all skill levels and for skilled blue-collar workers.

Gender disparities are apparent in both youth unemployment and youth labour force participation in Central and South-Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS. In 2012, female youth labour force participation was 34.1 per cent, compared with 49.6 per cent for young men.

The new crisis generated by the drop of Oil Prices which took place in November 2014 imposes additional challenges on the CIS region causing devaluation of national currencies of Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan and leading to an increase of unemployment, including youth unemployment.

A brief description of the project context as outlined in the Project Document is presented below:

*The global economic crisis has exacerbated the difficult situation that already existed in youth labour markets of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The crisis resulted in a dramatic increase in the levels of unemployment among young people. The **youth unemployment rate** in the region jumped from 17.0 per cent in 2008 to 20.4 per cent in 2009⁷. The rate decreased between 2009 and 2011 but has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels, and is projected to be slightly over 18 per cent until 2018⁸.*

*Moreover, young people in the region are usually over-represented in the **informal economy**. The higher proportion of informal young workers is found in agriculture, construction and*

⁵Labor Market in CIS Countries in 2013 / CIS statistics. Statistical bulletin, 2014 #10 (541), p.55 / Рынок труда в странах Содружества в 2013 году / Статистика СНГ. Статистический бюллетень, 2014 № 10 (541). С. 55.

⁶ ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013, Geneva. If not referred to otherwise, data on regional trends presented in this section refer to Eastern Europe (non-EU countries) and Central Asia.

⁷ ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012, Geneva. If not referred to otherwise, data on regional trends presented in this section refer to Eastern Europe (non-EU countries) and Central Asia.

⁸ This data and other figures mentioned in this section are, unless indicated otherwise, drawn from the ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013, Geneva. The next paragraphs are largely based on this ILO publication.

services. An analysis of informality among youth in the region shows that, in 2009, about one-third of total youth employment was in the informal economy.

The high share of young workers in informal employment points to **poor quality of youth employment** in these countries, where many young workers do not enjoy basic rights at work, do not have an employment contract and are not covered by social protection measures. Young workers are, to a larger extent than other groups, engaged in low-quality, precarious and hazardous forms of work.

Skills mismatches are also a serious concern in several countries of the region. The correlation between educational attainment and unemployment, in the sense that the higher the level of educational attainment, the lower the rate of youth unemployment, is generally valid. Nevertheless, the issue of the young “educated” unemployed is increasing. On the one hand, there are not enough jobs for young university graduates. On the other, there is high and unsatisfied demand for technicians at all skill levels.

Gender disparities are evidenced by both the sex-disaggregated rate of youth unemployment and of youth labour force participation. In 2012, the rate of female youth labour force participation in the region was 34.1 per cent, compared with 49.6 per cent for young men.

Limited access to social security is a serious concern for youth. Lack of social security coverage for youth is mainly due to informal employment. For instance, the practice of (total or partial) unreported remuneration without social security contribution is quite spread in the region

The response of policy-makers to these challenges does not always address the root causes of the problem. The public employment services have difficulties in reaching out to young people, as illustrated by the fact that the registered unemployment figures in CIS countries tend to underestimate the overall youth unemployment rate, be it for lack of information, on the part of the unemployed, about the services delivered by the employment centres, or for their lack of trust in the assistance that can be provided by these centres. Overall, both targeting and performance monitoring of Labour Market Policies (LMPs) are weak and rigorous impact evaluation is rarely conducted in CIS countries.

Unemployment and underemployment have adverse long-term consequences for young people. These include deterioration of skills and disaffection. The consequence on labour market outcomes can be long lasting. This has a “scarring” impact on wages that protract over several years of the working life. In addition, youth unemployment and inactivity can lead to social exclusion, as the inability to find employment creates a sense of idleness and frustration. Social exclusion and a sense of unfairness might lead to disaffection and anti-social behaviors.

An escalating youth employment crisis is not only an inter-generational problem but also exacerbates inequality within the youth cohort, particularly among those who are already disadvantaged (e.g. certain groups of young women, low-skilled youth, young people living in rural areas and young people with disabilities). This, in turn, can pave the way for ever more unequal societies and rising social tensions.

1.2 Brief description of the project

ILO acts as the executing agency of the project. The LUKOIL Company is the donor for the project and provides a financial contribution of 6 mln. USD for its implementation. The duration of the Project is 48 months (1 January 2013 – 31 December 2016).

The project is decentralized to DWT/CO-Moscow. It is technically backstopped and managed by DWT/CO-Moscow with the help of ILO field staff based in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, including ILO National Coordinators, and ILO Headquarters in Geneva.

The development objective of the project:

The development objective of the project is to contribute to the creation of decent work for youth in CIS countries.

Immediate objectives of the project:

Immediate objective 1: Policies and strategies for Decent Work for youth are adopted and/or revised as a result of priorities identified within the regional network

Immediate objective 2: Action plans and programmes promoting Decent Work for Youth are implemented in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation

It relies on intervention at regional, national and sub-national levels.

The regional intervention constitutes the overall framework of the project. It serves to develop joint approaches to address youth employment issues common to CIS countries and to establish a mechanism for regional cooperation on youth employment.

The national components target Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia. In these countries, the project supports the development and implementation of pilot programmes and initiatives that take into account the specificities of the youth employment challenge.

The sub-national components focus on youth employment action in three pilot areas of the Russian Federation with a view to creating a framework for cooperation among local institutions, the social partners and other actors. These partnerships will promote decent work for youth at the district level or other relevant local territories.

The vertical logic of the Project is presented below.

Immediate objective 1:

Policies and strategies for Decent Work for youth are adopted and/or revised as a result of priorities identified within the regional network. The expected outputs are:

- Output 1.1*** Framework for the regional cooperation network established and operational
- Output 1.2*** Peer reviews on policies, institutions and programmes on youth employment conducted and findings used for policy development
- Output 1.3*** Youth employment included in trade union's agendas
- Output 1.4*** Services targeting potential young entrepreneurs delivered by employers' organizations
- Output 1.5*** Good practice and information on policies for youth employment collected and available through the web-page

- Output 1.6** Tools for the development and implementation of policies and programmes on youth employment developed and adapted to the specific context of CIS countries

Immediate objective 2:

Action plans and programmes promoting Decent Work for Youth are implemented in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. The expected outputs are:

- Output 2.1.** In-depth youth employment policy reviews conducted, with action taken to implement their recommendations
- Output 2.2.** National youth employment initiatives developed and implemented in the Russian Federation
- Output 2.3.** Youth Employment Pacts involving public and private sector and responsible for managing a funding mechanism established in three regions of the Russian Federation (Khanty-Mansiysk District, Perm region and Republic of Kalmykia)
- Output 2.4.** National youth employment initiatives developed and implemented in Kazakhstan
- Output 2.5.** National package of labor market policies targeting youth adopted in Azerbaijan following implementation of pilot measures

The project is in line with the development goals of the three target countries. The summary of countries' analysis as stipulated in the Project Document is presented below:

Azerbaijan. Decent work is outlined as the first priority in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2011-2015 for Azerbaijan. The overall goal of the UNDAF is to continue promoting diversification of the economy as a basis for improving decent work opportunities while reducing regional differences in living standards and employment, and ensuring that all segments of the workforce, including the most vulnerable, have access to the necessary skills and resources required to improve their employment opportunities. The ILO has acted as a leading agency within UNDAF working group on promoting employment and presented the Decent Work Concept to the UN country team (UNCT) and UNDAF working group. Azerbaijan has adopted numerous development frameworks such as "Azerbaijan 2020: Vision into the future", the State Programme on "Social and Economic Development of the Regions" for 2014-2018; the National Employment Strategy (2006-2015); "State Program on implementation of the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2011-2015", State Programme "Azerbaijani Youth in 2011-15". All these national documents placed youth issues high on the agenda. Consultations between the President of Azerbaijan and representatives of youth organizations were organized, aiming to enhance the promotion of youth employment.

Kazakhstan. The priorities defined by the UNDAF 2010-2015 in Kazakhstan are intended to support the national development plans and complement the development activities of the government. The UNDAF for Kazakhstan focuses on three outcomes, including "economic and social well-being for all", which target specifically access to markets and social safety nets for young people. The national development priorities in Kazakhstan are laid out in its strategies for Development. The Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, adopted in December 2012, foresees wide-ranging reforms in all spheres of the economy, with the final aim of making

Kazakhstan one of the thirty most developed countries in the world by the mid of the century. It covers several main areas linked to the Project objectives in particular, modernisation of the labour policy and minimum social standards; and knowledge and professional skills, including modernisation of education and focus on youth. In order to reach the long term employment goals set out in the Strategy, the “Employment Programme 2020” was adopted in 2012. It addresses effective training and employment assistance, support to entrepreneurship, and increased labour mobility. In February 2013, the government also adopted the new State Youth Policy which covers all areas linked to youth well-being, including employment and education, and reaffirms the country’s commitment to further develop its youth policies.

Russia. The strategic priorities for the Russian Federation economic development are identified in the “Strategy 2020”, which focuses on improving the investment climate and maintaining the macroeconomic parameters that include low inflation, structural diversification of the economy and an increase in high-technology exports. The President of the Russian Federation addressed the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2011 (in his former capacity of Prime Minister) emphasizing that the Government shares the main principles of the Decent Work Agenda (i.e. employment promotion, job creation, a skilled workforce for innovation-based economy, protection of vulnerable groups) and is ready to facilitate the active promotion of these principles in the global economic and social agenda. The President declared that creating more modern, well-paid jobs was a major objective for his country and noted that modernization of the economy requires a skilled workforce, thus demanding a reform in vocational education and training. The core of the strategy for the Russian Presidency of the G20 is to foster the development of a set of measures aimed at boosting sustainable, inclusive and balanced growth and jobs creation around the world. The Russian Presidency intends to address job creation in order to overcome the unemployment and under-employment generated by the global financial and economic crisis. Also Russia’s ambitions to urge for close monitoring of the implementation of the strategies on youth employment were already adopted by the G20 in 2012.

Other relevant ILO interventions in the region include ‘Applying the G20 Training Strategy. Partnership of the ILO and the Russian Federation’ project (December 2012- November 2015) that aims at improving the functioning of the system of vocational education, by improving the structure and orientation of TVET institutions in the labour market. Countries covered in the CIS region: Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

The project ‘Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States’ corresponds to the ILO priorities and strategic objectives, as expressed in the Strategic Policy Framework for 2010-2015. The Project specifically targets two Programme outcomes – Employment Promotion and Skills Development. In light of the recent changes in the ILO’s Strategic Policy Framework the Project is linked to such Area of Critical Importance as “Jobs and Skills for youth”.

2. Evaluation background and methodology

Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation

The purpose of this independent mid-term project evaluation is to assess the progress made in achieving the project goals so far and make recommendations on the implementation of the next project phase.

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the ILO evaluation policy and regulations on independent evaluation of projects with budgets exceeding 5 million USD. This is done to promote transparency, accountability and learning. The participatory approach of this evaluation exercise will help to design future interventions, elaborate new priorities and gain necessary expertise for the ILO, its constituents and young men and women, the ultimate beneficiaries.

The evaluation covers the project as a whole, from its start until the time when the evaluation missions were conducted to Baku, Azerbaijan (February 26-27, 2015), Astana, Kazakhstan (March 11-13, 2015) and Elista, Russia (March 24-26, 2015). The series of interviews with the Project Team were conducted in Moscow, Russia on February 9-11, 2015.

The evaluation serves the following clients' groups:

- ILO management, technical specialists at the HQ and in the field
- Project staff
- Tripartite constituents in the target countries
- The Donor
- Direct beneficiaries, including policy-makers and practitioners
- Ultimate beneficiaries, including young people

The evaluation was conducted by Svetlana Bronyuk, Independent Consultant, contracted by DWT/CO Moscow. Ms. Bronyuk has had no prior involvement in the project management or its implementation.

Evaluation criteria and questions

The project was evaluated in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability in accordance with the evaluation questions defined in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the independent mid-term project evaluation, as follows.

1. Relevance and strategic fit

How relevant is the project to the target countries' needs? Does it correspond to the broader national development objectives?

How well does the project fit into the ILO programming and implementation frameworks?

Was the design and implementation of the intervention gender responsive?

2. Effectiveness

What has been the project progress towards the achievement of project outcomes (immediate objectives) up to date?

Are the objectives likely to be achieved by the end of the project?

Has there been any contributing factors or obstacles, unintended or unexpected effects?

How have gender issues been taken into account during the implementation?

3. Efficiency of resource use

Have the project resources (knowledge, expertise, networks, time, staff and funds) been used in an efficient manner?

4. Sustainability

What is the likelihood that the results of the project will be sustained and utilized after the end of the project?

What needs to be done to enhance the sustainability of the project, strengthen the uptake of the project outcomes by the national stakeholders?

OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance were used to interpret the answers to the evaluation questions. Additional considerations of gender and knowledge sharing were also incorporated into the assessment of the project. With consideration of ILO Evaluation policy highlighted in the ToR for the evaluation and based on UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation⁹, the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) was used to conduct this evaluation exercise.

The methodology included:

- a) Desk review of project reports, studies and documentation
- b) Interviews with the ILO DWT/CO–Moscow staff, including Senior Employment Specialist, Senior Specialist in Workers’ Activities, Chief Technical Advisor, Associate Expert on Youth Employment, Youth Employment Officer, ILO National Coordinators in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan
- c) Interviews with the national constituents, technical experts and other stakeholders
- d) Observation of the key events of the project in Kazakhstan (the development of the National Youth Employment Plan of Actions) and Russia (Inter-regional conference “Problems of Youth Employment”)
- e) Visits on site of the final beneficiaries – participants of the pilot projects in Russia (Republic of Kalmykia) and Azerbaijan (Baku city)

The series of interviews with key stakeholders were conducted in a confidential manner. The guides for semi-structured interviews were specifically developed by the Evaluator to collect the input from all stakeholders involved and the data triangulation method was applied at the formulation of evaluating questions to ensure the data credibility.

Field visits were conducted by the end of March 2015. Following the completion of research and field visit, the draft evaluation report was prepared by the middle of April 2015 and submitted to DWT/CO-Moscow for circulation and comments.

Gender sensitive approach

The gender sensitive approach was exercised by involving both men and women in the evaluation exercise. In addition to the gender-specific question suggested in TOR ‘*How have gender issues been taken into account during the implementation*’ other gender related questions were incorporated into the semi-structured interviews (ex. ‘*How does the project address regional gender-related goals?*’ and ‘*How does the project communicate with the constituents and project partners on gender-related objectives?*’).

⁹ United Nations Evaluation Group, *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation*, (UNEG, 2014)

Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

The Human Rights Based approach was applied by evaluating the design and performance of the project to address the needs of the disadvantaged youth identified in the project as ‘certain groups of young women, low-skilled youth, young people living in rural areas and young people with disabilities’. The related questions were addressed to all stakeholders at all levels of the project involvement including ultimate beneficiaries (employed young men and women) to collect evidence-based data.

Participatory approach

An important dimension of the evaluation approach is transparency and active participation of the project stakeholders in the evaluation exercise. All parties involved were made aware of the objectives of the evaluation and invited to actively participate in evaluation exercise.

Target groups for evaluation

The following target groups have been identified for the countries missions:

- ILO technical backstopping and project management team
- Ministries of Labour and other Government stakeholders
- Social partners
- Researchers and consultants who have worked on the project
- Ultimate beneficiaries – young men and women, participants of Active Labour Market Programmes.

Limitations of evaluation

The project log frame was not fully elaborated (some base line data was missing), so the assessment of progress towards achieved results was not always possible. A few social partners were not aware of the Project as such and their perspective could not be assessed versus particular activities. The evaluation of the project performance in terms of gender performance was limited as based on pre-evaluation analysis of the project design the evaluability of this aspect was estimated as “medium”¹⁰. The pilot projects implemented within the Project were not evaluated as such but assessed in terms of validity of the Project Design and future implementation and possible replication.

3. Main findings

3.1 Relevance and strategic fit

Evaluation questions for evaluating criteria “Relevance” based on OECD/DAC standards:

- How relevant is the Project to the target countries’ needs? Does it correspond to the broader national development objectives?
- How well does the Project fit into ILO programming and implementation framework?
- Was the design and implementation of the intervention gender responsive?

¹⁰ As per United Nations Evaluation Group, *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation*, (UNEG, 2014)

Relevance to CIS regional agenda and Strategic fit. All the respondents noted that the project is relevant, timely and responds to the topical problems and needs. The youth employment crisis was the main subject discussed by the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2012. Representatives of governments, employers' organizations and trade unions from 185 countries, including the CIS countries, called for urgent and immediate action to reverse the youth employment crisis and the threat of losing a generation of young people.

The 2012 ILC Resolution "The youth employment crisis: A Call for Action" contains guiding principles and a comprehensive set of conclusions describing policy measures that can guide constituents in shaping national strategies and action on youth employment. It affirms that a multi-pronged and balanced approach that takes into consideration the diversity of countries is the desired way to respond to the highest global priority of generating decent jobs for youth.

This approach should foster pro-employment growth and decent job creation through macroeconomic policies; education, training and skills; labour market policies; entrepreneurship and self-employment; and rights for young people.

The regional approach of the Project allows supporting CIS countries in taking action to tackle the youth employment challenge in the CIS region. The specific objective 1 "*Policies and strategies for Decent Work for youth are adopted and/or revised as a result of priorities identified within the regional network*" (1) is being achieved through the following outputs/activities in the region that are appreciated by stakeholders¹¹:

- Sub-regional conference on Employment Services (30 September -3 October 2013) in Almaty, Kazakhstan – participated 25 men, 22 women
- Peer review training for the members of the youth employment network, conducted in ILO training centre in Turin, Italy (7-11 April 2014) - participated 10 men, 16 women
- Mutual peer review of youth employment policies undertaken by Kyrgyzstan and Armenia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (7-10 July 2014) – participated 8 men, 10 women
- Regional Youth Employment Network members meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia (13-17 October 2014) – participated 23 men, 17 women
- Training on pro-employment macroeconomic policies and their impact on youth employment conducted in Baku, Azerbaijan (2-5 February 2015) by the international consultant and ILO HQ Official – participated 30 women, 50 men.

The evaluator has witnessed the contentment of the ILO constituents who took part of those activities and stressed the importance of such capacity building events in the future.

The same strategy proves to be relevant for the target countries' needs, in particular, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia. A brief country analysis per each of the target countries is presented below.

Azerbaijan. Youth Employment is a national priority for Azerbaijan as almost 30% of its population are young men and women¹². Azerbaijan has adopted the State Programme

¹¹Summary of answers to the question "Can you give an example of the best activity / product / training?"
Source: questionnaires developed for the stakeholders

¹²On 1st January 2014, total population of Azerbaijan is 9 477, 1 thousand people. Youth 15-29 y.o. comprise 27,5 % from the total population (762,8 thousand people). Source: The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan

"Azerbaijani Youth in 2011-15", which has placed youth issues high on the agenda. Consultations were organized between the President of Azerbaijan and representatives of youth organizations, aiming at enhancing the promotion of youth employment. The importance of creation of decent jobs is emphasised in the Azerbaijan 2020 National Development Strategy which sets ambitious goals to become an efficiency-driven and even innovation-driven economy. Youth is considered as a main asset in achieving those goals. Education and training along with creation of productive jobs are considered key priorities in Decent Work Country Programme for Azerbaijan in 2011-2015. Decent work is outlined as the first priority in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2011-2015 for Azerbaijan. The project complements the achievement of the goals within its regional component and within the national component - *National package of labour market policies targeting youth adopted in Azerbaijan following implementation of pilot measures* (Output 2.5). Active Labour Market Programmes such as "Wage-Subsidies for employers" and "Start and improve your business" have been chosen by the Azerbaijan government as Pilot projects to be implemented within the framework of the 'Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States' Project with the possibility of scaling up at the national level.

Gender national goals: As stated in Azerbaijan 2020 strategy, a traditional family of four with one provider at the formal remuneration level would face difficulties to maintain reasonable living standards. This confirms the importance of decent jobs for youth and expanding the access to labour market for young women. Maternity protection, aiming to protect the health of mother and child, as well as women's economic and employment security, was identified as one of the priority and agreed by tripartite constituents in 2011. Azerbaijan ratified the ILO Maternity Protection convention, 2000 (No.183) in 2010. The law "On State guarantees of Gender (women and men) equality was adopted in 2006. These legal commitments demonstrate adherence of Azerbaijan to achievement of gender equality national goals.

Kazakhstan. Youth Employment is a strategic priority for Kazakhstan. Though currently youth unemployment is relatively low – around 4 per cent, the government sets a key indicator that by 2020 the level of youth unemployment (15-28) should not exceed 4.6 per cent¹³.

In February 2013, the government adopted the new State Youth Policy till 2020 which covers all areas linked to youth well-being, including employment and education, and reaffirms the country's commitment to further develop its youth policies. Youth is considered as a driving force in the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy, adopted in December 2012. It foresees wide-ranging reforms in all spheres of the economy, with the final aim of making Kazakhstan one of the 30 most developed countries in the world by the mid of the century. It covers seven main areas, of which four are linked to the project objectives: economic policy, including modernisation of macroeconomic policies and personnel policies; support to entrepreneurship, including new models of public-private partnerships; new principles of social policy, including modernisation of the labour policy and minimum social standards; and knowledge and professional skills, including modernisation of education and focus on youth.

¹³Road Map on Employment 2020 of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Decree of the Government #636 from 19 June 2013.

In order to reach employment-related long-term goals set out in the strategy, the government adopted in 2012 the Employment Programme 2020¹⁴, addressing effective training and employment assistance, support to entrepreneurship, and increased labour mobility. In February 2015 the Federal Law “On state youth policy” was adopted in Kazakhstan where creation of conditions for youth employment and creation of favourable conditions for the development of youth entrepreneurship are two of nine key priorities. The mentioned priorities are supported by the Road Map on Employment 2020 and the Road Map on Business 2020.

The Project supports the State in these efforts by delivering Output 2.5. National youth employment initiatives developed and implemented in Kazakhstan through provision of the expertise and facilitating the process of developing *National action plan on youth employment formulated on a tripartite basis*. The project also contributes to the priorities defined by the UNDAF 2010-2015 in Kazakhstan that are intended to support the national development plans and complement the development activities of the government, including “economic and social well-being for all”, which targets specifically access to markets and social safety nets for young people.

Gender national goals: Kazakhstan has adopted the Strategy on Gender Equality 2006-2016 in November 2005 with identifying priorities for gender equality in all spheres of life including policies and work. One of the strategic goals is to increase gender sensitivity at all levels of policy development, incorporate gender mainstreaming in the implementation of all state programmes and create equal favourable conditions for men and women.

Russia. Unlike in other target countries youth population is relatively low in Russia. Due to rapid ageing of the population and unfavourable demographic trends, today 10-25 years old young men and women are the key **potential** labour force for Russia and their labour activity is the main source for future social protection of children, people with disabilities and elderly population. Youth employment is a key priority for Russia and is mentioned in the State Strategy on Youth Policy 2016 adopted in December 2006.

The strategic priorities for the Russian Federation’s economic development are identified in the “Strategy 2020”, which focuses on improving the investment climate and maintaining the macroeconomic parameters that include low inflation, structural diversification of the economy and an increase in high-technology exports. The President of the Russian Federation addressed the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2011 (in his former capacity of Prime Minister) emphasizing that the Government shares the main principles of the Decent Work Agenda (i.e. employment promotion, job creation, a skilled workforce for innovation-based economy, protection of vulnerable groups) and is ready to facilitate the active promotion of these principles in the global economic and social agenda. The President declared that creating more modern, well-paid jobs was a major objective for his country and noted that modernization of the economy requires a skilled workforce, thus demanding a reform in vocational education and training.

The core of the strategy for the Russian Presidency of the G20 is to foster the development of a set of measures aimed at boosting sustainable, inclusive and balanced growth and jobs creation around the world. The Russian Presidency intends to address jobs creation in order to overcome the unemployment and under-employment generated by the global financial and

¹⁴ Starting from 19 June 2013 it is called a “Road Map on Employment 2020”

economic crisis. Russia also has ambitions to urge for close monitoring of the implementation of the strategies on youth employment already adopted by the G20 in 2012.

The Project supports the country by putting in place the best international practices in youth employment, in particular activities under Outputs 2.2. *National youth employment initiatives developed and implemented in the Russian Federation* and Output 2.3. *Youth Employment Pacts involving public and private sector and responsible for managing a funding mechanism established in three regions of the Russian Federation*. ILO provided technical advice during the development of the National Youth Employment Road Map in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour. This national action plan could be a framework for the country to support youth in the labour market.

The best practices of advanced countries and innovations were included in the Road Map on Youth Employment and currently the selected programs are being piloted / tested in the pilot regions of RF. The Road Map includes tax remissions for employers creating jobs for people with disabilities, women with small children, young men and women, etc.

The other innovations include subsidies to the employers hiring young people which equal 50 per cent of the salary of a young person for 6 or 12 months. Another innovative and costly measure - “Youth Guarantee” adopted in the EU is to be tested in Khanty-Mansiysky region. It provides a young person of 18 to 21 years old either with a job or a studying opportunity. The Russian Federation can become the first country after the EU countries to pilot such a programme.

Gender national goals: Gender Equality policy is implemented by the Ministry of Labour. The state concept of “Demographic Policy 2025” adopted in 2007 (with amendments as of 1 July 2014) envisages a whole range of measures aimed at creating favourable conditions for women with small children such as creation of more flexible forms of work. Special measures are being taken to support women in motherhood and assist them in combining work and family responsibilities. For example, women with children less than 3 years old are provided with professional education to assist them in smooth back to work transition. This demonstrates the commitment of the Russian Federation to support young women to maintain their employability and thus fully corresponds to ILO strategy in support of country action on youth employment in the development of gender-sensitive policies¹⁵ that are embedded in larger national development frameworks.

Project Strategy and its relevance to ILO programming and implementation framework. Under the four strategic objectives of the ILO global Decent Work agenda such as Employment (1), Social Dialogue (2), Social Protection (3), Standards, principles and rights at work (4), the Project specifically addresses two Programme and Budget outcomes – “Employment Promotion” and “Skills Development”. In relation to the new ILO Strategic Policy Framework – the Project would target such Area of Critical Importance as “Jobs and Skills for Youth”. The project duration starting in 2013 and ending in 2016 fits under the current Strategic Policy Framework of 2010-2015 within the ILO Results Based Programming.

At the global level the Project contributes to the achievement of ILO Outcome 2. Skills Development set for 2014-2015 and measured by indicator 2.5. Number of member states

¹⁵ Project Document, page 6

that, with ILO support, develop and implement policies and programmes to promote productive employment and decent work for young women and men.

At the country level, the Project strategy takes into account current needs of countries and contributes to the achievement of results under specific country programme outcomes.

Under the draft DWCP Azerbaijan for 2012 – 2015, the Project is contributing to DWCP *Outcome 1.1. Labour market policy improved with particular focus on youth employment*; under the draft DWCP Kazakhstan for 2013-2015 it is contributing to DWCP *Outcome 2.2. Employability and Decent work opportunities for young women and men increased*; and under the Programme of Cooperation with the Russian Federation in 2013-2016 - *Outcome 2.3. Implementing youth employment policies and programmes*.

Under the ILO Outcome-Based Work planning system 2014-2015, these correspond to the following country programme outcomes: AZE106, KAZ159 and RUS155.

The following criteria are currently being addressed by the Project as to ensure the delivery of the stated above Indicator 2.5: Youth employment is a priority of national development strategies or national employment policies National Plans promoting youth employment are developed by the government and the social partners and contain priority measures as well as human and financial resources for their implementation.

Some observations on project design aspects

Project Design and Logical framework

The Project design was based on an overall regional situation analysis and specific country analysis of Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. It included a review of the lessons learned, best practices and evaluation findings of previous youth employment projects. Strategy for Monitoring and Evaluation and Data Knowledge management was developed.

The Logical framework represents a well-developed matrix with formulated risks and assumptions. The description of the logic of the project consists of the definition of the development objective, immediate objectives and the outputs corresponding to them. It represents a detailed matrix reflecting key deliverables and indicators. Data was age/sex disaggregated throughout the Project Document, but no specific activities were envisaged to tackle gender disparities in youth employment.

- The Project Design lacks a Gender Analysis and a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

The project's approach to use a combination of capacity building, political mobilization, inter-regional cooperation and piloting of Active Youth Employment Labour Market programmes was well integrated throughout the log frame.

ILO strategy in support of country action on youth employment in development of gender-sensitive policies¹⁶ that are embedded in larger national development frameworks is not integrated in the log frame and not supported by due outputs and activities and thus is under threat of poor implementation.

¹⁶Project Document, page 6

The needs of disadvantaged groups were identified in the Project Document, as follows: *certain groups of young women, low-skilled youth, young people living in rural areas and young people with disabilities*, but not addressed in the Project Design.

The design lacks activities aimed at enhancing policy maker's capacity for tackling challenges of informal economy wide spread in the region as a root problem affecting rights to work of young men and women as stipulated in the Problem Analysis.

Though the log frame has indicators per each objectives / outputs and base line data was collected at the beginning of the Project, they are not specific enough¹⁷ and not assigned with target data. Such structure of the log frame makes it rather difficult to measure project results. Often the baseline data start with formulation "No" or "No activities / no recommendations were undertaken / elaborated with ILO support" which may lead to delivering results rather on output level and not at the outcome level.

It is hard to read from the project results which impact the Project will make on ultimate beneficiaries / direct beneficiaries and it is advised to collect base line data in order to track the project's impact. Ex. Under Immediate objective 2: *Action plans and programmes promoting Decent Work for Youth are implemented in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation*, the set indicator was a "Number of young men and women benefiting from improved employment services and other youth employment initiatives". However the baseline data was not collected and it won't be possible to evaluate how actions plans and programmes changed the employment status of young men and women.

Similarly, Outputs 2.2 and 2.4 have the indicator "*Number and characteristics of initiatives implemented by type, location, number of beneficiaries (share of participants by gender, age, level of education etc.), enrolment, attendance and dropout rate by individual characteristics, and as relevant: number of jobs created, quality of jobs provided, number of companies involved, etc.*", however baseline data has not been properly collected.

- It is advisable to pay due attention to the formulation of expected results with relevant indicators and targets and collect the base line data in order to assess the impact of the Project and manage results. Special attention should be given to development of gender sensitive indicators and in addition to the "quantity" type indicators suggest "quality" type indicators.

Management approach

The project was designed based on ILO Results Based Management approach. Direct staff costs were budgeted to support the implementation of the Project. The Project is managed from the ILO DWT/CO–Moscow where the Chief Technical Advisor, Youth Employment Officer and Project Assistant are based. The project has a Senior Project Assistant in Kazakhstan and works in close cooperation with the ILO National Coordinators in the target countries – Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. For the research activities external experts' costs were budgeted.

- It is advisable to envision Gender Expert costs to support the Project Team in the implementation of a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy.

¹⁷Example. Output 1.1.Framework for the Regional Cooperation network established and operational; assigned indicator (one of): Number of national and comparative studies on youth employment themes developed and disseminated.

Participatory approach to project design

The project concept was designed in consultations with the national partners. All key stakeholders interviewed confirmed their involvement into Project Design. However no stakeholders could clearly formulate project objectives, key outputs and overall strategy.

- It is recommended to sustain the practice of consultations with the constituents but make sure to brief them about the status of the Project as a whole; involving them in reporting and encouraging those to track the progress of the Project on related outputs.

Representatives of young men and women, including those from disadvantaged groups were not consulted during the Project Conceptualization. There is a possibility to use their potential not only to better address their needs and come up with relevant interventions, but engage them in active project related policy areas. Ex. Youth Parliament Movement of Russia in 2010 has developed the concept of the Federal Law “About employment of youth in RF”.

Conclusion: All the partners confirmed the relevance of the project to the needs of the target countries. The Project is fundamentally relevant for the region due to the global financial crisis and youth employment crisis. It is very timely and relevant. The design was flexible enough to address the current needs of the constituents.

3.2 Project effectiveness

Below are the evaluation questions for evaluating criteria “Effectiveness” based on OECD/DAC standards:

- What has been the project progress towards the achievement of project outcomes (immediate objectives) up to date?
- Are the objectives likely to be achieved by the end of the Project?
- Has there been any contributing factors or obstacles, unintended or unexpected effects?
- How have gender issues been taken into account during the implementation?

The project is on track and is likely to achieve its objectives and key outcomes. Understanding and commitment of the Government and social partners on Youth Employment both through the development of policies and implementation of Active Labour Market programmes has increased due to the project.

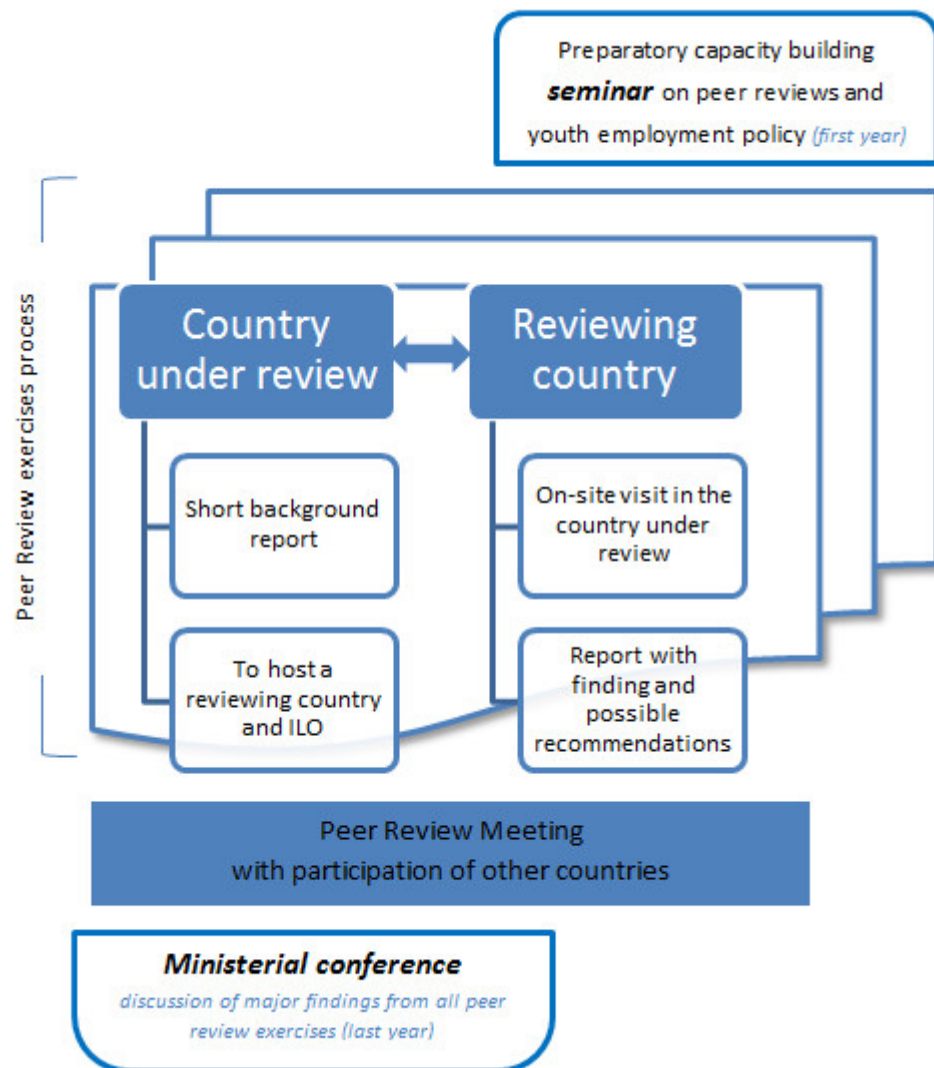
Regional level. The achievement of the project at the regional level has been the development of the regional network on youth employment involving governments, trade unions and employer organizations. The Peer Review mechanism on mutual voluntary assessment of youth employment policies by peer countries has been launched and is in place.

The stakeholders were unanimous in saying that the project has equipped them with the knowledge on youth policies development and exposed them to the best international practices. The international study tours have made profound impact to witness how effective Public Employment Service (PES) centres work in real life. The international expertise and technical assistance of ILO has allowed the stakeholders to hear questions about policies which made them seek answers and look for solutions.

- Unexpected positive effect. From the beginning of the Project in 2013 nobody was expecting a new economic crisis which urged the Russian Federation to implement anti-crisis employment measures in 2014. Local PES have been required to report to the Ministry of Labour on a by-weekly basis. The representatives of local PES from the target regions of the project (sub-regional component) have been in close touch due to regular project-supported inter-regional events and cooperate/exchange experiences on every-day challenges on youth employment and beyond. This has helped them to cope with the new situation and made them better prepared to meet the new challenges. Such unexpected effect proved that the Project has chosen the right focus on strengthening inter-regional cooperation as a platform for effective youth policies development and anti-crisis response.
- Unexpected negative effect. Some countries are not in favour of visiting other CIS countries for exchanging experience and rather would prefer focusing on advanced countries, ex. Germany, Sweden, Norway. The quality of expertise / information delivered during the project events should be more profound according to their opinion. “It’s not something new for us” was often said, but nevertheless the new innovative practices introduced by the project, such as dual education, pre-school professional orientation – were much appreciated.

Best practices and innovations. Policy Peer Review Mechanism. The project has successfully tested and launched Peer Review Mechanism helping countries in identifying good practices in the field of youth employment. It presents guiding points for reference when a country wishes to share its positive experiences with other countries or strengthen its own policies by using practices demonstrating measurable and successful results in other countries (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Policy Peer Review Mechanism



The innovative mechanism of assessment of the existing policies and employment policies for young men and women is based on voluntary decision of a country to be under review by another country. The ILO guides the country under review and the reviewing country to undertake the assessment. The peer review exercises phase is conducted prior the capacity building seminar on peer reviews and youth employment policy held in the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, Italy. The country under review prepares a short background report with ILO assistance providing information on the economic and social situation in the country, labour market situation of young people, existing programmes for young men and women, public employment services available for them, etc. The reviewing country together with the ILO undertake on-site visit in the country under review to examine the existing policies and services for young men and women, how effective the public employment services, including the possibility to reach the disadvantaged groups of youth. Finding and possible recommendations for improvement are summarized in a short paper drafted by the reviewing country with the ILO assistance. ILO has developed the templates for the reports and a set of questions for the examiner's team to facilitate the preparation of the quality reports. Further the reports will be discussed at the peer review meeting which is held twice a year. Each meeting peer reviews two countries. The discussion of each country

is introduced by the presentation of key findings and policy recommendations of the reviewing country, followed by comments, assessments and policy suggestions of other countries. Such approach allows to encourage regional cooperation through peers-to-peers learning approach. After the peer review part the ILO organizes a one-day thematic session on a topic of major interest to some or all participating countries that provides best international experience in tackling the issue. Towards the end of the Project the ILO will organize a ministerial conference to discuss major findings from all peer review exercises and discuss how to further stimulate regional cooperation on youth employment¹⁸.

Good practices, developed and implemented in a country in order to promote decent work opportunities for youth, are an important asset to be analysed and possibly shared with other countries. Its importance lies in identifying success factors of labour market programmes and employment promotion measures, demonstrating what really works for young people entering labour market or experiencing difficulties in adaptation to it.

- *Unexpected positive effect.* Thorough preparation of the stakeholders to conduct a Peer Review of youth employment policies during training in ITC Turin, Italy has strengthened their overall commitment to Monitoring and Evaluation of their national employment policies / programmes. It was demonstrated during the interviews and other project events that there is willingness of stakeholders to evaluate programmes and set specific indicators.
- *Unexpected negative effect.* The training agenda didn't have specific focus information related to gender-sensitive policies and / or gender analysis of youth policies. The Guidelines for a Country's Youth Employment Policy Peer Review didn't have a clear link to evaluating country policies on youth employment taking into account gender issues and needs of young men and women. These two factors resulted in rather limited inclusion of gender issues into the Peer Review on Kyrgyzstan that was conducted by Armenia. In order to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to develop gender-sensitive policies for youth it is recommended to deliver training on gender-sensitive programming / budgeting of youth policies.

National level. At the national level the Project is well on track and Youth Employment is a national priority in the target countries. The resulting knowledge and skills are already used for the development of policy and implementation measures:

Azerbaijan. Two pilot projects were launched successfully providing employment opportunities for young men and women:

- Wage subsidy programme in Baku. 10 young men and 5 young women were employed with the help of the Project via financial support and supervision over the process of candidates' selection. All participants had higher education and were placed in sustainable businesses matching their education. All of them were given permanent job contracts which allowed them to start their career based on participation in formal economy.

¹⁸ Based on Guidelines for a Country's Youth Employment Policy Peer Review

- *Unexpected effect – 3 participants dropped out of the programme due to personal reasons.*
- “Subsidies to young rural entrepreneurs of the district of Geokchay” programme in rural area Geokchay (a district centre, 280 km from the capital Baku). At the moment of evaluation 21 young persons (17 men and 4 women) had been trained by ILO Master Trainer and developed their business plans ready to launch their businesses. The programme is managed by the Public Employment Service under the ILO project guidance.

The main obstacles – reluctance of young people to register their business and low trust on the part of employers to hire young people (reluctance to cooperate with the government and international organizations, fear of bureaucratic procedures). Also, young women tend to drop / withdraw from the programmes due to marriage prospects.

Kazakhstan. An in-depth review of youth employment policies has been conducted serving as an evidence-base for the Action Plan on Youth Employment. Action Plan on Youth Employment is formulated on a tripartite basis and is at the final stage. It is likely to be adopted at the national level. During the one-day event¹⁹ “Development of Action Plan on Youth Employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan (13 March 2015, Astana), the stakeholders demonstrated cooperation and mutual respect to take into account interests of all parties. The indicators on youth employment were formulated and verified against current employment programmes in coordination with respecting Ministries.

¹⁹ 4th Meeting of Technical National Group



Russia. The Road Map for Youth Employment was elaborated with the Project support which is likely to become a national document. Prior its development the major challenges for youth employment in Russia were discussed within an established working group, including regional disparities in the Russian labour market, characteristic features of



transition from education to work, misbalance in the labour market, job quality, involving of youth in the informal sector of economy, etc.

Based on the identified and assessed capacity and training needs of staff of labour market institutions and social partners in Russia, capacity building programmes were developed and implemented (mainly through the regional network meetings) to help national policy makers develop the most effective initiatives to address the youth employment challenges at national and sub-national levels.

Based on this constituents are currently developing in cooperation with the ILO a gender-sensitive and evidence-based Roadmap. The work is on-going with regular meetings of the National Technical Team to discuss the contents of the Roadmap. The Roadmap includes a package of targeted initiatives that tackle the major problems jointly identified at national and sub-national levels (e.g., ALMPs for youth, such as wage subsidies and youth guarantees; establishment of local partnerships; labour mobility measures; modernization of the system of occupational standards, career guidance etc.).

Special focus is made on the programmes for vulnerable/disadvantaged groups; exchange of good practices with BRICS countries on youth employment policies and programmes etc.

Also, work on a unique document is on-going – the toolkit for conducting peer reviews where all the identified good practices and methodology will be documented. In addition, at the request of the Ministry of Labour of Russia the project supports development of the reports on the international experience of implementing some measures that are proposed in the Roadmap – such as labour mobility and modernization of occupational standards system.

Groups selected as basic target groups for the Roadmap implementation include graduates of educational institutions without work experience; young people not in education and not in employment; working young people who lack education/skills; young men demobilised from the Armed Forces; young women on maternity leave to attend to a child up to the age of 3 years; young people with disabilities.

All the measures proposed in block 3 of the Roadmap (Labour mobility and integration) touch upon disadvantaged groups (ex. labour mobility study includes analysis of policies and

measures that influence mobility of women, young people with lack of education, migrants, people with disabilities). Same about proposed active labour market measures, e.g. apprenticeship programmes, which facilitate school to work transition, including for disadvantaged groups.

Youth targeted active labour market programmes were elaborated as a result of the YE Road Map and are to be piloted by the project in three target regions of the Russian Federation.

At the moment of the evaluation exercise a pilot Active Labour Market programme in Kalmykia was launched, as presented below.

Wage subsidy programme in Elista/Kalmykia. Two employers participated in the pilot project – an Individual Entrepreneur and an Open Stock Company, a plant, as presented below.

Case 1. Individual Entrepreneur – main producer of meat products in Kalmykia and exporter to other regions of RF. Number of young people employed within the Project – 6 (5 men and 1 woman), 50% of them have middle-level vocational education. All young people received a permanent labour contract without a probation period.

➤ *Unexpected positive effect* – the employer was happy about participating in the programme. He stressed that he had not realized before that young people were vulnerable in the labour market. The participation in the Project helped him to pay now more attention to his other young employees. He stressed that subsidy is not so important for him but recognition and participation in the project of an international organization such as the ILO is what counts most.

Case 2. Open Stock Company, a plant – one of the key producers of radio-goods of special purpose. The plant once used to be a major employer in the times of the USSR. Currently it employs more than 300 employees. Within the Project 10 young people were employed (all women), 50% of them have higher education (economist, ecologist, lawyer, social anthropologist, manager), 30% have middle-level vocational education (accountant, cook-confectioner) and 20% don't have any vocational education at all. Every third of young women didn't work before and the plant is their first work place.

➤ *Unexpected positive effect*– four of the employed women were sent to the vocational training to Stavropol to learn how to produce new goods.

- *Unexpected negative effect* – though all young women received permanent contracts and high salary, the profession of “winder” doesn’t match their qualifications. The gender distortion in the selection of programme participants (100% women) was explained by the fact that the particular product the young women were hired to work at was designed especially for female hands – as most delicate for an extra fine wire. However that may indicate on poor capacity in gender-sensitive job-placement on the part of PES / Employer.

It should be noted that key importance when it comes to creating jobs for youth is engaging more actively the employers. Given the fact that the employers valued non-financial benefits of participating in the Project, it might be useful to explore the opportunity to integrate youth employment into the current policies of Corporate Social Responsibility of companies and discuss the strategy with Employers’ organizations within the project countries.

Conclusion: the Project has shown effectiveness in terms of achieving its immediate objectives. It is observed that the social partners are working together in addressing youth employment, but not yet on a full scale. They were involved into the project implementation, but their involvement was not equal, so more attention to strengthening the capacity of the employers’ organization in particular would be needed. Gender issues have been taken into account to some extent during the Project Implementation which needs further consideration to ensure equal access of young men and women to jobs.

3.3 Efficiency

Evaluation questions for evaluating criteria “Efficiency” based on OECD/DAC standards are:

- Have the project resources (knowledge, expertise, networks, time, staff and funds) been used in efficient manner?

It was confirmed by all the stakeholders that the project was managed efficiently by the DWT/CO-Moscow team. The Project Team from DWT/CO-Moscow reported high work load but additional staff costs were not envisaged. In the regions in Russia the Project is being implemented with the help of coordinators in PES appointed by the Project. In Kazakhstan there is one project staff member (Senior Project Assistant) who is in charge of local activities. In Azerbaijan the Project activities are being implemented by the ILO National Coordinator and though additional support is provided by DWT/CO-Moscow office the work load is estimated as rather high. Also it puts additional risk for the Project due to the fact that all project activities are managed by one person, so additional staff costs (Project Assistant) is highly recommended.

The Project was successful in attracting additional resources for its implementation at no cost. For example, the project at the country level was successful in securing a venue for project meetings from the government at no cost. Additional expertise and knowledge for the Project was provided by the Youth Employment Unit in Geneva and technical specialists from DWT/CO-Moscow, such as Senior Employment Specialist, Senior Specialist in Workers activities and Associate Expert on Youth Employment.

Highly qualified and experienced international experts were involved to implement research activities and to support the elaboration of evidence-based policies and programming. Generated data and knowledge are collected and shared on the ILO web-site, as well as other online resources such as YouthPol, which contributes to overall development agenda.

Coordination mechanism with ILO constituents and partners. It was observed that not all Project partners were fully aware of their role in the Project. However they confirmed that the ILO project consulted with them, but they are not informed about its goals in general. Ex. the interview with the Trade Union in Azerbaijan was not conducted as the Senior Management of the Trade Union was not fully aware about the project goals, immediate objectives and key activities, though confirmed that ILO has consulted with them during the visit to Azerbaijan.

Some representatives of PES in Russia were not fully aware of the Project structure as well as of their role in the Project. They expressed the need to know better about the ILO mandate, their agreement with the Russian government and on what basis they are cooperating in the Project (memorandum, agreement, etc.). The practical implementation aspects of the innovative measures to be piloted in Russia – “Youth guarantees” and “Youth Employment Partnerships” - were not quite clear to them.

- Given the found gaps it is recommended to conduct stakeholders’ analysis and develop a Participation / Mobilization ladder with clear roles of each partner and assign/ communicate their roles in the Project with clear outputs, reporting and contribution to outcomes.

Some delays in the implementation of project activities have been observed due to the placement of Chief Technical Advisor (due to visa procedures) and absence of a Senior Specialist on Employers Activities at the ILO Moscow, which is to be filled soon. Also, the Project Assistant position was filled three times due to personal reasons of incumbents.

A Monitoring and Evaluation expert was consulted at the design stage, but Monitoring and Evaluation framework has not been adopted by the Project Team as a tool for tracking project results. Some colleagues were not aware of Progress Report forms and some expected outputs in their countries which could put at risk the actual delivery of results and demotivate the Project Staff in country offices.

- For a project of four-year duration, with multiple-facet strategy and regional scale, it is important to develop an integrated monitoring and evaluation framework for managing results.

Nevertheless time-wise and budget-wise this is a large-scale project with tangible and useful results, including the elaboration of an innovative mechanism like a Peer Review, establishing effective participation mechanism on drafting National Action Plans for Youth Employment, piloting Active Labor Market Programs, preparation of solid analytical outputs and communication of research findings to the key stakeholders and policy-makers at the regional and national level.

Conclusion: The overall efficiency of this intervention is high.

3.4. Sustainability

Evaluation questions for evaluating criteria “Sustainability” based on OECD/DAC standards are:

- What is the likelihood that the results of the project will be sustained and utilized after the end of the Project?
- What needs to be done to enhance the sustainability of the Project, strengthen the uptake of the project outcomes by the national stakeholders?

Sustainability and exit strategy. It is very likely that the capacities strengthened with the support of the project will be sustained. Should the policies be adopted in the target countries and become National Action Plans – the project results will be sustained and Active Labour Market programmes, measures will be stemmed out from them in future.

It was reported that often policy makers participating in the events change and thus it is very difficult to ensure the sustainability of developed skills / knowledge in policies programming. It was confirmed by policy makers that the Project has increased their knowledge and sensitivity to youth unemployment. A sustainability strategy was well defined at the stage of the project design and actions towards the sustainability of the project results have been mainstreamed into the overall project approach: through engaging stakeholders into the design of research methodology and tools (survey questionnaire), validation of research and discussion of the studies, communication of findings to the decision-makers at the inter-regional conference in St. Petersburg and all bi-annual regional network meetings where a broad range of stakeholders from the tripartite constituents organizations, international organizations, NGOs and academic community were present.

Institutional sustainability. The project main focus has been at empowering the national partners with the relevant knowledge and tools. An inter-regional network of experts was established to discuss the challenges of youth employment. This can be seen as an institutional platform for further work. This group could be sustained, possibly, with the ILO's help as a facilitator of meetings in the future.

The level of involvement of social partners was good, but not the same. It is advisable to enhance the participation of employers in future dialogue and capacity building activities and improve cooperation with ACTEMP in general.

Sustainability of National Actions Plans on Youth Employment. It is very likely that the National Actions Plans on Youth Employment will be adopted in the national level. In Russia the Roadmap for Youth Employment is likely to become a national document. In Kazakhstan the National Plan of Actions on Youth Employment is being finalized but it has not been decided yet whether it could become a national document. It was suggested that in order to ensure its financial sustainability it could be possible to include it under current public employment programmes.

Looking one step forward, financial sustainability of the Active Labour Market Programmes is one of the most challenging aspects, taking into account the economic situation in the countries (Azerbaijan and Russia) where they are being currently piloted. A commitment to allocate national financial resources for the implementation of Active Labour Market Programmes in case of Azerbaijan would clearly enhance the sustainability of the project results.

As for Russia, the responsibility for planning and implementation of Active Labour Market Programmes rests with the subjects of the Russian Federation. While for some regions (Khanty-Mansiysky region) the budget could be allocated, for other regions (ex. Republic of Kalmykia) it won't be easy to allocate local public funds to implement such programmes due to limited budget.

Conclusion: Sustainability of the project contributions at the policy level has good prospects. At the regional level Peer Review mechanism is being implemented by providing opportunities for active learning through applying gained knowledge at capacity building activities aimed at development of Youth Employment policies. At the capacity building level the skills and knowledge are likely to be used without further presence of the ILO project(s) in the country, however due to on-going changes in political leadership at the

ministerial level there is a risk of loss of newly gained knowledge. At the implementation level, **much will depend on the availability of public funds** for the implementation of relevant plans and actions, given the fact that the target countries are currently facing economic challenges and devaluation of national currencies.

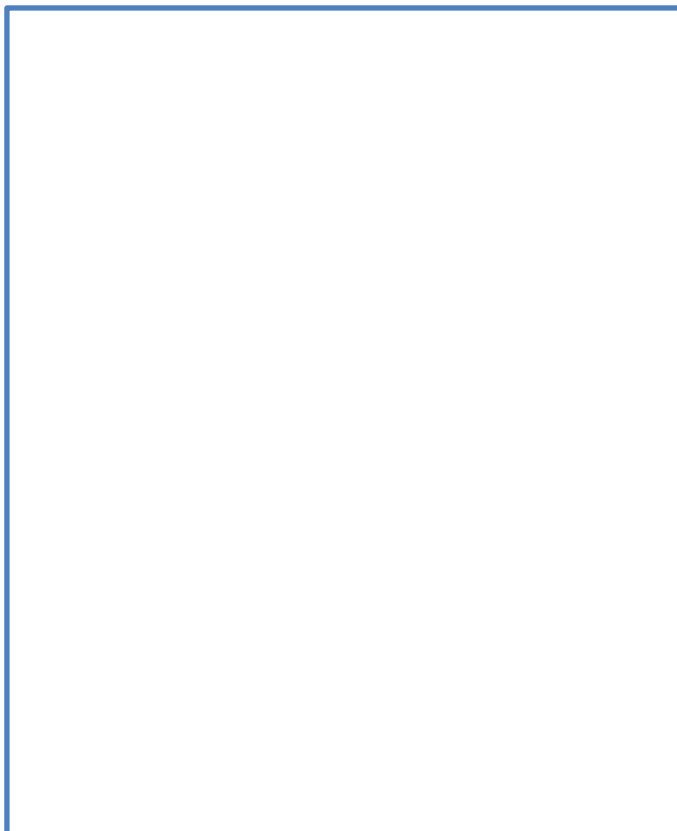
3.5 Special considerations

Gender issues

Though the project implementation didn't envisage a specific focus on gender issues, adequate provisions for gender-disaggregated data collection were made. **Gender** statistics have been well recorded during the preparation of events, studies / research conducted by ILO. All projects quantitative data are gender-disaggregated and adequate attention has been paid by ILO to making sure that gender specific findings could be reflected in the first round of Peer Review. It is advised to put more efforts to increase the capacity of stakeholders in gender-sensitive programming and implementation though.

Knowledge sharing

The review of the project records and interviews with the stakeholders confirm that knowledge sharing has been addressed at all the stages of the implementation. The knowledge products of the project include specifically designed research tools, quantitative



and qualitative, including Guidelines to conduct a Peer Review and drafting National Action Plans.

The additional knowledge products as a result of establishing **synergies with other projects and ILO activities** were prepared in Russian and shared with the project stakeholders:

- Assistance to transition to formal economy based on example of some CIS countries ²⁰, Working document #6, ILO Moscow 2014;
- A skilled workforce for strong, sustainable and balanced growth: A G20 Training Strategy, ILO, 2010.

Moreover, these knowledge products were published in two languages: Russian and English, which makes them accessible and convenient to use for broader audiences beyond the CIS region. Of particular notice, the project events were covered by

national mass-media.

- It is recommended to make sure that the project studies are made available online after they are finalized, at least on the following websites: YouthPol, Work4Youth, ILO/HQ,

²⁰ In Russian: Содействие переходу к формальной экономике на примере некоторых государств-участников СНГ, под редакцией О. Кулаевой и Ф. Лапер, МОТ, Москва 2014

ILO/Moscow. Active use of social media and youth popular content is recommended for further dissemination of generated knowledge and achieved results;

- It is advised to conduct a more active learning event on the information presented in “The assistance in transition to formal economy based on example of some CIS countries²¹, Working document #6” as informal economy is one of the key topics of interest for the stakeholders and one of the key problems leading to violation of labour rights of youth men and women;
- It is also recommended to make sure that the studies are easily searchable online through popular search engines by relevant key words and with relevant tags inserted into the text.

4. Conclusions

The project represents a good example of several types of interventions, at all levels: individual workplace, territorial, country, regional and sub-regional. It is a strategic investment to support the constituents and strengthen their capacities in policy making on one of the topical labour market issues in CIS region – employment of youth in crisis.

The project has achieved significant progress and tangible results, including the elaboration of an innovative mechanism like a Peer Review, establishing effective participation mechanism on drafting National Action Plans for Youth Employment, piloting Active Labour Market Programs, preparation of solid analytical outputs and communication of research findings to the key stakeholders and policy-makers at the regional and national level.

The data collected, the findings and recommendations of key events produced by the project have been already used by the partners in drafting evidence-based public policies and pilot projects of Active Labour Market Programmes will serve as a reference point for future replication of active measures on youth employment. Gender issues were given consideration to some extent but need to be strengthened.

Of particular notice, representatives of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Azerbaijan and Ministry of Health and Social Development of Kazakhstan asked to put on record their gratitude to the ILO and the Donor for the technical assistance offered within the project.

5. Recommendations

1. To sustain the inter-regional working group on Youth Employment and explore new formats or approaches to coordination on youth employment and development issues with other international organizations;
2. To consider a possibility to support the national partners in evaluating the results of the implementation of the Active Labour Market Programmes, for example 6 or 12 months after their start, and assist in their implementation;

²¹ Russian: Содействие переходу к формальной экономике на примере некоторых государств-участников СНГ, под редакцией О. Кулаевой и Ф. Лапер, МОТ, Москва 2014

3. To the project to consider a possibility to benefit from external gender expertise to develop guidelines on Youth Employment Policies Review through Gender lenses (within current Peer Review Guidelines);
4. It is advised to develop a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Project and introduce gender-relevant/sensitive indicators to the Project's Log frame. Capacity building activities for Project staff and its constituents on integrating a gender-sensitive approach in policy development, programming and implementation including Gender Sensitive Budgeting are recommended;
5. It is advised to develop clear approaches on integrating specific vulnerable groups of youth into the National Action Plans and Policies. Also setting specific indicators on vulnerable groups of youth into the Project Design in coordination with partners is highly recommended;
6. Enhance participation of employers and trade unions in future capacity building activities and strengthen their skills in social dialogue on youth employment;
7. It is advised to the ILO to reinforce the dialogue and enhance capacity building for governments on tackling challenges of informality in youth employment;
8. Examine the possibility to replicate Peer Review methodology developed under the project in other countries with similar context. In this regard, it would be beneficial to evaluate Peer Review mechanism and develop Step-by-Step guidelines for sharing to encourage possible replication in other regions;
9. The methodology of preparation of national action plan on youth employment developed by the ILO²² and applied in the development of National Action Plan in Kazakhstan proved to be highly effective and is recommended for further replication within the region. Translation into Russian would be highly beneficial for the stakeholders in the region;
10. To support social partners, especially trade unions, in the development of Anti-Crisis Project strategy on youth employment, in order to preserve achieved project results;
11. Make sure that the project studies are made available online in Russian and English after they are finalized, at least on the following websites: YouthPol, Work4Youth; ILO/HQ; ILO/Moscow, and are searchable online through popular search engines with relevant tags inserted into the text. Active use of social media and youth popular content is recommended for further dissemination of generated knowledge and achieved results.

²²

Some thematic areas for further cooperation suggested by the partners in the countries are:

- job creation, with a particular consideration to the quality of jobs created (focus on permanent jobs and not temporary ones) – **AZ, RUS, KZ**;
- new effective forms of professional orientation of young men and women (pre-primary school professional orientation, business games to learning entrepreneur skills “virtual company”, dual education, education through life, etc.) – **AZ, KZ**;
- strengthened cooperation with ACT/EMP and ACTRAV – **AZ, KZ**;
- technical support in the Creation of National Tripartite Committee on Economy and Social Issues in Azerbaijan on discussion of employment issues, including employment of young men and women – **AZ**
- ‘Moral’ factors of motivation of young men and women to work in blue-collar professions and increase the prestige of labour as a life value as such - **KZ**
- To conduct research on needs/supply of youth skills in labour market in order to stimulate education organizations to prepare qualified and needed personnel - **AZ**
- “Green” jobs for youth, public-private partnerships –**RUS**

6. Lessons learned and good practice

1. Preparation of the stakeholders on evidence-based policy development and equipping them with knowledge on monitoring and evaluation leads to better commitment to develop evidence-based policies and measure results.
2. Study-tours and inter-regional events though being a costly measure generate better adherence to new practices and motivate stakeholders to make it work in their own country / region.

Good practice

Projects / activities involving constituents equally in joint work (ex. Development of National Action Plan in Kazakhstan) contribute to better ownership of the Project. Such a good practice of joint work was observed during the development of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment in Kazakhstan. The technical working group on policy development included policy makers (government) themselves, trade unions and employers’ organizations. The process of policy development was moderated by an external expert in policy development and youth employment specialist (ILO). The participatory approach was applied and the social partners’ stakeholders (trade unions and employers’ organizations) confirmed their equal involvement and role in the process next to the government.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference



International Labour Organization

Independent Midterm Evaluation of the project

Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS Countries

Countries:	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation²³
ILO Responsible Office:	Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ILO DWT/CO-Moscow)
Duration:	1 January 2013 – 31 December 2016 (48 months)
Donor:	OAO LUKOIL

I. Project background

The evaluation of Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS Countries project will be conducted after the first two years of project implementation, at the medium term of the overall lifetime of the project, in accordance with the provisions of the Project Document (PRODOC) and ILO evaluation policy guidelines. The project is the result of a public/private partnership between the ILO and the Open Joint Stock Company LUKOIL.

²³Six more countries are part of the regional cooperation component of this project (Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

The global economic crisis has exacerbated the difficult situation that already existed in youth labour markets of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The crisis resulted in a dramatic increase in the levels of unemployment among young people. According to the ILO study, *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012*, the youth unemployment rate in the region jumped from 17.0 per cent in 2008 to 20.4 per cent in 2009. The rate decreased between 2009 and 2011 but has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels and is projected to be slightly over 18 per cent until 2018.

Moreover, young people in the region are usually over-represented in the informal economy. The higher share of informal young workers is found in agriculture, construction and services. An analysis of informality among youth in the region shows that in 2009 about one-third of total youth employment was in the informal economy.

The high share of young workers in informal employment points to poor quality of youth employment in these countries, where many young workers do not enjoy basic rights at work, do not have an employment contract and are not covered by social protection measures.

Young workers are, to a larger extent than other groups, engaged in low-quality, precarious and hazardous forms of work.

Skills mismatches are also a serious concern in several countries of the region. The correlation between educational attainment and unemployment, in the sense that the higher the level of educational attainment, the lower the rate of youth unemployment, is generally valid. Nevertheless, the number of young “educated” unemployed is increasing. On the one hand, there are not enough jobs for young university graduates. On the other, there is high and unsatisfied demand for technicians at all skills levels.

Gender disparities are evidenced by both the sex-disaggregated rate of youth unemployment and rate of youth labour force participation. In 2012, the rate of female youth labour force participation in the region was 34.1 per cent, compared with 49.6 per cent for young men.

Limited access to social security is a serious concern for youth. Lack of social security coverage for youth is mainly due to informal employment. For instance, the practice of (total or partial) unreported remuneration without social security contribution is quite spread in the region.

The response of policy-makers to these challenges does not always address the root causes of the problem. The public employment services have difficulties in reaching out to young people, as illustrated by the fact that the registered unemployment figures in CIS countries tend to underestimate the overall youth unemployment rate, be it for lack of information, on the part of the unemployed, about the services delivered by the employment centers, or for their lack of trust in the assistance that can be provided by these centres. Overall, both targeting and performance monitoring of Labour Market Policies (LMPs) are weak and rigorous impact evaluation is rarely conducted.

The crisis of youth employment was a main subject discussed by the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2012. Representatives of governments, employer organizations and trade unions of 185 countries, including those from CIS, called for urgent

and immediate action to reverse the youth employment crisis and the threat of losing a generation of young people. The 2012 ILC Resolution “**The youth employment crisis: A Call for Action**” contains guiding principles and a comprehensive set of conclusions describing policy measures that can guide constituents in shaping national strategies and action on youth employment. It affirms that a multi-pronged and balanced approach that takes into consideration the diversity of countries is the desired way to respond to the highest global priority of generating decent jobs for youth. This approach should foster pro-employment growth and decent job creation through macroeconomic policies; education, training and skills; labour market policies; entrepreneurship and self-employment; and rights for young people.

As a follow-up to the ILC resolution, the project aims to support CIS countries in taking action to tackle the youth employment challenge in the region.

The project also contributes to the implementation of “The Oslo Declaration: Restoring confidence in jobs and growth” adopted at the Ninth European Regional Meeting in April 2013 that stresses the urgency of action on the youth employment crisis in the region, i.e. through active labour market programmes particularly targeting the needs of young workers.

Development objective of the project

The development objective of the project is to contribute to the creation of decent work for youth in CIS countries.

Immediate objectives of the project

The project has two immediate objectives:

Immediate objective 1: Policies and strategies for Decent Work for youth are adopted and/or revised as a result of priorities identified within the regional network

Immediate objective 2: Action plans and programmes promoting Decent Work for Youth are implemented in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation

Project strategy

This project aims to improve the effectiveness of policies and programmes for youth employment in order to support the creation of more and better jobs for young people. It relies on interventions at regional, national and sub-national levels.

The regional intervention constitutes the overall framework of the project. It serves to develop joint approaches to address youth employment issues common to the countries of the region and to establish a mechanism for regional cooperation on youth employment.

The national components target Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. In these countries, the project supports the development and implementation of pilot programmes and initiatives that take into account the specificities of the youth employment challenge.

The sub-national components focus on youth employment action in three pilot areas of the Russian Federation with a view to creating a framework for cooperation among local institutions, the social partners and other actors. These partnerships will promote decent work for youth at the level of the districts or other relevant local territories. The three pilot regions in the Russian Federation are Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District, Perm Region, and the Republic of Kalmykia.

At the three levels of intervention, the project approach combines three essential components:

- strengthening the capacity of policy makers to design and implement policies and programmes on youth employment;
- establishing strategic partnerships on youth employment; and
- piloting programmes aimed at creating more and better jobs for young people.

The project implementation strategy is based on the principles of tripartism and social dialogue, whereby the social partners (workers' and employers' organizations) are fully engaged and involved into the project capacity building, knowledge sharing and policy making activities. The social partners are both offering their advice on project implementation approach and benefitting from the new skills, methods and tools that the project is making available at all the three levels of intervention.

Project management arrangements

The project is working under the supervision of the ILO Decent Work Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia based in Moscow (DWT-Moscow). The Senior Employment Specialist of the DWT-Moscow is appointed as focal point for the project. The project is staffed with an international Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) who is responsible for the overall implementation of the project, one Youth Employment Officer who supports the CTA in all the activities, and two administrative assistants. In addition, a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) based in Moscow provides input into the technical documents, as well as advice on the implementation of the project strategy. A technical cooperation specialist based in the ILO's Programme on Youth Employment in Geneva, provides technical backstopping to the project.

A Project Partnership Committee (PPC) has been established in Moscow to inform regularly the donor on the implementation process of the project and on the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. The members of the PPC include ILO and donor representatives.

Major events and milestones of the project

The project has made progress under each of two main objectives in 2013-2014.

The sub-regional meeting in Almaty in October 2013 marked the project's launch and establishment of a network which will convene bi-annually and perform youth employment

policies peer reviews. Two sub-regional meetings conducted in April and October 2014 facilitate functioning of a youth employment network that serves as a ground for conducting peer reviews of youth employment policies, programmes and institutions. The first round of the peer review was conducted in Kyrgyzstan in July 2014.

At the same time, activities in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation at the national level, as well as in the pilot regions of the Russian Federation, are on-going. This includes further work on the draft policy review in Kazakhstan and meetings with a team of national stakeholders aimed at developing a National Action Plan on Youth Employment; development of the draft Roadmap for Youth Employment in Russia; launching of Youth Employment Pacts in the regions of Russia; piloting youth targeted active labour market programmes in Azerbaijan etc. All the activities serve as a solid basis for further development of the project in 2015.

Below are the highlights of the project's activities and achievements up to date.

Immediate Objective 1

- Regional cooperation network is operational
- Long-term agenda for regional cooperation on youth employment is presented and discussed among the members of the network
- Two bi-annual meetings of the members of the network to exchange knowledge and experience etc. are conducted with participation of the government representatives and selected social partners
- A number of capacity building exercises for peer reviews and labour market information collection and analysis conducted for the members of the network
- First round of peer reviews of YE policies, programmes and institutions is organized and findings are discussed at the sub-regional event with further recommendations elaborated
- The topics for studies identified based on the constituents' requests
- Desk review of enterprise-based human resources development and other practices targeting young people is ongoing in cooperation with employers' organizations
- Analysis of international experience on development of occupational standards conducted
- Analysis of international practices relating to labour mobility is ongoing
- Desk review on successful practices relating to youth employment conducted
- Information on national policies, policy frameworks and legislation promoting youth employment in some countries of the network is collected and processed through the comprehensive global e-database YouthPOL (available for wider audience)
- Social partners are part of the cooperation network and participate in the peer review process as well as selected bi-annual meetings.
- Social partners are involved in implementation of all other project activities, as piloting of active labour market programmes in Azerbaijan, NTT meetings to discuss policy review in Kazakhstan, implementation of youth employment pacts in Russia etc.
- A number of capacity building, awareness raising and knowledge-sharing sessions on the role of trade unions in formulating youth employment policies and youth employment promotion, as well as promotion of the Decent Work Agenda are conducted with ILO participation in the countries of the sub-region on national level as well as in the regions of target countries

Immediate Objective 2

- The review of policies, institutions and programmes for youth employment in Kazakhstan is drafted and presented to the constituents. Comments from constituents have been incorporated
- A National Technical Team (NTT) is operational to develop a National Action Plan on Youth Employment in Kazakhstan
- The NTT in Kazakhstan was trained on how to draft effective youth employment action plans and strategies
- Recommendations coming from the policy review have been presented to the NTT in Kazakhstan and will serve as a basis for further development of the National Youth Employment Action Plan
- Youth employment policy review in the Russian Federation is finalized and prepared for printing
- A National Technical Team (NTT) is operational to develop a Roadmap for youth Employment Promotion in Russia
- Draft of the Roadmap for YE is presented to the NTT and comments are incorporated
- Representatives of the Ministry of Labour of Azerbaijan and public employment services are trained on how to implement and evaluate labour market programmes targeting young people
- Two active labour market programmes targeting young people are launched in Baku and rural area (with involvement of the social partners and other key stakeholders)
- Monitoring tool is developed and submitted to the constituents in Azerbaijan; monitoring of one of the programmes conducted; recommendations on possible improvements are elaborated
- Based on conducted assessment, the representatives of the pilot regions are trained on how to prioritize and address youth employment challenges
- Technical assistance on establishment of youth employment pacts is provided
- Operational guide on implementation of partnerships produced and submitted to the regions
- YE Partnerships (Pacts) are endorsed at tripartite level in three target regions of the Russian Federation
- Technical assistance to select a set of youth employment interventions and support their implementation within the frames of the Pacts is provided (e.g. piloting of selected youth targeted active labour market programmes)
- Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan added to the ILO global database on policies for youth employment (YouthPOL)

II. Purpose, Scope and Clients of Evaluation

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of technical cooperation activities. Provisions are made in all projects in accordance with ILO evaluation policy and established procedures. According to the Project Document (PRODOC), the project will be subject to two independent evaluations (mid-term and final) to assess its design, implementation and results.

Purpose

In accordance with the purpose statement in the PRODOC (Chapter 5, Monitoring and Evaluation), the mid-term evaluation will investigate and determine if the project is being implemented according to its design and if, based on monitoring data, adjustments need to be made in order to achieve the project's objectives. It will allow to fine-tune the implementation approach for the remaining duration of the project.

Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation are to:

- a. Assess the relevance of the project design and implementation strategy;
- b. Track the implementation process and assess the progress in the achievement of both quantitative and qualitative results and immediate objectives;
- c. Determine the efficiency of the project;
- d. Assess the likelihood that the project will have sustainable results and long-term effects on the beneficiary institutions, national systems, policies;
- e. Identify the supporting factors and/or barriers and constraints;
- f. Identify lessons learned, especially regarding models of interventions that can be replicated;
- g. Provide recommendations, i.e. in terms of enhancing effectiveness and sustainability at the final stage of the project.

Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will focus on the project as a whole covering the period from January 1, 2013 through the end of 2014. At the mid-term stage in project implementation, field research will be conducted in three target countries: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation. Assessment of the regional component (regional cooperation network) will be done based on documentation review (desk research).

Clients of the evaluation

The evaluation will serve the following clients' groups:

- a. ILO management, technical specialists at the HQ and in the field
- b. Project staff
- c. Tripartite constituents in the target countries
- d. The Donor
- e. Direct beneficiaries, including policy-makers and practitioners
- f. Ultimate beneficiaries, including young people

It is expected that the evaluation findings will be extensively used by the Project team and line managers responsible for the implementation of the project at the HQ, regional and country level.

III. Norms and standards

The evaluation will be carried out in adherence with the ILO Evaluation Policy, ILO Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation; UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards, Ethical Guidelines, Code of Conduct; and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria.

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_168289/lang--en/index.htm

Gender concerns should be addressed in accordance with ILO Guidance note 4: “Considering gender in the monitoring and evaluation of projects.”

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165986/lang--en/index.htm

Data should be sex-disaggregated and age-disaggregated when possible and different needs of women and men targeted by the project should be considered throughout the evaluation process.

Ethical safeguards should be maintained during the evaluation process and women and men will be interviewed in ways that avoid gender biases or reinforcement of gender discrimination and unequal power relations.

IV. Evaluation Questions based on OECD/DAC evaluation criteria²⁴

1. Relevance and strategic fit

How relevant is the project to the target countries' needs? Does it correspond to the broader national development objectives?

How well does the project fit into the ILO programming and implementation frameworks?

Was the design and implementation of the intervention gender responsive?

2. Effectiveness

What has been the project progress towards the achievement of project outcomes (immediate objectives) up to date?

Are the objectives likely to be achieved by the end of the project?

Has there been any contributing factors or obstacles, unintended or unexpected effects?

How have gender issues been taken into account during the implementation?

3. Efficiency of resource use

²⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Have the project resources (knowledge, expertise, networks, time, staff and funds) been used in an efficient manner?

4. Sustainability and likelihood of the project to have a longer-term impact

What is the likelihood that the results of the project will be sustained and utilized after the end of the project?

What needs to be done to enhance the sustainability of the project, strengthen the uptake of the project outcomes by the national stakeholders?

5. Recommendations²⁵

Are there any recommendations for the immediate next steps for the remaining duration of the project?

Is there any corrective action needed?

V. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted by an international consultant.

The following is the proposed evaluation methodology. While the evaluation consultant can propose adjustments in the methodology, any such changes should be approved by the ILO.

1. Document review

Desk review of appropriate materials, including the project document, Logical Framework, progress reports, mission reports, activity reports, surveys, studies and other outputs of the project, ILO Country Programmes, progress reports of other ILO projects implemented in the countries and relevant materials from secondary sources (e.g., national research and publications).

At the end of the desk review the evaluation consultant will prepare an evaluation instrument indicating the methodological approach to the evaluation to be followed in each of the countries (list of evaluation questions) that will be discussed with the ILO prior to the field missions.

2. Planning meeting

A planning meeting will be conducted (possibly, on distance) with the participation of the ILO representatives. The objective of the meeting is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, priority assessment questions, data sources, data collection instruments, status of logistical arrangements.

3. Observation

²⁵ Recommendations should be clear, concise, actionable and specify who is called to act upon.

If scheduling permits, the evaluator will attend and assess an event or a training activity of the project.

4. **Interviews**

Individual or group interviews will be conducted with the following stakeholders:

- a) Project staff at the ILO/ Moscow and in the countries
- b) ILO/Moscow management and technical specialists
- c) ILO National Coordinators in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan
- d) Project partners from tripartite constituents organizations in the target countries
- e) Project partners and direct beneficiaries, i.e. those who received training from the project pilots or participated in project events and activities
- f) UN partners and other development agencies working in the field
- g) The Donor

5. **Field visits**

Field visits to Russia (Moscow and, possibly, one of the pilot regions), Kazakhstan (Astana) and Azerbaijan (Baku) will be conducted. Meetings will be scheduled in advance of the field visits by the ILO project staff in accordance with these terms of reference.

6. **Post-trip debriefing**

The evaluator will present preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations to the ILO and will prepare the draft report. The draft report will subsequently be shared with the ILO for comment.

VI. Evaluation arrangements and requirements

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluation consultant who will be assisted by country based interpreters if necessary. It will involve field research in Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

The consultant profile

- University degree in economics or social sciences
- Knowledge of the social and economic development context of the region
- Technical expertise or previous experience in the area of youth employment policies and programmes
- Knowledge of evaluation methods and norms
- At least three years experience in the evaluation of development projects, in the ILO and/or the UN system in particular
- Previous work experience in the target region and countries an advantage
- Fluency in English
- Knowledge of Russian an advantage

Roles and Responsibilities

The Evaluation Consultant is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the terms of reference (TOR). He/she will:

- Review the TOR and provide input, propose any refinements to assessment questions, as necessary
- Review project background materials (e.g., project document, progress reports)
- Conduct preparatory consultations with the ILO prior to the assessment mission
- Develop and implement the assessment methodology (i.e., conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the assessment questions
- Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report
- Conduct briefing on findings, conclusions and recommendations
- Prepare a final evaluation report based on comments obtained on the initial draft report

The Evaluation Manager is responsible for:

- Drafting the TOR and circulating the draft to the stakeholders
- Finalizing the TOR with input from colleagues
- Preparing a short list of candidates to be circulated to the relevant stakeholders
- Preparing a selection memo for submission to RO Evaluation Focal Point for approval and HQ Evaluation Office for final clearance
- Hiring the consultant
- Providing the consultant with the project background materials in coordination with the project team
- Participating in preparatory meeting prior to the assessment mission
- Assisting in the implementation of the assessment methodology, as appropriate (i.e., participate in meetings, review documents)
- Reviewing the initial draft report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the evaluation consultant
- Reviewing the final draft of the report
- Submitting the final draft of the report to RO/Europe and EVAL for approval
- After EVAL approval, submitting the final report to PARDEV for submission to the Donor.
- Disseminating the final report or a summary to all the stakeholders
- Coordinating follow-up as necessary

The Project Manager (CTA) is responsible for:

- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input, as necessary
- Providing project background materials, including surveys, studies, analytical papers, reports, tools, publications produced
- Participating in preparatory meeting prior to the assessment mission
- Facilitating all the necessary logistical arrangements, preparation of the programme and schedule of all meetings/interviews
- Reviewing and providing comments on the draft report
- Participating in debriefing on findings, conclusions, and recommendations
- Ensuring proper follow-up on evaluation recommendations

- Ensuring translation of the most essential parts of the report into the national languages, if necessary

The evaluation will be carried out with the logistical and administrative support of the ILO project staff.

Evaluation Timeframe

26 work days (non-consecutive) during the period of two months, with the submission of the final report within one month from the end of the field research mission.

Tentative schedule

Phase	Duration/days	Timing 2015
I Desk review	5	Last week of January
II Pre-mission briefing	1	February
III Field research missions to three countries	9 (3 days per country*3)	February - March
IV Preparation of draft report	7	-'-
V Briefing on findings and recommendations (on distance)	1	-'-
VI Consultation on draft report	(2 weeks)	
VII Finalisation of report	3	First week of April
Total	26 Days of work	

VII. Deliverables

The expected deliverables are:

- Draft evaluation report (electronic version) in English that should comply with ILO Evaluation Office requirements²⁶ and include:
 - ✓ Executive Summary with key findings, conclusions and recommendations²⁷
 - ✓ project background²⁸

²⁶ See EVAL Checklists 5 & 6 on preparing evaluation reports for detailed guidance

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165967.pdf

²⁷ The executive summary should address the project purpose, project logic, project management structure, present situation/status of project, evaluation purpose, evaluation scope, evaluation clients/users, evaluation methodology, main findings, conclusions, main recommendations, important lessons learned, and good practices.

- ✓ evaluation methodology
 - ✓ description of the current status of the project (stocktaking), per each of the strategic objectives
 - ✓ findings
 - ✓ conclusions and recommendations (identifying which stakeholders are responsible)
 - ✓ lessons learnt
 - ✓ good practices
 - ✓ annexes including the TORs, a list of those consulted by the evaluation team in each country
- Final evaluation report (electronic version) in English incorporating feedback from stakeholders on the draft.
 - Translation of the evaluation report or most essential parts of it into the national languages as relevant (to be done by the project).

The total length of the report should be up to 35 pages, excluding annexes.

²⁸ The project background should address the project context, project purpose, project objectives, project logic, funding arrangements, organizational arrangements for implementation, and project major events and milestones.

Annex 2. List of Interviews

Midterm Independent Evaluation Programme, February – March 2015

PART 1. MOSCOW

9 February 2015

- 11.00** Meeting with Ms. Olga KOULAEVA, Senior Employment Specialist, ILO/Moscow
- 12.00** Meeting with Mr. Mikhail POUCHKIN, Chief Technical Advisor, YE project
- 14.00** Meeting with Ms. Rebecka RASK, Associate Expert on Youth Employment
- 15.00** Meeting with Ms. Julia SURINA, Junior Youth Employment Officer, YE project

11 February 2015

- 11.00** Meeting with Mr. Sergeyus GLOVACKAS, Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities
- 12.00** Meeting with Ms. Irina MELEKH, Programme Officer
- 15.00** Meeting with Ms. Dimitrina DIMITROVA, Director, DWT/CO Moscow

18 February 2015

- 12.00** Meeting with Ms. Elena KUDRYAVTSEVA, G20 Project Coordinator

PART 2. BAKU

26 February 2015

- 10:00** Meeting with Mr. Yashar HAMZAEV, ILO National Coordinator in Azerbaijan
- 10.30** Meeting with Mr. Anar BADALBEYLI, Head of the Public Employment Service
- 11.00** Meeting with PES staff
- 15.00** Meeting at the Confederation of Employers (entrepreneurs)
- 16.45** Meeting at the National Confederation of Trade Unions

27 February 2015

- 10.00** Meeting with Master Trainer Azad RAHIMOV
- 11.00** Visit to the Company involved into ALMP - Medi Light
- 12.30** Visit to the second Company involved into ALMP - Millennium

PART 3. ASTANA

11 March 2015

- 10.00** **Visit to the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan**
- Meeting with Ms. Balzhan SHAMENOVA, Director of the Department of Employment of the Population and Mr. Erzhan BEZHKENOV, Chief expert of the Direction of the Employment Policy
- 11.00** **Visit to the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan**
- Meeting with Ms. Gulnar ZHARMAKINA, Head of the Direction of the development of health, employment and social protection of the Department of social, migration policies and the development of state bodies and Ms. Natalia BELONOSOVA, Head of the Direction of the Statistics of population of the Department of labor statistics and level of life of the Statistics Committee.
- 15.00** **Visit to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan**
- Meeting with Mr. Takhir BALYKBAEV, Vice-Minister and Mr. Damir MENDYGALIEV, Chief Expert of the Department of youth policy.
- 16.30** **Visit to the Federation of trade unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan**
- Meeting with Ms. Gulnara ZHUMALGEDIEVA, the Deputy-Chair and Mr. Nurlan NURPEISOV, Director of the Department of women issues, youth and public relations and Mr. Kayrat ZHANABEKOV, Study Center and Mr. Baurzhan MUSIN, the Director of the Study Center of the Federation of trade unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Mr. Baurzhan MUSIN, the Director of the Department of the social-economic protection and labour inspection.
- 19.00** **Meeting with Mr. Nadzhat KADYROV, the Executive Director of the Confederation of Employers the Republic of Kazakhstan**

March 12, Thursday

Observation of the meetings and consultations of the ILO and the stakeholders

- 10.00 **Mr. Argandykov – vice-minister of health and social development of the Republic of Kazakhstan**
- Consultations with the officers of the Department of Employment of the Ministry of health and social development of the Republic of Kazakhstan**
- Consultations on employment issues
- Discussion of the priorities, goals, tasks and responsible bodies of the Action Plan on Youth Employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan
- 15.00 **Consultations on labour mobility with the officers of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

March 13, Friday

4th Meeting of the National Technical Group

Observation on site of the Development of the National Action Plan on Youth Employment of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Facilitator: Ms. Rebecka RASK, Specialist on Youth Employment (ILO, Moscow)

- 10.00 **Foreword and brief outline of the previous meetings of the National Technical Group**
Ministry of health and social development of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Ms. Rebecka RASK, Specialist on Youth Employment (ILO, Moscow)
Mr. Talgat UMIRZHANOV, National Coordinator of the ILO in Kazakhstan
- 10.30 **Presentation of the participants of the National Technical Group**
- 10.40 **Presentation of the draft of the National Action Plan on Youth Employment of the Republic of Kazakhstan**
Ms. Alyona NESHPOROVA, International expert
- 11.45 **Comments and questions**
- 14.00 **Round table “Priorities, goals, tasks, outcomes, outputs and indicators of the National Action Plan on Youth Employment”**
Ms. Alyona NESHPOROVA, International expert – moderation of the discussion
- 16.45 **Summary**
Ms. Rebecka RASK, Specialist on Youth Employment (ILO, Moscow)

PART 4. ELISTA

25-26 March 2015

Meetings in Elista; observation of the conference on Youth Employment Promotion

25 March 2015

- 9.00 **Visit to the JSC Factory «Zvezda»**, to share knowledge of piloting wage subsidy programme for young people in the framework of the ILO project "Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS". Meeting with young workers involved in the wage subsidy programme.
- 14.00 **Visit to the company «Individual Entrepreneur Ivanov»**, to share knowledge of piloting wage subsidy programme for young people in the framework of the ILO project "Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS". Meeting with young workers involved in the wage subsidy programme
- 17.00 **Interview with the Deputy of the Minister of Social Development, Labour and Employment Ms. Elza NAKHATINOVA**

26 March 2015

- 10.00 **Inter-regional Conference "Problems of Youth Employment"**, conducted by the Kalmyk State University in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, Labour and Employment of the Republic of Kalmykia and the ILO Moscow Office
- Session A
- Ms. Elza NAKHATINOVA, Deputy of the Minister of Social Development, Labour and Employment
- Ms. Natalia SEVEROVA, Head of the Department of the Organization of the activities of the Public Employment Service on the registration of the clients of the state services and monitoring of the labour market of the employment agency of the PermskyKrai
- Mr. Valery BESPOYASKO, Head of the Direction of the Population Employment of the Department of Labour and Employment of the Khanty-Mansy Autonomous District – Yugra.
- 12.00 **Inter-regional Conference "Problems of Youth Employment"**, conducted by the Kalmyk State University in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, Labour and Employment of the Republic of Kalmykia and the ILO Moscow Office
- Session B
- Mr. Claes-Göran LOCK, the ILO international expert, Sweden
- Mr. Sanal DAVAEV, Kalmyk regional branch of the youth public organization

“Russian student units”

Ms. Saglara BOLDYREVA, candidate of economic science, associate Professor of the Department of Economics and Management at the Enterprise, Kalmyk State University

Ms. Nina BASANGOVA, assistant at the Department of Accounting, Analysis and Taxation, Kalmyk State University

14:00

Insight Interviews with the experts and Project Partners

Ms. Natalia SEVEROVA, Head of the Department of the Organization of the activities of the Public Employment Service on the registration of the clients of the state services and monitoring of the labour market of the employment agency of the PermskyKrai

Mr. Valery BESPOYASKO, Head of the Direction of the Population Employment of the Department of Labour and Employment of the Khanty-Mansy Autonomous District – Yugra.

Annex 3 Bibliography

A skilled workforce for strong, sustainable and balanced growth: A G20 Training Strategy, ILO, 2010

ILC Resolution “The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for action”, ILO 2012

ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012, Geneva

ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013, Geneva

Guide for Preparation of National Action Plan on Youth Employment, ILO, Geneva 2008

Labor Market in CIS Countries in 2013 / CIS statistics. Statistical bulletin, 2014 #10 (541)

Road Map on Employment 2020 of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Decree of the Government #636 from 19 June 2013.

The assistance in transition to formal economy based on example of some CIS countries, Working document #6

United Nations Evaluation Group, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, (UNEG, 2014)

Annex 4 List of Project Products

Reports

- School to work transition report in Russia (in cooperation with HQ)
- Report for the Start and Improve Your Business training for the PES officials and selected group of young people who participate in piloting of entrepreneurship programme
- Monitoring and evaluations surveys and Monitoring report for Azerbaijan (wage subsidy programme)
- Report on Promoting Labour Market Mobility in Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation
- Report German approach and experience of development of occupational standards
- Report overview of the occupational standards system in English speaking countries
- Assessment report by Armenia of the YE policies, programmes and institutions in Kyrgyzstan for the peer review exercise (prepared by Arm in coop with ILO)
- Assessment report by Azerbaijan of the YE policies, programmes and institutions in Tajikistan for the peer review exercise (prepared by Azerbaijan in coop with ILO)
- Synthesis Report Peer Review of Youth Employment Policies in the Kyrgyz Republic

Reviews and Overviews

- Review of policies for youth employment of the Russian Federation
- Review of policies for youth employment of Kazakhstan
- Overview of Youth Employment policies, programmes and institutions in Kyrgyzstan for the peer review exercise (prepared by Kyrgyzstan in cooperation with ILO)
- Overview of YE policies, programmes and institutions in Tajikistan for the peer review exercise (prepared by Tajikistan in coop with ILO)
- Overview of social-economic situation (baseline study) in Permsky krai; KhMAO; Republic of Kalmykia

Manuals and Guidelines

- Operations Manual for Wage Subsidy Programme for Young Graduates in Azerbaijan
- Manual for Implementing a Youth Employment Pact and active labour market programmes (three separate manuals for three Russian regions)
- Guidelines for a Country's Youth Employment Policy Peer Review

National Action Plans and Recommendations

- National Action Plan for Youth Employment Promotion, Kazakhstan
- Roadmap for Youth Employment Promotion, Russia
- Wage subsidies for young unemployed in the Russian republic of Kalmykia - recommendations for improvement

Publications

- Job searching skills for youth (in Russian)

Annex 5. Lesson learned template

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Evaluation Title: Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States

Project TC/SYMBOL: RER/12/01/LUK

Name of Evaluator: Svetlana Bronyuk

Date: Jul. 2015

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	Preparation of the stakeholders on evidence-based policy development and equipping them with knowledge on monitoring and evaluation leads to better commitment to develop evidence-based policies and measure results
Context and any related preconditions	<p>The project “Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States” was formulated in 2013 to address the Global Youth Crisis following the International Labour Conference in 2012 when representatives of governments, employer organizations and trade unions of 185 countries, including those from CIS countries, called for urgent and immediate action to reverse the youth employment crisis and the threat of losing a generation of young people. The 2012 ILC Resolution “The youth employment crisis: A Call for Action” was endorsed.</p> <p>The global economic crisis has exacerbated the difficult situation that already existed in youth labour markets of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The crisis resulted in a dramatic increase in the levels of unemployment among young people. The youth unemployment rate in the region jumped from 17.0 per cent in 2008 to 20.4 per cent in 2009²⁹. The rate decreased between 2009 and 2011 but has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels, and is projected to be slightly over 18 per cent until 2018³⁰.</p> <p>The response of policy-makers to these challenges did not always address the root causes of the problem and the public employment services had difficulties in reaching out to young people. Their capacity to develop evidence-based policies and programmes was hampered by the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems of youth employment action. Overall, both targeting and performance monitoring of Labour Market Policies (LMPs) was weak and rigorous impact evaluation was rarely conducted in CIS countries.</p>

²⁹ ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012, Geneva. If not referred to otherwise, data on regional trends presented in this section refer to Eastern Europe (non-EU countries) and Central Asia.

³⁰ This data and other figures mentioned in this section are, unless indicated otherwise, drawn from the ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013, Geneva.

Targeted users / Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO management in charge of policy development projects design and implementation - ILO Youth Employment Programme managers - Project implementations teams - Governments and policy-makers
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	N/A
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	<p>During the evaluation exercise it was observed that policy makers and representatives of the Public Employment Services stated independently the importance of evaluation of the state programs on youth employment as a way to measure results.</p> <p>This positive effect was a result of their participation in the preparatory capacity building seminar on youth employment policy in ILO Training Centre in Turin, Italy which included sessions on monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>For example, in Azerbaijan the representatives of government suggested to evaluate the Active Labor Market Programmes piloted within a Project to assess their effectiveness and possibility to escalation to the state level.</p> <p>In Kazakhstan during the development of the National Action Plan on Youth Employment policy-makers made sure that all indicators were measurable and aligned with the current state programmes.</p> <p>These positives measure leads to conclusion that <i>preparation of the stakeholders on evidence-based policy development and equipping them with knowledge on monitoring and evaluation leads to better commitment to develop evidence-based policies and measure results</i></p>
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Future projects' design should incorporate an inception phase due resources (time, staff and funds) for the capacity building activities to equip the stakeholders / policy makers with knowledge on evidence-based policy development, monitoring and evaluation to promote the accountability and effectiveness of the youth labour policies.

Annex 6. Good practice template

ILO Emerging Good Practice

Evaluation Title: Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States

Project TC/SYMBOL: RER/12/01/LUK

Name of Evaluator: Svetlana Bronyuk

Date: Jul. 2015

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
Brief description of the good practice; link to specific action; task or policy	Projects / activities involving constituents equally in joint work / project contribute to better ownership of the Project
Relevant pre-conditions, Context	<p>Good practice of joint work was observed during the development of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment in Kazakhstan. The technical working group on policy development included policy makers (government) themselves, trade unions and employers' organizations. The process of policy development was moderated by the external expert in policy development and youth employment specialist (ILO).</p> <p>To support ILO tripartite constituents in youth employment evidence-based programming the in-depth analysis of youth employment policies and existing challenges in Kazakhstan was conducted.</p> <p>The process of the joint policy development was in line with ILO Guide for the preparation of National Action Plans on Youth Employment / Gianni Rosas and Giovanna Rossignotti; International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO, 2008</p> <p>The participatory approach was applied and the social partners' stakeholders (trade unions and employers' organizations) confirmed their equal involvement and role in the process next to the government. The capacity of the trade unions and employers' organizations to take part in the development of youth employment policies at the national level was strengthened as the result of the training aimed to prepare them for the participation in the development of the National Action Plans on Youth Employment.</p>

Causal Factors	<p>It was observed during the evaluation interviews (policy-makers, employers' organizations and trade unions) that joint development of the National Action Plan on Youth Employment involving constituents equally in joint work contributes to better ownership of the Project.</p> <p>The key performance indicators were verified by the government and aligned with the current programs of Kazakhstan on youth employment. The trade unions and the employers' organization have developed strategy on youth employment aligned with the National Action Plan on Youth Employment.</p> <p>These measures indicate that direct involvement of the stakeholders in the policy development increases the ownership of the country and of the stakeholders of the Project.</p>
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ILO management in charge of policy development projects design and implementation - ILO Youth Employment Programme managers - Project implementations teams - Governments and policy-makers
Indicate Measurable impact	N/A
Potential for Replication	<p>The emerging practice was backed up by the ILO Guide for the preparation of National Action Plans on Youth Employment and proved to be effective. The facilitation of the process with the help of the external expert puts all the stakeholders in equal position and is a good way to manage power relations in the process. The emerging practice could be replicated in other CIS countries to encourage participatory approach in policy development.</p>
Links to Country Programme Outcomes or ILO Policy	<p>The emerging practice is relevant to the ILO strategy in support of country action on youth employment to provide technical assistance to strengthen the policymaking process.</p>
Other relevant documents or comments	<p>The emerging practice will be beneficial if all stakeholders are prepared for the process through capacity building activities (ex. Training on Policy development cycle, evidence-based programming, monitoring and evaluation).</p>