



ILO EVALUATION

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This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Unit.

Independent Final Evaluation Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS

Title	Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS
TC Code	RER/12/01/LUK
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Timing of Evaluation	Final
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List of Acronyms

ALMP	Active Labour Market Programme
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China and South Africa
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	Country Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program
DWT/CO	Decent Work Team and Country Office
EU	European Union
HQ	Headquarters (ILO)
ILO	International Labour Organization
KAB	Know About Business
NC	National Coordinator
NTT	National Technical Team
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PARDEV	ILO's Partnership and Field Support
PPC	Project Partnership Committee
PES	Public Employment Service
RSPP	Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the evaluator and do not necessarily represent those of the ILO or the governments of the target countries.

Executive Summary

About the Project

The project “Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States” was implemented over a five-year period, from 2013 to 2017, through a Public-Private Partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and a major Russian enterprise – the global energy company, LUKOIL. Youth employment promotion has been recognised as a global priority and the project represents an important regional response, incorporating many of the policy and programme approaches called for in the 2012 International Labour Conference resolution – “The youth employment crisis: A Call for Action” and reinforced in the 2013 “Oslo Declaration: Restoring confidence in jobs and growth” adopted at the Ninth European Regional Meeting of ILO constituents.

The immediate objectives of the project focused on both the development of effective youth employment policies and strategies in the region and support for the implementation of action plans and programmes in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. It included action at three levels. At the *regional* level, the project sought to foster a collaborative network across the CIS countries that would serve as a platform for knowledge sharing, regional strategy development and the conduct of peer reviews. At the *national* level, the project would support the development of packages of initiatives tailored to the specific needs of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. It would also develop the capacity of these countries to effectively implement these initiatives. At the *sub-national level*, the project would support three regions of the Russian Federation to build local partnerships that would oversee the piloting of some of these initiatives.

About the Evaluation

This final independent evaluation of the project examined its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The clients of the evaluation were ILO management, technical specialists (in HQ and the field), project staff, tripartite constituents in the target countries, the donor (LUKOIL), and direct beneficiaries (i.e. policy makers and practitioners). It was conducted in September and October 2017.

The evaluation focused on the end results of the project and assessed overall performance in achieving its defined objectives. An international consultant, based in Sydney, Australia, conducted the evaluation using a combination of methods including analysis of documents, field visits to Moscow, the Republic of Kalmykia (in the Russian Federation) and Azerbaijan, and interviews with project stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Findings

Relevance

- This project was **well designed**. It responded effectively to regional, national and sub-national needs in the field of youth employment policy and programmes and built on other past support provided by the ILO, delivered in line with its strategies and programming frameworks. The intervention logic was sound and, despite including a quite complex array of outputs and activities, these cohered well in the implementation, which was managed well by a relatively small team.
- The project broke new ground through the involvement of a major Russian company, LUKOIL, as the development cooperation partner. The company has led the way in demonstrating the positive **impact that can be made by the private sector in advancing global development goals**. More needs to be done to tell this story to a wider audience.

Effectiveness

- Most of the planned activities were completed and the **Regional Cooperation Network** established through the project is now proving to be an effective mechanism for cooperation, peer-to-peer learning, the sharing of international good practice, the commissioning of comparative research on topics prioritized by the constituents, and the improvement of youth

employment policies and programmes. The Network is task-oriented and has played an important role in highlighting the need for reforms in the youth employment approaches taken by its member countries.

- **Five peer reviews** were conducted through the project and participating countries have seen this initiative as being useful. The process for these peer reviews has been refined and incorporated into a toolkit with potentially global application. Changes brought about by the peer reviews could be better monitored, but the reviews are already helping the ILO to better target the assistance it provides within the region.
- The project **actively involved the social partners** in all facets of its implementation, including the Regional Cooperation Network meetings, the conduct of the peer reviews, the commissioning of research and publications, and in the national and sub-national action plans and programme pilots. Trade Unions and Employers' Organisation were immersed through the project in the key youth employment policy challenges faced by the participating countries, exposing them to international good practice aimed at addressing these challenges, and ensuring they had a voice, through social dialogue, in policy and programme improvement. The social partners and the key labour market institutions, including **Public Employment Services (PES)**, have also benefitted from targeted capacity-building activities.
- The project commissioned, validated and published a number of **reports and comparative studies** designed to disseminate good practice on youth employment policy. All of these publications directly addressed priority issues being faced by the participating countries and there is evidence that the practices identified and the issues discussed in them have informed the development of national policies and programmes.
- In response to the expressed needs of the participating countries, the project developed or adapted a number of **tools** designed to guide them in their review and development of youth employment policy and programmes. These tools all had a practical application for the countries involved and made a positive contribution to the project objectives. The reported use of the peer review tools in other regions was an unexpected positive outcome.
- The project supported the conduct/implementation of **youth employment policy reviews**. In Kazakhstan, while the project conducted many of the planned activities, it was not in a position to support the implementation of the action plan due to circumstances outside the project's control. In the Russian Federation, an in-depth analysis of youth employment policies was conducted in 2013-2014 (separate from this project) and the priorities identified and the policy recommendations made in this review formed the basis of a "Roadmap for Youth Employment Promotion in the Russian Federation", supported by the project. In Azerbaijan, the project has made a real impact on youth employment policies and programmes primarily by implementing small scale pilots from which broader action plans and strategies later grew.
- Sub-regional pilots were conducted in three Russian regions. In **Kalmykia**, the Youth Employment Partnerships have proven to be an effective mechanism to engage local actors in the development and delivery of active labour market programmes, harnessing local knowledge and contacts and improving service coordination. The Partnerships are still in their infancy and require continuing support to maximize the value they can add to programme delivery in the region. At the individual beneficiary level, the wage subsidy pilot programme implemented by the Partnerships seems to have acted as a "circuit breaker" for a small group of long-term unemployed people, successfully connecting them to lasting jobs. It is still too early to assess the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship pilot, which was also run there.
- In the other two regions (**Perm Territory and Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Region**), the small pilot programmes run have been successful and may soon be expanded, but the value added by the Partnerships in their management has not been well documented.

- In **Azerbaijan**, the project was very successful. The successful conduct of a pilot entrepreneurship programme in 2014 (using the ILO's SIYB model) led to a government commitment to scale up its delivery to cover 10,000 households across all regions of the country and backed by a \$US4 million allocation from the Presidential Fund. Ongoing piloting enhanced the country's capacity to expand in this way by training an additional 142 SIYB trainers who have since delivered the programme to 1,915 people. 1,500 of these will receive business start-up assistance from the government. Other project achievements in Azerbaijan included contributions to the creation of a permanent tripartite Commission on Labour, Economic and Social Affairs, the finalization of a new National Employment Policy, and capacity building and reform of the PES.

Efficiency

- Considering the scale and complexity of activities, which offered intensive support to three countries as well as tangible benefits to six others in the sub-region, the project gave **excellent value for money**.
- In terms of human resources, the project was **efficiently coordinated by a small team** in Moscow (CTA, a Youth Employment Officer and two assistants) with an assistant in Kazakhstan. External human resources – expert advisors, trainers, researchers, consultants – were engaged to undertake specific tasks and, judging by the quality of their finished work and feedback from those consulted, these seem to have been performed very well.

Sustainability of results and likelihood of long term effects

- In **Azerbaijan**, the project has directly contributed to the development of a new national employment policy, enhanced tripartism in policy development through a new Commission, greatly enhanced PES effectiveness, proven the effectiveness of an active labour market programme, and seen this programme fully adopted, funded by the government and expanded tenfold. All of these are **enduring results, representing major reforms at multiple levels**.
- In the **Russian Federation**, building on earlier collaboration and support, a Roadmap for Youth Employment Promotion was developed and this is shaping future interventions. The project has supported continuing reforms in the vocational training system and in the setting of occupational standards and these have the potential to greatly influence youth employment approaches and outcomes, including by better management of school-to-work transition. At a sub-national level, the project is testing the implementation of various delivery models, including the involvement of local partnerships in delivering labour market programmes and these too seem likely to influence future planning and delivery.
- In **Kazakhstan**, even though the project's support for implementation has been held back, a National Youth Employment Action Plan has been endorsed.
- At a **regional level**, the project has built an effective mechanism for collaboration, knowledge sharing and joint-ventures among a group of countries with similar needs and a shared institutional heritage. The involvement of BRICS countries has extended these benefits.

Conclusions

- This well-designed project responded to regional, national and sub-national needs in the field of youth employment policy and programmes. It built on past support provided by the ILO, delivered in line with its strategies and programming frameworks. The intervention logic was sound and its quite complex array of outputs and activities cohered well in practice.
- The social partners and the key labour market institutions, including Public Employment Services, have all been active participants and have benefitted from targeted capacity building activities and their direct involvement in programme development and piloting. New and emerging forms of work are posing new challenges for the social partners and, as young workers may be

disproportionately affected by these changes, a strategic response could be explored in the second phase of the project.

- Moving forward, continuing capacity building in monitoring and evaluation of youth employment initiatives is needed as is more support for addressing gender issues in design and delivery and in targeting programmes for people disadvantaged in the labour market.

Recommendations

1. **Promote the project as a model of Corporate Social Responsibility** in the Russian Federation and globally
2. Identify how best to **monitor the changes made as a result of the peer reviews** in youth employment policies
3. Consider further research into **how new and emerging forms of work are affecting young people** in the labour market and what policy responses might be needed in CIS countries
4. Continue to build the capacity of stakeholders (especially in pilot locations) to **monitor and evaluate** the youth programmes they pilot
5. As recommended in the Mid-Term Evaluation, **enhance the gender sensitivity of future project implementation** including through specialist expertise (e.g. in review of research and tools produced), capacity building for stakeholders in programme design and management, and in project performance monitoring
6. Encourage/support countries to give **more attention to the needs of people disadvantaged in the labour market** (e.g. people with disabilities, low levels of education, or facing discrimination) in the design and delivery of youth employment programmes, including by sharing international good practice and specialist expertise
7. **Monitor and document Azerbaijan’s experience in “mainstreaming” and scaling up entrepreneurship training** as a means of sharing good practice and lessons learned to other countries (in the region and elsewhere)
8. Ensure project monitoring in Stage 2 gives **more attention to measuring outcomes/effectiveness of outputs** and activities by revising the current performance indicators and reporting accordingly.
9. **Reinforce the application of International Labour Standards** in Stage 2 by systematically reviewing opportunities for their promotion at all stages of implementation, especially activity design and commissioning.

Main lessons learned

Ensuring that project’s design builds directly on previous ILO work allows the project to “hit the ground running”, reducing the delays in project start-up that can occur when projects attempt to introduce activities where no ground work has been done.

In Azerbaijan, the project showed that small scale pilot projects can demonstrate programme effectiveness and lead to them being scaled up by governments. While this is part of the “theory of change” in many technical cooperation projects, in practice it often does not happen. In Azerbaijan, the success factors in this respect were: having a local “champion” who was both an expert in the delivery of the programme in the country context and respected by key government decision makers; key local people (e.g. mayors) learning of the project and lobbying for its expansion; the support given to the PES to coordinate the programme at a local level; and a mechanism to fund the expansion – in this case, the President’s discretionary fund.

1 Project Background

1.1 Context

Countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) continue to face significant challenges in addressing the needs of young people (aged 15 to 29) in the labour market. Despite some improvements since the global financial crisis, youth unemployment rates continue to be unacceptably high, especially outside the big cities. Of those who are employed, too many work in the informal economy or in low-quality, precarious or hazardous jobs. The social and psychological effects of this situation are of great concern and have sparked fears that social exclusion and entrenched inequality might lead to disaffection and anti-social behaviours. The situation is worse for disadvantaged young people who face an even higher risk of social exclusion.

At the same time, youth employment policy is of critical importance to the health of the overall labour market and to national and regional economic performance. Despite persistent youth unemployment, there is unmet demand for skilled workers in many areas. This points to a misalignment between the skills of young people exiting education and training institutions and the skills actually required by employers.

While these issues are by no means unique to CIS countries, policy makers and labour market institutions in these countries share similar challenges, both in realigning established services to meet current needs and in designing, implementing and monitoring effective policy and programme responses. These shared challenges lend themselves to a collaborative policy response that would foster a regional approach to the problem, identify and share knowledge of “what works” and supports the piloting of new programmes. The project is designed to respond to these issues and opportunities.

1.2 About the project

Project intervention logic, strategy and objectives

The project’s intervention logic is founded on the premise that the shared institutional and labour market challenges faced by CIS countries support a regional approach that fosters cooperation, mutual learning and exchanges of knowledge and expertise between and within countries. Building on this regional cooperation and learning, the project would put into practice revised youth employment policies and approaches. This would include institutional reforms, national action plans, and the piloting of interventions that can be scaled up and used as national programmes. An overview of the logic and strategy is included below in **Diagram 1**.

The project’s Development Objective, two Immediate Objectives and eleven Outputs are summarised in **Box 1** below. In broad terms, the project included interventions at three levels. At the *regional* level, the project sought to foster a collaborative network across the CIS countries that would serve as a platform for knowledge sharing, regional strategy development and the conduct of peer reviews. At the *national* level, the project would support the development of a package of initiatives tailored to the specific needs of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. It would also develop the capacity of these countries to effectively implement these initiatives. At the *sub-national level*, the project would support three regions of the Russian Federation to build local partnerships to oversee the piloting of labour market programmes of various types with a view to expanding these arrangements in the future.

Box 1: Project Objectives

Development Objective: “Contribute to the creation of decent work for youth in CIS countries”

- **Immediate Objective 1:** focused on the adoption and/or revision of policies and strategies for decent work for youth in line with priorities identified by a collaborative regional network. Six expected outputs and 36 activities were planned which related to:
 - Establishing a **regional cooperation network**
 - Conducting **peer reviews**
 - Elevating youth employment in **trade unions’** agenda
 - Engaging **employers’ organisations** in servicing young entrepreneurs
 - **Disseminating good practice**
 - Developing/adapting youth employment **tools for CIS countries**

- **Immediate Objective 2:** focused on the implementation of youth employment action plans and programmes in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. Five expected Outputs and 37 activities were planned which related to:
 - **Reviewing youth employment policy** and implementing recommendations
 - Developing and implementing youth employment **initiatives in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan**
 - Establishing **“Youth Employment Pacts/Partnerships”** in three Russian regions
 - Adoption of a **national package of youth labour market policies in Azerbaijan** following implementation of pilot measures

Organizational arrangements

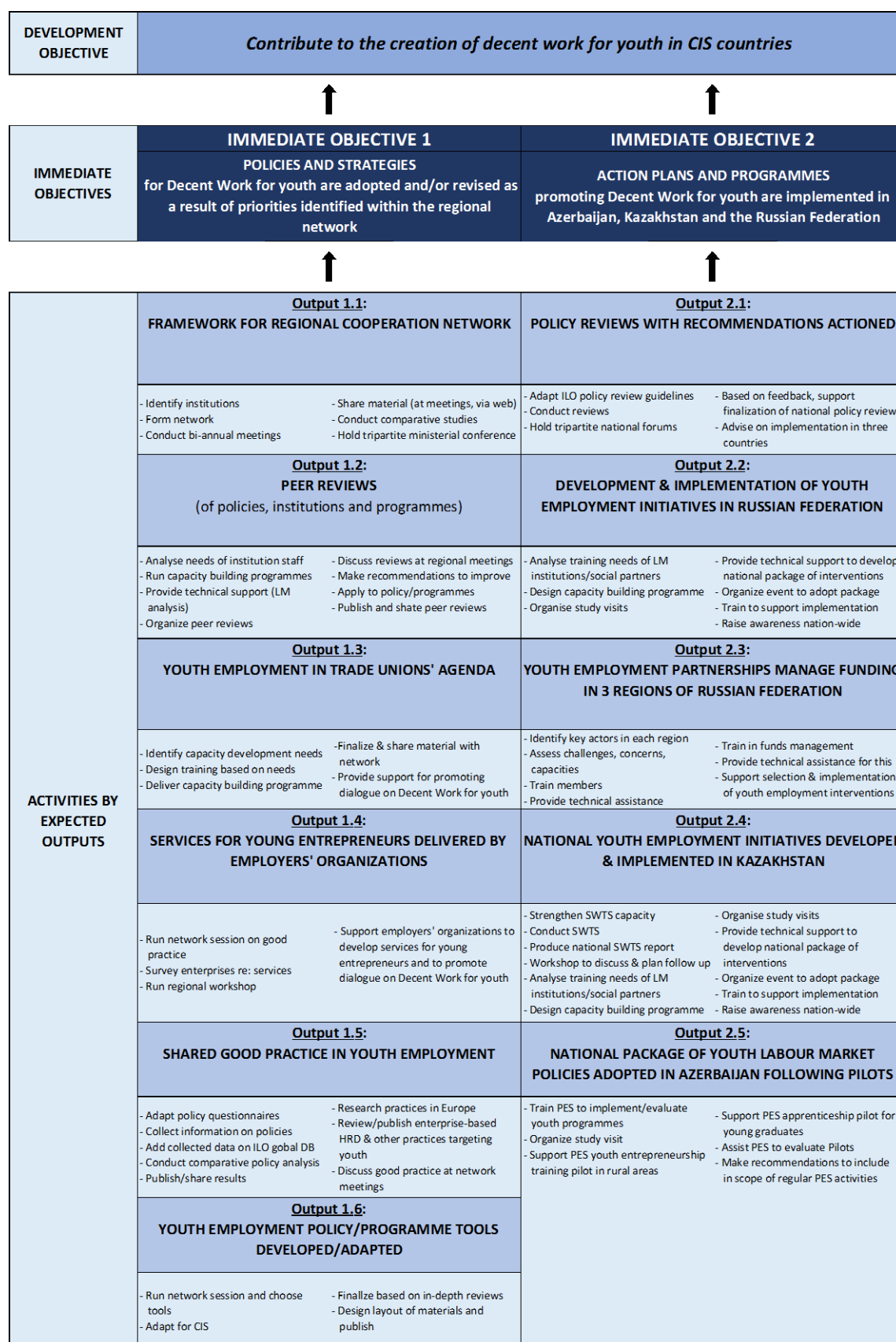
The project was supervised by the ILO Decent Work Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia based in Moscow (DWT-Moscow) with this office’s Senior Employment Specialist as focal point. Project staffing included an international Chief Technical Advisor (vacant at the time of the evaluation with recruitment underway), a Youth Employment Officer supporting all project activities, and three assistants (two in Moscow, one in Astana/Kazakhstan). Technical backstopping for the project was provided by a youth employment specialist in ILO headquarters in Geneva.¹

An overall project implementation plan was prepared at inception and updated throughout the project. This included details of the timing of planned activities, the responsible organization, the partners involved, and a breakdown of costs. Performance indicators were included in the project document (see **Annex D**) and were reported against in annual project progress reports along with a narrative on the project’s status, issues and risks faced, and lessons learned.

A Project Partnership Committee (PPC) was formed, comprising representatives of the ILO and the donor, and met regularly to keep the donor informed of project progress.

¹ A Junior Professional Officer in Moscow (funded by the Government of Sweden) and a Junior backstopping officer in ILO headquarters were also supported the project in 2014-15.

Diagram 1: Overview of Intervention Logic



2 Evaluation Background and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

ILO considers evaluation to be 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.

This is the final independent evaluation of the project. A mid-term evaluation was conducted in February-May 2015 which identified some deficiencies in the project's design, but which was broadly satisfied with the project's progress at that time.

2.2 Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

In accordance with the TOR, the purpose of the final evaluation is accountability to the Donor, ILO management and constituents, as well as project improvement, particularly in view of the second phase. In particular, the evaluation focuses on the end results of the project and assesses its overall performance in achieving the defined objectives. A second phase of the project will commence in January 2018 and lessons learned from the evaluation will inform the implementation of this phase.

The primary audience for the evaluation are ILO management, technical specialists (in HQ and the field), project staff, tripartite constituents in the target countries, the donor (LUKOIL), and direct beneficiaries (i.e. policy makers and practitioners).

2.3 Evaluation criteria and questions

In line with the OECD/DAC criteria, and reflecting the need to be accountable to ILO management, its constituents, and to the donor, this final evaluation examines the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability and impact likelihood of the initiative.

Relevance and strategic fit

1. Has the project been relevant to the target countries' needs in the area of youth employment? Did it correspond to the broader national development objectives as they evolved?
2. How well does the project fit into the ILO programming and implementation frameworks?

Effectiveness

3. Have the project outcomes (immediate objectives) been achieved? Has the project been effective in fostering adequate policy responses to youth employment challenges?
4. Have there been any contributing factors or obstacles?
5. How have gender issues been taken into account during the implementation?
6. How have the relevant international labour standards concerning, for instance, employment, discrimination and informality, been taken into account during the implementation and how have the social dialogue and tripartite approach contributed to project implementation?

Efficiency of resources use

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

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

8. What is the likelihood that the results of the project will be durable and utilized after the end of the project?

9. Is it likely that the project will have long-term effects (impact) on the target groups and institutions, and more equitable gender relations?

Recommendations

10. In view of the upcoming second phase, what are the recommendations for the next steps in the technical areas covered by the project?

2.4 Methodology

An international consultant, based in Sydney, Australia, conducted the evaluation, including the analysis of project documents and reports, interviewing stakeholders in Moscow, Kalmykia and Azerbaijan, and writing the Evaluation Report. The evaluation adhered to 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.

Key elements of the methodology were:

(a) Analysis of key documents and information resources supplied by the ILO, obtained during the field visits, or located via web search. These included:

- The original project document and logical framework
- The mid-term evaluation report
- Project annual reports for 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016
- Publications, tools and other outputs of the project
- Decent Work Country Programmes/Programme of Cooperation
- Peer Review Synthesis Reports
- ILO Outcome-Based Workplan reports (AZE106, KKAZ159, and RUS155)
- Reports on Regional Cooperation Network conferences
- Policy reviews (Russia, Kazakhstan)
- Country Employment Strategies
- Minutes of the Project Partnership Committee meetings
- Monitoring reports
- Youth Employment Partnership manuals

(b) Inception report

An Inception Report was prepared and submitted to the Evaluation Manager on 24 September 2017. See **Annex B**. As part of this Inception Report, a data collection plan was developed that identified indicators, sources and methods to be used to answer the evaluation questions.

(c) Field visits and interviews

The evaluation included visits to the Russian Federation (Moscow and three regions of Kalmykia, including Elista) and Azerbaijan (Baku and two regions). Interviews were conducted with ILO staff (project staff, management, technical specialists, CTAs of other relevant projects, National Coordinator), the donor (LUKOIL), universities and research institutions, project partners/stakeholders (tripartite constituents), direct beneficiaries (i.e. policy makers and practitioners who participated in regional networks and capacity building initiatives), ultimate beneficiaries (i.e. individual and group meetings with participants), and other UN agencies working in related areas in the field. As some key stakeholders were unavailable during the field visits, some were later interviewed via Skype. A full list of interviews is included at **Annex C**.

(d) Observation

As part of the field visits in Kalmykia, the evaluation attended two Youth Employment Partnership events/meetings where entrepreneurship programme participants presented and defended their business plans and the Partnerships made decisions about who would receive start-up grants.

(e) Analysis and report writing

Data collected by the consultant was analysed to identify key issues and themes in line with the evaluation questions. A draft report was submitted for feedback to the Evaluation Manager on 10 November 2017 and circulated for stakeholder comments. The report was finalized taking into account stakeholder comments.

Limitations

There were no field visits to two of the project locations (Perm Territory and Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Region) and so evaluation sources were restricted to documents and reports on project performance in these two regions. Also, as the field visit to Azerbaijan coincided with an international ILO conference in Turkey, some key constituents were not available at that time for face-to-face interviews.

3 Findings

3.1 Relevance

3.1.1 Global priorities and needs

Youth employment is a recognised global priority. At the International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2012, representatives of governments, employer organizations and trade unions from 185 countries (including the project's target countries) called for urgent and immediate action to reverse "the youth employment crisis". The ILC resolution – "The youth employment crisis: A Call for Action" – proposed a multi-level approach that embraced pro-employment growth through *macroeconomic policies*, a focus on *skills formation*, labour market *policy review*, *entrepreneurship* and self-employment, and protecting the *rights of young workers*. Similarly, the 2013 European Regional Meeting of the ILO culminated in the "The Oslo Declaration: Restoring confidence in jobs and growth", which encouraged action to "facilitate the *exchange of experience*...focused on concrete issues of concern" and the promotion of Active Labour Market Programmes (*ALMPs*) *targeting the needs of the young*.

The project includes interventions that apply elements of all of these approaches in the participating countries.

3.1.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

A significant aspect of project relevance in this case is the involvement of a major Russian enterprise – the global energy company, LUKOIL – as the project donor. LUKOIL contributes funds to a wide range of local, national and regional initiatives through its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). These initiatives contribute to energy efficiency and environmental awareness, the needs of the underprivileged, emergency services, arts and culture, community engagement, and education and empowerment.

According to the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP), the main Russian employers' organization and the peak body representing the interests of Russian businesses, LUKOIL is a pioneer in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility and the first Russian enterprise to enter into a funding agreement of this type with a UN agency. The RSPP maintains an active interest in promoting CSR initiatives in the Russian Federation. It is now looking at opportunities to align these initiatives, wherever feasible, to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs.) It sees great potential for other Russian enterprises to follow LUKOIL's lead and engage in this form of CSR. To this end, RSPP believes more should be done to work with

LUKOIL to highlight project achievements to other major firms, explore their CSR interests, and establish funding partnerships. As an RSPP representative put it: “Business people are attracted to the smell of success.” (See **Recommendation 1**).

3.1.3 Needs and priorities of CIS countries

Youth Employment is a national priority for all of the project’s participating countries and is linked to their development goals. The project document provided a detailed analysis of the current policy, programme and institutional situation of the three focus countries and presented a strong rationale for how the project would meet identified needs in each. Key points that highlight how project activities fit with national priorities include:

Azerbaijan - Youth employment promotion is a priority given the country’s demographic profile and this is reflected in the existing national employment policy, UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) priorities and past programmes (“Azerbaijani Youth in 2011-15”). *Entrepreneurship training*, a focus of the project in Azerbaijan, is also a priority and is seen as contributing to its *economic diversification* goals, which form part of its *macroeconomic policy* settings. *Reducing informality* in the labour market is also linked to this. To improve employment services and labour market programme delivery, *PES capacity* building is also a priority. The project fits well with all of these issues.

Kazakhstan – While the official youth unemployment rate is quite low, the State Youth Policy recognises the central importance of improving *education and training standards*, increasing *local employment opportunities* to avoid a youth “brain drain”, and *reducing informality* in the youth labour market. Improving *macroeconomic policies* and encouraging *economic diversification* are important related issues. The project design included elements focusing on all these areas.

Russian Federation – The project document highlighted the “*striking differences in unemployment rates* across entities of the Russian Federation”, including high rates in the South, Far Eastern and Siberia Federal Districts. As regional labour markets face different challenges, *mechanisms to enhance local relevance and responsiveness* in programme delivery (such as the project’s Youth Employment Partnerships) are needed. *Modernization of the training system* was also highlighted as a priority – *skills mismatches* are acute and too few young people are pursuing careers in *blue collar occupations*. The project responded to these needs through its support for the modernizing of occupational standards and career guidance initiatives as well as the piloting of locally managed programmes in a diverse selection of regions.

3.1.4 ILO programming and implementation frameworks

The project was designed within the ILO’s Strategic Policy Framework 2010-15, though its operation extended into 2016-17, when a “Transitional Strategic Plan” was in place. It also spanned three “Programme and Budget” (P&B) cycles (2012-13, 2014-15, 2016-17) – these set out the strategic objectives and expected outcomes for the ILO’s work in each biennium as approved by the International Labour Conference. “Decent Work Country Programmes” (DWCP)², aligned with national development plans and UN planning frameworks, link to the P&B. Together, these shape country-level “Outcome-based Workplans” (OBWs) and form the basis for internal ILO reporting.

Broadly speaking³, the italicized sections below highlight how the project fits within these frameworks:

- **Strategic Policy Framework 2010-15 (and P&Bs for 2012-13 and 2014-15):**

² In the case of the Russian Federation, rather than establish a DWCP, a “Programme of Cooperation” is negotiated instead.

³ The rules by which the ILO monitors and records results in these frameworks are complicated, sometimes disallow reporting against multiple outcome areas, and are often revised. For the purposes of this evaluation, a broad assessment of *where the project seems to have added value* has been made. In practice, results against these frameworks are recorded differently.

- Outcome 1: Employment Promotion – including “initiatives in policy areas that facilitate *transition of informal activities to formality*”;
- Outcome 2: Skills Development – including “develop and implement integrated policies and programmes to promote *productive employment and decent work for young women and men*”;
- Outcome 3: Sustainable Enterprises – including “*implement entrepreneurship development policies and programmes* for the creation of productive employment and decent work”;
- Outcome 9: Employers’ Organizations – including “create or significantly *strengthen services* to respond to the needs of existing and potential members”;
- Outcome 10: Workers’ Organizations – including “achieve greater respect for fundamental workers’ rights and international labour standards through their *participation in policy discussions* at national, regional or international levels”.
- **Transitional Strategic Plan 2016-17 (and P&B for 2016-17)**
 - Outcome 1: More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects – including the “developed, revised, implemented or monitored *comprehensive employment frameworks*”; “targeted action on *jobs and skills for young people* through the development and implementation of multi-pronged policies and programmes”; “*strengthened capacities on macroeconomic policies* for promoting more and better jobs and for tackling inequalities”; and “policies, regulations and services to achieve inclusive and *effective labour market institutions*”;
 - Outcome 4: Promoting sustainable enterprises – including “public and private intermediaries have designed and implemented *scalable entrepreneurship programmes* aimed at income and employment creation with a focus on young people and women”;
 - Outcome 5: Decent work in the rural economy – including “targeted programmes that contribute to decent work and productive *employment in rural areas*”;
 - Outcome 6: Formalization of the informal economy – including “promote and facilitate the *transition to formality*”
 - Outcome 10: Strong and representative employers’ and workers’ organizations – including “*strengthened and delivered sustainable services* to respond to the needs of existing and potential members”; “increase their representative strength to *influence policy agendas* at the national, regional and international levels”.
- **Decent Work Country Programmes and Programme of Cooperation with Russian Federation**
 - Azerbaijan (DWCPs 2012-15; 2016-20): Promoting decent employment opportunities and quality jobs for inclusive growth – including development of *National Employment Policy, active labour market programmes targeting youth, and self-employment programmes*;
 - Russian Federation (Programmes of Cooperation 2013-16; 2017-20): Increasing employment opportunities and labour productivity – including measures targeting *regional disparities in unemployment, skills mismatches, and training system development*.
 - Kazakhstan – no current DWCP (in draft form only).
- **Other important programming and planning links**
 - Moving forward, the project’s focus on a Regional Cooperation Network and peer reviews fits well with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development

Goal 8 calls for “*peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets*”;

- Research, knowledge, labour statistics and capacity development – the project was designed to contribute to research and knowledge sharing across the participating countries and commissioned a range of studies (e.g. macroeconomic policy, occupational standard setting, school-to-work transition, gender issues) in line with the ILO’s agenda for research and knowledge.

3.2 Effectiveness

3.2.1 Introduction

This was an ambitious project. Its scope, geographic reach, and technical complexity required the detailed planning and management of multiple interventions at regional, national and sub-national levels. It encompassed high-level research and advice on the macroeconomic foundations of youth labour market development, but also detailed technical assistance in implementing programmes in the field. It was a mechanism with “many moving parts”.

The project document detailed 11 separate outputs and 73 discrete activities that would contribute to the achievement of the Immediate Objectives. In practice these were often intertwined, reinforcing each other and enhancing overall effectiveness (e.g. the participation of Trade Unions in the peer review process under Output 1.2 both enhanced this process and strengthened the place of youth employment in Trade Unions’ agenda, under Output 1.3).

This section describes what the project delivered under each of its 11 expected outputs and evaluates the extent to which these outputs have contributed to the achievement of the project’s objectives.

3.2.2 Immediate Objective 1 – Development of Policies & Strategies

Regional Cooperation Network (Output 1.1)

Following a period of initial consultations with the proposed Network partners (Ministries of Labour, Public Employment Services, and social partners of nine CIS countries), the Network was officially established in September 2013 at a launch event in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This event also provided Network members the opportunity to define the group’s interests and working priorities and to agree on a framework for bi-annual conferences, which would include training and capacity building/information sessions, presentation on peer review findings (Output 1.2), sharing of good practice (Output 1.5), and the validation of tools and resources prepared through the project (Output 1.6).

Core membership of the Network included nine countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) with representatives of the project’s three sub-national regions of the Russian Federation (the Republic of Kalmykia, Perm Territory and the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region) also sometimes attending. To further enhance international cooperation and knowledge sharing on youth employment policy and approaches, the Network has also twice hosted representatives from Brazil, India, China and South Africa (which with Russia form the BRICS group of countries).

Over the course of the project, the Network has had 7 *sub-regional conferences* and the agenda and reports of these meetings suggest a highly-engaged, self-directed and enthusiastic membership. The dynamics of group interactions in these reports also suggest that members are using the Network to enhance bilateral cooperation. **Box 2** below provides details of these sub-regional conferences, including date and location, countries attending and content covered.

While the sub-regional conferences were the primary gatherings of the Network, these also served as a mechanism to drive other forms of networking and cooperation among members. The Network facilitated the participation of various members in other workshops and meetings relevant to their youth employment policies and programmes (and linked to other project Outputs) - including occupational standards (November 2014), the impact of macroeconomic policy on youth employment (February 2015), employment of people with disabilities (November 2015), strengthening the PES (January 2017) and the informal economy (September 2017). The peer reviews of youth employment policies (Output 1.2, discussed below) also fostered closer bilateral ties between the reviewing and reviewed countries (through site visits and institutional and personal connections).

Box 2: Regional Cooperation Network Meetings

Date/Location	Countries represented	Content
October 2013 Almaty Kazakhstan	7	Launch of project and first meeting of the Network Identification of priority needs
April 2014 Turin & Rome Italy	9	Training in peer review of youth employment policies and programmes EU experience in youth employment
October 2014 St Petersburg Russian Federation	9 (+3 BRICS Observers and 2 Russian Regions)	First peer review discussed (Armenia reviewed Kyrgyzstan) Identification of good practice in end-program compilation report Youth employment promotion approaches (including BRICS)
April 2015 Krasnoyarsk Russian Federation	7 (+3 Russian Regions)	Second peer review discussed (Azerbaijan reviewed Tajikistan) Session on macroeconomic policies promoting youth employment delivered by expert from Italy Session on Austrian experience in implementing ALMPs by Regional Director of Austrian PES Session on anti-crisis measures implemented by Russian Federation by Director of Employment Department of Ministry of Labour & Social Protection Field visit to Krasnoyarsk Centre for Career Guidance
October 2015 Sochi Russian Federation	8 (+3 Russian Regions)	Third peer review discussed (Russian Federation and Kazakhstan reviewed Azerbaijan) Youth employment promotion including for people with disabilities Validation of peer review toolkit
May 2016 Stockholm, Sweden & Oslo, Norway	8	Fourth peer review discussed (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the Perm Region of the Russian Federation reviewed Bashkortostan, Russian Federation) Swedish and Norwegian experience in youth employment policy design and implementation ILO presentation on results of study into internal labour mobility Field visits to offices of PES, Trade Unions, Employer Organization and Ministries Individual consultations on the youth guarantee programme at the Swedish Ministry of Employment and PES
January 2017 Turin Italy	9 (+ 4 BRICS Observers)	Fifth peer review discussed (Russian Federation reviewed Armenia) ILO Centenary Initiative on the future of work Training in gender aspects of school-to-work transition in the CIS Presentation on lessons learned from youth employment promotion in BRICS Validation of part 3 of the peer review toolkit Recommendations for future actions of the Network

As planned, the Network identified a number of themes for the conduct of *comparative studies* of mutual interest to the group. These included international practices in the field of internal labour mobility, international experience on development of occupational standards, a review of enterprise-based human resources development targeting young people, and a review of gender aspects of school-to-work transition. (See also *Knowledge Sharing – Output 1.5* below.)

The project document also envisaged a *tripartite conference at the ministerial level* that would support the development of a long-term framework for regional cooperation on youth employment. This may have been conceived as a means of continuing the Network's operation after the project had concluded, but the approval of a second 5-year phase of the project made this a less pressing concern. While the planned end-2017 conference did not take place, ministerial awareness of the project was raised by the participation of the project donor, LUKOIL, in a panel discussion at the ILO's 10th European Regional Meeting in Istanbul in October 2017.

The members themselves expressed satisfaction with the Network's mode of operation and see it as making a difference to their work. At the January 2017 conference, members shared their views on the effectiveness of the Network and the project as a whole. The *social partners* said that the Network and project had strengthened their cooperation, including through their direct involvement in the design and implementation of pro-employment macroeconomic policies. It had also developed their capacity to support the implementation of successful pilot programmes and to enhance employment services, as well as focusing their attention on important gender consideration in supporting school-to-work transitions.

Similarly, *Ministries of Labour and PES representatives* highlighted how the project and Network had enhanced cooperation between countries and had led to innovative practices being replicated (e.g. bilateral cooperation led the Russian Federation to adopt Azerbaijan's electronic system of registering labour contracts as a means of reducing informality in the labour market). They also said that improved social dialogue had been beneficial and that the Network's focus on specific issues, and the research that this had generated (e.g. on labour mobility) had also been invaluable. Looking forward, they saw the Network extending its focus to other pressing issues, including the monitoring and evaluation of labour market programmes, and the job placement of young people with disabilities and those with low educational levels.

Following the October 2015 conference in Sochi, a representative from Perm Territory's Agency for Employment said this about the Network:

*"The very format of the project suggests a positive impact on the policies of the participating countries. Its members have a unique opportunity to learn the best practices that the renown international experts bring in. The project that ILO Moscow offered us to implement is very important for us... [and] helps the participating regions to develop new strategies and tactics to enhance youth employment."*⁴

In summary, most of the planned activities were completed and the Regional Cooperation Network is now proving to be an effective mechanism for cooperation, peer-to-peer learning, the sharing of international good practice, the commissioning of comparative research on topics prioritized by the constituents, and the improvement of youth employment policies and programmes. The Network is task-oriented and it has played an important role in driving real reforms in the youth employment approaches taken by its member countries (as detailed in the other project Outputs, described below). While sustainability of the Network may need to be addressed at some point (see 3.4 below), the approval of a second phase of the project and the continuing enthusiasm of members suggest that the Network will continue to be effective.

Peer Reviews (Output 1.2)

A number of international organizations encourage the use of peer reviews as a means of building the capacity of important national institutions. The World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee and others use peer reviews in different contexts, and, in the area of employment policy, both the ILO and the European Union use them to encourage learning and the uptake of effective policies. The rationale is that, by allowing participating officials and technical experts to study familiar policy and programme areas in unfamiliar contexts, there can be an exchange of ideas and approaches and an opportunity to reassess existing practices through fresh eyes.

⁴ ILO. "Results of the third round of peer review of youth employment policies summed up in Sochi." ilo.org. http://www.ilo.org/moscow/news/WCMS_423438/lang--en/index.htm

While the approach can be difficult to promote in some regions (for example, due to local rivalries or cultural differences), the shared institutional heritage of the project's participating countries meant that they were open to its use. It was seen as a rare opportunity for practitioners and heads of policy departments to engage in a detailed examination of youth employment strategies, an area of great importance to all.

The reviews involved high-ranking officials and technical experts representing the Ministry of Labour, PES and social partners. Participation was voluntary and was focused on youth employment, although this is an area that links to broader policy concerns (including macroeconomic policy, trade and investment, education, ALMPs, and service delivery including PES operations.) Broadly, the review process involves:

- The country under review produces a range of data and documents to support the assessment (including information on its economy, youth labour market, existing policies and programmes) and shares this with the ILO and the reviewer;
- The reviewer analyses the data and documents prepared (along with any additional research) and conducts site visits to the country;
- The reviewer prepares a review report;
- This is presented, workshopped and validated at a bi-annual Network conference;
- Recommendations on policy reforms and improvements to services, targeting, labour market information and social dialogue are made;
- The country actions the recommendations;
- The ILO prepares a synthesis report, including an outline of effective practices found in each country.

Capacity development to prepare for and conduct the reviews was built into the project design. This included training sessions on youth labour market analysis, how to use statistics to create evidence-based policies and strategies for youth employment and to evaluate results, and the preparation of review guidelines. While there was a certain amount of “learning by doing”, especially in the earlier reviews (e.g. of Kyrgyzstan by Armenia), the experience accumulated in conducting the reviews was embodied in a comprehensive, three-volume toolkit⁵ that was published in 2017, after being reviewed at the January 2017 Network conference.

Five peer reviews were conducted in all:

- 2014 – Armenia reviewed Kyrgyzstan
- 2015 – Azerbaijan reviewed Tajikistan
- 2015 – Russian Federation and Kazakhstan reviewed Azerbaijan
- 2016 – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Perm Region reviewed Bashkortostan (Russian Federation)
- 2017 – Russian Federation reviewed Armenia

ILO staff interviewed for the evaluation, believed that the peer reviews had been a very useful exercise for both the reviewed and reviewing countries. They were described as being quite “labour intensive” but effective in bringing about positive change. They also indicated that in every country so far reviewed, a unique practice had been identified that was of interest to other members of the Network as a possible approach that might enhance their own youth employment strategy. A useful by-product of the process was also mentioned – the peer reviews fostered individual networks that enabled officials in one country to consult with international colleagues on problems as they arose.

⁵ Including, “Toolkit for Conducting Voluntary Peer Reviews on Youth Employment Policies”, “Methodology for Conducting Youth Labour Market Analysis”, and “Towards Policies Tackling the Current Youth Employment Challenges in Eastern Europe and Central Asia”.

The evaluation reviewed the synthesis reports prepared by the ILO after each peer review. The form and detail of these reports seem to have evolved over time as the group gained experience in the peer review approach and tools were developed to guide the process. Some of the recommendations made to the reviewed countries were very broad (e.g. “job rich growth should be at the centre of policy making”), but there were also some specific recommendations that could be implemented more readily (e.g. “reallocate ALMP funds from less effective measures and introduce an apprenticeship programme”). There were also a number of recurring themes in the recommendations – including recommendations to develop the capacity of Public Employment Services and their staff; to establish local partnerships or public-private partnerships that improve the coordination of youth employment policies; and to keep a focus on youth-related issues in supporting economic diversification.

The overall effectiveness of the peer reviews can best be measured by the changes they have brought about in the countries under review. A number of examples were provided to the evaluation that demonstrated that countries were taking steps that were broadly in line with the recommendations made in their peer review reports. These included:

- Funding ALMP expansion in Azerbaijan through its unemployment insurance fund;
- Introducing new measures to address informality in both Armenia and the Russian Federation;
- Building the capacity of the PES in Tajikistan (through cooperation with the Russian Federation).

These are encouraging signs that the peer reviews are actually shaping reforms at a country level. However, no formal process has yet been established to systematically monitor each country’s progress in implementing the recommendations made in their reviews⁶. The *Toolkit for Conducting Voluntary Peer Reviews on Youth Employment Policies*, prepared through the project, promotes this kind of monitoring and evaluation of the process. It suggests a number of options including questionnaires and an annual web-based survey “to identify any potential results from the activities and thus measure the impact of the process” (p.77). To accurately measure its effectiveness as an instrument of policy improvement, Network members should be consulted on how best to incorporate this kind of monitoring and evaluation in the future, including in the project’s second phase (See **Recommendation 2**).

While we do not yet have a clear picture of the implementation of peer review recommendations, the process has helped to shape the ILO’s planning and delivery of support within the region. In each synthesis report, the ILO indicates that “recommendations will be taken into consideration when planning future ILO interventions”. The reviews have served to provide the ILO with current, country-specific needs analyses, focused on youth employment, but reflecting broader needs too. Examples of ILO interventions that have supported peer review recommendation include training of stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan in data analysis relevant to youth employment, and intensive support and training for the reform and expansion of PES in Azerbaijan.

More broadly, the project’s experience in conducting peer reviews has also benefited other regions through its production of a high-quality and practical toolkit that can support the application of the process elsewhere. The project’s approach was also included as one of eight international examples of peer review mechanisms presented to the 328th Session of ILO Governing Body in October/November 2016 (a paper was prepared that showcased the project’s approach as an effective mechanism for youth employment policy development.) In addition, interest has been shown by countries in Latin America and among BRICS countries (e.g. South Africa was reported to be using the methodology to review regional PES performance). The project’s peer review mechanism therefore has the potential to be promoted as a “global product” of the ILO.

⁶ While perhaps a somewhat crude and difficult measure, the project document included as a performance indicator the “number of steps taken by the main actors and institutions at national level to implement the recommendations of the peer reviews in the countries of the network”.

Trade Unions and Youth Employment (Output 1.3)

This aspect of the project sought to enhance the capacity of trade unions in the Network countries to effectively engage in youth employment promotion and policy development. The project document envisaged activities that would identify development needs, develop and deliver training in response to these needs, disseminate training materials via the web, and provide ongoing technical support for trade union involvement in social dialogue on youth employment policies and strategies.

Project reports indicated that there were initial consultations and meetings on the project with trade unions of all participating countries and that a sub-regional Trade Union Youth Network was established consisting of representatives from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. They referred to a number of capacity building, awareness raising and knowledge-sharing sessions on the role of trade unions in formulating youth employment policies and that youth employment promotion took place at regional, national and sub-national levels, coordinated by the Senior Workers' Activities Specialist in ILO Moscow. Examples included:

- A national conference in May 2014 in Azerbaijan of 50 young trade unionists and youth policy specialists that considered global youth employment trends and problems, the trade unions' role in addressing these, and action plans for unions to follow up;
- A sub-regional conference on the informal economy, conducted in Azerbaijan in June 2016 and involving other project target countries, which included a focus on addressing the challenges faced by young people.

Two sub-regional Trade Union youth networks were also established and were linked to the project – the Arctic Circle network, involving the northern regions of the Russian Federation and selected Scandinavian Countries, and the Caspian Sea network, involving Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. The former has met three times (2015, 2016 and 2017, all in Murmansk in Russia), in the process developing positions on such matters as the regulation of labour mobility, providing incentives for young people to work in the Far North, the role of trade unions in the context of the future of work, and protection of their rights. This network was also engaged to comment as a group on the project's research report on corporate good practices in the field of youth employment promotion in the CIS. The Caspian Sea network has also met three times.

Representatives of Trade Unions consulted in the evaluation highlighted the important role the project has played in sharing international experience in youth employment promotion. The fact that the project involves a number of CIS countries was also important as labour mobility within the CIS means that these countries now share a common labour market. The training provided through the project has helped unions to develop new ideas and approaches which could be formulated as packages and used in social dialogue. Moving forward, there may be a need for more assistance – especially in respect of new and emerging forms of work, to which young people in particular may be attracted. These forms of work pose a challenge for trade unions and the protection of workers' rights and therefore need a strategic response. (See **Recommendation 3**).

Overall, the project actively involved trade union representatives in all facets of its implementation, including the Regional Cooperation Network meetings, the conduct of the peer reviews, the commissioning of research and publications, and in the national and sub-national action plans and programme pilots implemented as part of Immediate Objective 2. All of these activities served to immerse trade union representatives in the key youth employment policy challenges faced by the participating countries, exposed them to international good practice aimed at addressing these challenges, and ensured they had a voice, through social dialogue, in policy and programme improvement.

Employers' Organizations (Output 1.4)

While the project document described this output in terms of supporting employers' organizations to deliver services to young entrepreneurs, in practice the project adopted a broader approach, involving employers in all aspects of the project and seeking to develop their knowledge and capability to contribute to youth employment policy development. They had a direct and important role in the Regional Cooperation Network (Output 1.1), the peer reviews (1.2), the development of policy and programme tools (1.6), and the national and sub-national initiatives and pilots (2.2 to 2.5). This gave them hands-on experience in youth employment strategy review and development and exposed them to the latest thinking and international practice in this field.

In addition, activities were organized at the sub-regional, national, and sub-national levels that were intended to support employers' organizations work in youth employment, including:

- A sub-regional workshop at the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin, Italy designed to give Employers' Organizations a set of tools to help prioritize youth employment in national policymaking and to develop strategies at national and local levels (September 2016). Participants in this four-day workshop included employers' organizations from 8 countries (some countries were represented by more than one);
- Technical support for the development of new occupational standards by the employer-led Presidential National Council for Qualifications in the Russian Federation. Designed to improve the relevance of the education and training system in the Russian Federation, this initiative has the potential to also improve youth transition-to-work outcomes. Support included the production of two analytical reports on the modernization of the occupational standards system (highlight as examples in Germany and English-speaking countries);
- Support for employers' organizations from Kazakhstan to participate in a meeting in Moscow on professional qualifications systems of the Russian Federation, CIS countries, Eurasian Economic Union (November 2016);
- Targeted support for employers' organizations in Azerbaijan in the development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies (including the conduct of a national review).

In assessing the effectiveness of the project in developing the capacity of employers' organizations to contribute to youth employment policy, it is important to consider their different national circumstances. The resources, expertise, and organizational readiness needed to perform this role vary widely across the sub-region. While youth employment is a pressing issue for employers and is linked to broader concerns (e.g. business growth and weaknesses in the education and training system), the ability of employers' organizations to have an effect on youth employment policy development is sometimes constrained by other external factors. The receptiveness of governments to the independent voices of employers (or trade unions) varies across the region and this can limit their influence. As an ILO stakeholder said, some can at best "whisper ideas" and hope they are heard.

Despite these constraints, the project has reinforced the value of social dialogue in all its activities and, in some participating countries, employers are at the forefront of change. In the Russian Federation, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP) is playing a leading role in both the development of new occupational standards and in promoting the involvement of major employers, including through their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments (LUKOIL, the project donor, is a member of RSPP). In Kyrgyzstan, after attending the September 2016 workshop in Turin, an employer organization was reported to have become highly energized in this field and has established a new committee that focuses on employment policy, including youth employment.

At a local level, while the project does not seem to have led to new services targeting potential young entrepreneurs being "delivered by employers' organizations" (as described in Output 1.4), they have played an active role in pilot projects through the Youth Employment Partnerships (see below).

Knowledge Sharing (Output 1.5)

Driven in large part by the Regional Cooperation Network, the findings of the peer reviews and the expressed needs of participating countries, the project commissioned, validated and published a number of reports and comparative studies designed to disseminate good practice on youth employment policy. It also updated or added youth employment policy information on six participating countries⁷ for inclusion in the ILO's global database (YouthPOL), facilitating international comparative analysis and knowledge sharing.

Publications included:

- Analysis of international practices in the field of promotion of internal labour mobility (comparison of experience of Kazakhstan and Russia with three OECD countries)
- Report on facilitating the transition to the formal economy (in CIS)
- Review of gender aspects of school-to-work transition (in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan)
- Review of international experience in development of occupational standards (example of German experience and experience of English-speaking countries) for Kazakhstan and Russian Federation
- Review of enterprise-based practices targeting young people (in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia)

In addition, the toolkits developed under Output 1.6 (see below) also included examples of international practices relevant to this element of the project.

All of these publications directly addressed priority issues being faced by the participating countries and there is evidence that the practices identified and the issues discussed in them have informed the development of national policies and programmes (see 3.2.3 below).

Youth Employment Tools (Output 1.6)

In response to the expressed needs of the participating countries, the project developed or adapted a number of tools designed to guide them in their review and development of youth employment policy and programmes. The main results (listed in the project's annual reports) were:

- Toolkit on conducting voluntary peer reviews – in three parts, covering the peer review process, youth labour market analysis, and regional good practice⁸;
- Synthesis reports of the five peer reviews conducted;
- Manual for piloting labour market programmes in Azerbaijan;
- Operational guide for implementing Youth Employment Pacts in the target regions of Russia;
- ILO publication on job searching skills for youth (translated into Russian)
- Report “Is there a case for front-loaded fiscal consolidation in Azerbaijan?”
- Training packages on labour market analysis and monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes
- Assessment reports on the wage subsidy programmes piloted in the Republic of Kalmykia and Perm Territory, the wage subsidy and entrepreneurship programmes piloted in Azerbaijan, the youth guarantee scheme piloted in Khanty-Manis Autonomous Region, and the Youth Employment Partnerships established in the three Russian regions.

These tools all had an immediate practical application for the countries involved and can therefore be assessed as having made a positive contribution to the project objectives. The reported use of the peer review tools in other regions was an unexpected positive outcome.

⁷ Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation and Tajikistan

⁸ http://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_397644/lang-en/index.htm and http://www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS_563467/lang-en/index.htm

3.2.3 Immediate Objective 2 – Implementing Action Plans

Youth Employment Policy Reviews (Output 2.1)

This element of the project aimed to directly support a review of Youth Employment Policy in Kazakhstan. It also aimed to support the implementation of this review as well as earlier reviews conducted with the assistance of the ILO in the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan.

The review in Kazakhstan was initiated in 2013 and carried out during 2014 and 2015. It involved collecting and reviewing data on the labour market, reviewing past and present programmes addressing youth employment, and examining the institutional arrangements governing the labour market. The review was carried out in cooperation with the constituents and overseen by a National Technical Team (NTT) that involved representatives of relevant ministries and the social partners. This led to recommendations on policy and institutional reform being embodied in a National Youth Employment Action Plan which set implementation deadlines throughout 2016.

In terms of effectiveness, while many of the project's planned activities in Kazakhstan were implemented, it was not in a position to support the implementation of the action plan in line with Immediate Objective 2. This was due to circumstances outside the project's control related to ongoing compliance issues in respect of ratified ILO Conventions. (See *Output 2.4* below.)

In the Russian Federation, an in-depth analysis of youth employment policies was conducted in 2013-2014 (separate from this project). The priorities identified and the policy recommendations made in this review formed the basis of the "Roadmap for Youth Employment Promotion in the Russian Federation", supported by the project and designed to:

- create new opportunities for youth employment through modernization of the labour market;
- introduce innovative programmes and services;
- strengthen interaction between the education and training system and the labour market; and
- actively engage the social partners in the discussion of employment related issues.

The project supported the implementation of the roadmap through the activities described under *Output 2.3* below.

In Azerbaijan, the project was very effective in achieving its objectives in this area, but it followed a different path, which a number of stakeholders commented went "from the bottom up". The project has made a real impact on the youth employment policies and programmes - not by first imposing an overarching plan, but by implementing small scale pilots from which broader action plans and strategies later grew. This is described in more detail under *Output 2.5* below.

National Youth Employment Initiatives Implemented in the Russian Federation (Output 2.2)

The national-level activities set out under this output in the project document and described in annual reports blended somewhat with other project activities. Representatives of the Russian Federation participated in capacity-building activities delivered to the Network as a whole in youth employment policies - including the peer reviews, knowledge sharing, tool development all described above. Similarly, while the project document anticipated a separate study visit to a country with internationally recognized good practices in youth employment promotion, this instead was done as part of the May 2016 Regional Cooperation Network meeting in Stockholm and Oslo, which gave the Russian delegation the opportunity to hold individual consultations on youth guarantee programmes with the Swedish Ministry of Employment and PES.

Although a national approach was detailed in the Roadmap described above, the envisaged national "package of interventions" has not yet been introduced beyond the sites of the three sub-national pilots, described below under *Output 2.3*. The project did, however, provide technical and logistical support to important systemic reforms described in the Roadmap (e.g. relating to the modernization

of the labour market and strengthening links between it and the education and training sector). This support included:

- At the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the ILO provided technical expertise and policy advice on the draft Law "On independent assessment of qualifications" which was adopted in June 2016 and came into force from 1 January 2017;
- Related to this, the project's review of international experience in development of occupational standards (mentioned under Output 1.5) was an important input;
- Support for an analytical report prepared by Moscow State University on the future of work in the Russian Federation, including an analysis of labour market transformations driven by new technologies.

Youth Employment Partnerships in Three Regions of the Russian Federation (Output 2.3)

This element of the project was a mechanism both to empower local (sub-national level) stakeholders in the development and delivery of youth employment initiatives and a means of piloting specific approaches set out in the Roadmap. Three regions established Youth Employment Partnerships (originally referred to as "pacts") – local groups composed of the regional authorities, social partners, private sector and civil society organizations. Three Partnerships were established in the Republic of Kalmykia, one in the Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Region, and one in Perm Territory. After an initial consultation with local stakeholders, the project provided training and ongoing technical support to these groups as they prioritized and addressed their youth employment challenges. This support included the input of international experts who visited each region, presented examples of similar partnerships, and developed operational guides. A study visit by representatives from the Republic of Kalmykia and Khanty-Mansy to Perm Territory was also organized which enabled knowledge sharing on partnership operation.

In all three regions, the Partnerships became a platform for the delivery of pilot initiatives. The Republic of Kalmykia and the Perm Territory both piloted a youth wage subsidy programme; Kalmykia also piloted a Youth Entrepreneurship programme; and Khanty-Mansy piloted a "youth guarantee scheme"⁹, the first such programme implemented in the Russian Federation. Beyond the assistance provided in setting up the Partnerships, the project offers no funding for their ongoing operations – they are now self-propelled and chaired by a local representative of either the Ministry of Labour or the PES.

Youth Entrepreneurship Pilot in Kalmykia

The evaluation included a field visit to the Republic of Kalmykia and attendance at meetings of two of its three Youth Employment Partnerships – the "University Graduates' Employment Facilitation Council" operating at the Kalmyk State University in Elista, and the partnership operating in the rural Yashkul community. (A third partnership operates in Tselinny.) The visits coincided with final presentations from, and selection of, young entrepreneurs who were seeking start-up grants for their businesses after successfully completing training through the pilots.

The partnerships each have between 10 and 12 members, all drawn from the local community and representing business, the education sector, government, non-government organizations, and the social partners. Formal rules for partnership operation have been established and these are followed.

Entrepreneurship training is not new in the Russian Federation – e.g. a federally-funded programme was in place in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis and this operated in Kalmykia. However, according to a member of the partnership at the Kalmyk State University, the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) model is a more comprehensive programme, offering training in business

⁹ A Youth Guarantees is a commitment to ensure that all young people under a specified age receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship. (<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079>)

planning, access to start-up capital and ongoing mentoring and support. The development of local PES capacity to deliver the training component was seen as a mechanism for sustainability (a staff member of the university was also trained). Around 50 young entrepreneurs have been through the training component of the pilot and 18 have received start-up grants of \$US3,000. All these businesses are still in their infancy, but were reported to be still operating.

As there are insufficient entry-level jobs in the local labour market, self-employment is an established pathway for many young people in Kalmykia. Many enter into business in cattle breeding and agriculture, the region's main industries. The evaluation was told that it was not unusual for young people to be earning a livelihood from these activities while still officially regarded as unemployed (e.g. the Deputy Head of the Yashkul region said she knew of an unemployed young person who owned around 1000 animals). Others enter into the service sector through cafés, repair centres and the like. The project therefore builds on this existing pathway, providing skills and resources to support young people to make the transition to the workforce and reducing the risk of business failure.

Box 3: Youth Employment Partnerships in Action – Kalmykia

The evaluation observed the final presentation of business plans by shortlisted participants in the entrepreneurship pilots in Elista and Yashkul. The young entrepreneurs delivered ten-minute presentations outlining their business ideas, market entry plans, financial projections and marketing and promotion ideas. Business ideas included:

- Web-based sales of high-end tea products, attractively packaged and delivered to the door;
- Natural cosmetics using local plant products
- Mobile phone and technology repair
- A café for tourists near the main Buddhist Temple in Elista
- A hairdressing business in a remote rural town
- A household goods shop offering stylish, high-quality merchandise

After asking the young people a series of specific questions on their ideas, the Partnership members then privately discussed the merits of the business plans. They demonstrated a good knowledge of local markets and needs, and of the logistical challenges some proposals might face (e.g. regulatory requirements for the cosmetics business). The Partnerships included people with “real world” business experience. When they made their final selections (three from each community) they made it clear to the young people that they would be held accountable for the funds they were to receive and that group was there to provide ongoing support as they established and grew their businesses.

The evaluation also interviewed the young people as a group. They highlighted the following as the key benefits they had derived from the programme:

- Support in turning their ideas into a business plan
- Learning the basic steps in starting a formal business
- Analysis of their weak points and risks
- Identifying a point to enter their chosen business market
- Help with finding specialist business advice relating to their product or service.

Wage Subsidy Pilot in Kalmykia

In 2015, the Partnership also supervised the delivery of a wage subsidy pilot, designed to find sustainable work for 16 young people (11 women and 5 men) with varying educational backgrounds (including university graduates). A subsidy equivalent to 50 percent of the usual rate was to be offered to employers to engage the participants for six months. Beyond that, employers were under no obligation to retain them, but the expectation was that they would continue. The Partnership

approved two enterprises to participate – a small meat processing company and a medium-sized electronics company.

After the six months, 14 of the 16 participants completed the subsidized period and were retained by their employers. Of the two who did not complete, one had found another job and one had left for personal reasons. At the time of the evaluation (almost two years after the pilot), 10 of the original group were reported to be still employed with their original host employers.

Moving forward, the Partnership is looking to run a second pilot in 2018 that focuses on people with disabilities. There was also a reference in a 2016 review report (conducted by a Norwegian advisor) to a plan for the Ministry of Labour to build on this pilot by financing a three-month apprenticeship programme that also included a 50 percent wage subsidy. This was planned for 2017, but does not appear to have been implemented. When asked, the Ministry said that they would be looking to the federal government to provide resources to institutionalize the model.

In terms of effectiveness, at one level, the Youth Employment Partnerships in Kalmykia have proven to be an effective mechanism to engage local actors in the development and delivery of labour market programmes, harnessing their local knowledge and contacts and improving service coordination. The groups are still in their infancy and require continuing support to maximize the value they can add to programme delivery in the region. For example, as pointed out by the Norwegian advisor who reviewed the partnership in September 2016, additional support to develop the groups' capacity to monitor and evaluate the programmes and to learn from their experience would be helpful. (**See Recommendation 4**)

At the programme beneficiary level, the wage subsidy programme seems to have acted as a “circuit breaker” for a small group of long-term unemployed people, successfully connecting them to lasting jobs. Whether these results can be scaled up to make a real impact on youth employment in the region remains to be seen, but the project's support for PES capacity building and its engagement of local partners in identifying the target young people and in vetting potential employers were good developments. It is still too soon to make a judgement on the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship pilot on beneficiaries.

Pilots in Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Region and the Perm Territory

The evaluation did not include visits to these regions, and relied instead on the available project documents and reports¹⁰, which mainly focused on the pilots rather than how the Partnerships themselves have operated. In Khanty-Mansy:

- A Youth Employment Partnership has been established in Nizhnevartovsk City. It has presumably overseen pilot arrangements in the region, but the project documents and reports do not describe the details of this role;
- Through the partnership, the region decided to implement, in association with the project, a “Youth Guarantee” pilot programme (though this term is not used by the stakeholders). Working with a selected PES office, all eligible youth in the target region would be offered under this arrangement either a (wage-subsidised) job or access to education or training for a period of six months;
- The Russian Federation was reported to be interested in scaling-up this approach for national application. At the same time, within the region, broader education-to-employment initiatives are also being implemented/piloted;
- The main initiative conducted through the project (as a pilot element of the Youth Guarantee approach) was an “Enterprise Internship”. Through this:

¹⁰ Including the project's four published annual reports, the Partnership Manual produced in September 2014, and a review report prepared by a Norwegian advisor in February 2017.

- 15 young people (under 25) were placed with 4 enterprises for six months (from September 2015 to March 2016). All were graduates of either vocational training institutions or universities. The pilot was broadly targeted to job seekers in the age group – this contrasts with the use of such programmes in other countries, which tend to focus on disadvantaged youth (e.g. non-completers, people with disabilities etc.);
- Employers were given a subsidy amounting to 50 percent of each participants wage and were expected to provide on-the-job training and individual workplace mentoring;
- As at October 2016 (7 months after the internships), all participants were still employed, including 11 with their original employers.

In the Perm Territory:

- A Youth Employment Partnership has been established in Vereschagino. It piloted a wage subsidy programme, delivered through the PES;
- The pilot involved 16 participants (all registered with the PES and between 20 and 30 years of age) who were employed by 3 enterprises - a medium-sized flour mill employed 4, a small bakery employed 4, and a medium sized software development company employed 8;
- As in Khanty-Mansy, the pilot was broadly targeted to job seekers in the age group (not focused on disadvantaged youth);
- At the end of the subsidy period 14 were still employed. Participating employers were said to be enthusiastic about the programme, believed the young people had enriched the workplace, and would retain them in the future;
- Institutionalization of the wage subsidy programme was reported to be under consideration with ongoing involvement of the Partnership.

As the project documents and reports provided very little information about their operation, the effectiveness of these Youth Employment Partnerships is difficult to assess. The small pilot programmes run in these two regions have themselves been successful and may soon be expanded, but the value added by the Partnerships in their management has not been well documented.

Youth Employment Initiatives Implemented in Kazakhstan (Output 2.4)

Although the project invested considerable resources into youth employment policy and strategy development in Kazakhstan (under Immediate Objective 1), the planned support for implementation of specific initiatives there – including actions related to vocational training, youth entrepreneurship, PES development, and improved career guidance – all had to be put on hold in 2016 due to factors beyond the project’s control. Unresolved issues relating to Kazakhstan’s compliance with ratified ILO Conventions meant that support through the project had to be suspended.

The project document also originally envisaged the conduct of a School-to-Work Transition Survey (SWTS) as a key activity, but this proved not to be feasible within current regulations. The project instead initially focused on the National Youth Employment Policy review (Output 2.1), which led to an Action Plan accepted by 4 ministries. This would have been the basis for the delivery of Output 2.4 had support continued.

Various capacity building and knowledge sharing activities intended to support implementation were delivered over the course of the project, including:

- A study tour to Germany (2014) to expose ILO constituents with international best practice related to employment policies and programmes;
- Training on impact of macroeconomic policies on (youth) employment policies;
- A visit to Azerbaijan to study the experience of piloting youth targeted active labour market measures in cooperation with the ILO;
- ITC course on the macroeconomic policies, jobs and inclusive growth;

- ITC course on the labour market statistics and analysis;
- A workshop on inclusion of people of disabilities into the labour market.

National Package of Youth Labour Market Policies in Azerbaijan (Output 2.5)

The project's work in Azerbaijan built on earlier ILO activities and projects in the country. The Government, seeking to diversify the economy and stabilize the labour market during an economic downturn, had engaged with the ILO through the Ministry of Labour and together designed a package of measures covering youth employment programmes, macroeconomic approaches, employment policy development, entrepreneurship training, and modernization of the PES. This collaboration provided an ideal policy backdrop for the implementation of the project in Azerbaijan – in the words of an ILO specialist, it proved to be “a perfect match of commitment from the constituents and ILO support”.

All those consulted in evaluation hailed the project's implementation in Azerbaijan to be an outstanding success. The planned activities outlined in the project document were all delivered and sometimes significantly expanded to achieve a much deeper and enduring effect. The main achievements have included:

- The conduct of a pilot entrepreneurship development programme in 2014 (using the ILO's SIYB programme) in the Geychay region, involving 21 young people (4 women, 17 men). All 21 completed their training, were supported with resources to start their businesses, which are all still operating. The potential of the model was quickly recognised by the Government and led to a **commitment to scale up its delivery to cover 10,000 households** across all regions of the country. It will be delivered through the PES and **backed by a \$US4 million allocation** from the Presidential Fund;
- Continuing project work in developing the country's capacity to deliver this training through trainer training and **ongoing piloting** in different regions. **142 SIYB trainers** have been trained (from over 3,000 candidates) and, since September 2016, the pilot programme has delivered **training to 1,915 people. 1,500 of these will receive business start-up assistance** from the government. Project support has made an important contribution to the country's capacity to scale-up the programme nationally;
- Creation of a permanent **tripartite Commission on Labour, Economic and Social Affairs**. Following a study tour, organised through the project, to the Russian Federation to learn how a similar body worked there, this Commission was established and officially launched in September 2016. Currently chaired by the Ministry of Labour (but in future to be rotated through the social partners), the Commission will act as the peak policy development authority for employment matters in Azerbaijan. According to ILO representatives, the Commission is already exercising an unprecedented level of influence over policy, providing a platform for frank and open discussion between the partners, and backed by a strong executive in the Ministry of Labour, which provides thorough research in support of the Commission's work;
- Delivery of a **tailored course (February 2016) on employment policies** in Baku to the Ministries of Labour, Economic Development, and Finance, the PES, Central Bank, and others involved in formulating of comprehensive employment policy framework;
- Delivery of a tailored course for key stakeholders (using experts from the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin) to support the development of a new National Employment Policy and the review of Unemployment Insurance legislation.
- A **new National Employment Policy**, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and including youth employment strategies, has been endorsed by the Tripartite Commission and is expected to be signed off by the Government before the end of the year;

- Reform of the **Unemployment Insurance Law**, including the creation of a **fund that will support the delivery of employment programmes** on a sustainable basis;
- **Major reform of the PES** – A plan was developed early in the project (2013) and submitted to the constituents. This was followed up with a major investment in PES **training at all staffing levels**. Expert trainers from the ILO’s International Training Centre in Turin delivered tailored programmes, first to PES Directors and then to job seeker servicing staff. Another course is to be delivered to employer servicing staff in November 2017. Before the project, there were only 350 staff employed in the PES nationally, but this number has now been trebled and staff roles and job descriptions have been revised.
- A comprehensive, country-specific **report on macroeconomic trends and policies** and anti-crisis measures was prepared by two international experts and presented to the Ministry of Labour. This was followed up by the participation of Azerbaijani representatives in a **course on macroeconomic approaches to labour market** in November 2016;
- The project has contributed to **better coordination of UN programmes** overall in Azerbaijan. A new inter-agency alliance between the ILO and UNDP is emerging in Azerbaijan, through which the two agencies are coordinating support in the implementation of the SDGs through a comprehensive employment policy framework. Central to this will be the ILO’s work in supporting economic diversification through promoting entrepreneurship activities in rural area and building the capacity of PES as a key labour market institution;
- In terms of **gender equity**, the project’s various capacity building activities and training courses have raised awareness of some important policy issues and there are signs that both the Ministry of Labour and the Tripartite Commission are keen to pursue reforms. For example, the Deputy Minister of Labour made a presentation to the Commission highlighting gender discrimination issues, the country’s obligations under ILO Conventions 156 and 183, and made comparisons with other international practices (e.g. European Social Charter). An ILO expert will be visiting the country in December to provide advice on gender policy.
- Less successful was a planned youth apprenticeship/wage subsidy pilot. There were some early, tentative steps to run this pilot, but stakeholders were not well prepared and it seems to have been limited in its scope and effectiveness. The ILO did indicate that the idea has been raised again and there was now a serious intention to explore its potential in the future.

Considering the above, the project has enjoyed outstanding success in Azerbaijan and has proven to be effective at multiple levels. Most stakeholders consulted commented on the “bottom-up” nature of this success – starting with a very small pilot in a rural community, momentum built to the point where national programmes have been introduced, the key delivery institutions have been reformed, and the overall employment policy development framework has been reinvented. One stakeholder described the project as “the most popular and effective project in the country”.

This bottom-up approach was an important part of the project’s success in this country, but there were other factors too. The project itself was well designed and showed a good understanding of the local situation, built as it was on some years of earlier work in Azerbaijan. The government, union and employer partners were described as being all committed to project outcomes and saw it as reinforcing their individual priorities. Lastly, the ILO staff involved in the project – locally, in Moscow, and HQ – were effective in seizing opportunities as they arose, flexible in making necessary adjustments, and made sure that they delivered what they promised to the stakeholders.

Box 4: Entrepreneurship training in Azerbaijan's Hajiqabul District

Hajiqabul is a rural town 70 km south-west of Baku which has a population of around 23,000. As a result of the project, the local PES has established a "Self-Employment Centre" as part of its services which promotes the SIYB programme primarily to low-income families (not just youth) and to other disadvantaged groups.

Local people registered with the PES can apply to participate in the programme. A basic level of literacy and numeracy is required. The selection process involves the trainer and the PES Director assessing each application against SIYB programme and Ministry criteria. Face-to-face interviews are often conducted along with site visits to assess the operational viability at the proposed location. Those selected undergo two, four-hour formal training sessions per week, with consultations conducted with each between sessions to ensure knowledge has been transferred and applied. After completing the training, participants complete a business plan. This is submitted to the Ministry for final assessment by a committee.

Those approved receive start-up capital to establish their business – not in cash, but as business assets or services such as equipment, breeding stock, fodder, veterinarian fees etc. Trainers closely monitor the businesses over the first year and conduct monitoring visits at 3, 6 and 12 months where they track business performance data, including income, expenses, number of employees, stock levels, and adherence to the business plan. Links are facilitated where required with local credit facilities. Some businesses are now asking for additional business training and the PES and its trainers are looking to offer the Improve Your Business modules, possibly on a fee-for-service basis.

The evaluation visited a number of local businesses established through the project:

- Nofal was an unemployed man who completed SIYB training in August 2016. He had previously worked in the informal sector in Baku, separated from his family. Through the project he has started a tile manufacturing business. A kiln and tile moulds were provided for the business. Both Nofal and his son work full-time in this profitable business. A roadside display of tiles was luring customers and the business now accepts cash and credit card sales.
- Firuze is a widow with two small children. Through the project she started an agricultural business with two cows provided as start-up assets. These have provided her with much needed income. She now has two calves and is looking forward to expanding her operation. Through the income her business has generated she has been able to extend her small home.

The entrepreneurship training introduced through the project is now regarded as an indispensable service of the local PES that is making a real difference to the incomes of poor rural families. Some key success factors identified by stakeholders and beneficiaries include:

- Research and development of a regional market assessment report that identifies products and services in local demand. This helps regional authorities in their targeting of start-up business support while simultaneously contributing to local economic development;
- Efforts are made to connect businesses with potential local buyers;
- Regular monitoring visits and mentoring of businesses. This requires that a relationship of trust and open communication is fostered between the trainer and the business.
- Care in the selection of participants to ensure they are committed to realising their business idea;
- Close collaboration and teamwork that involves the local PES and the SIYB trainers;
- Continuing supervision of the programme by the SIYB Master Trainer.

3.2.4 Gender issues, International Labour Standards and Social Dialogue in implementation

The attention given to gender issues in project implementation varied across the different project Outputs.

- The peer review synthesis reports included data on the labour market situation of women and in some cases made policy recommendations (e.g. the Armenian report recommended a compulsory course on gender equality and labour rights in the curricula of educational institutions; the Kyrgyzstan report highlighted the need for universal childcare, maternal leave and income tax systems that promoted both members of a couple working).
- Among the thematic reports commissioned through the project was “Gender and Youth employment in CIS Countries: Trends and Key Challenges”, which exposed gender challenges in the vocational training and job placement of youth in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation.
- The youth employment policy and programme “tools” developed did not provide much practical guidance in advancing gender equity. For example, although it mentions gender as a subject to be covered, the Toolkit for Conducting Voluntary Peer Reviews does not include gender as a “key aspect” of its assessment framework (pp.51-55) or suggest any “guiding questions” in this section. Similarly, gender is given scant attention in the Methodology for Conducting Youth Labour Market Analysis. In “Towards Policies Tackling the Current Youth Employment Challenges in Eastern Europe and Central Asia”, despite highlight gender gaps in its analysis, no mention is made of gender in its policy recommendations (Section 3).
- In the pilot programmes visited as part of the evaluation, efforts are being made to ensure equitable participation of women. 11 of the 16 participants of the wage subsidy pilot in Kalmykia were women and equal participation of women is also actively promoted in the entrepreneurship pilot. In Azerbaijan, the original pilot programme was male-dominated (in the training 6 of 23 were female, and 2 of these were stopped by their families from going to the next stage). The expanded pilot was also male-dominated – 322 of the 1644 completing SIYB training (19.6%) were women. Despite this, there is a clear intent to target women in the country’s future implementation of the programme. Increasing the number of female trainers might assist in attracting more women (currently only 15% are women).
- In the small pilot programmes run in Khanty-Mansy and Perm Territory, the gender balance was reported to have been even – 8 of 15 participants in the former were female and 7 of 16 in the latter.

As suggested in the Mid-Term Evaluation, more attention could be given to gender issues in a number of project activities. The gender strategy and indicators should be re-examined for the second phase of the project (See **Recommendation 5**).

More broadly, in terms of promoting International Labour Standards and social dialogue, the project reinforced the eight fundamental conventions the policy and programme advice provided through the project (e.g. issues related to equal remuneration, discrimination, collective bargaining are covered in project publications and tools) and gave particular attention to the issue of reducing informality. The social partners were involved at regional, national and sub-national level in all project activities. In Azerbaijan, the formation of a new Tripartite Commission was supported by the project. The promotion of International Labour Standards should be given attention in Stage 2 of the project, including by the systematically reviewing opportunities to incorporate key messages in all project activities and outputs, perhaps aided by a quality management checklist (See **Recommendation 9**).

3.3 Efficiency of resource use

The total cost of the project, spread over five years, was \$6 million. Considering the scale and complexity of activities, which offered intensive support to three countries as well as tangible benefits to six others in the sub-region, the project gave excellent value for money. Both in the project's policy and strategy development work (Immediate Objective 1) and in its support for implementation and pilots (Immediate Objective 2) good progress has been made. Stakeholders in all participating countries have benefited from a highly effective regional cooperation network which is itself a very efficient means of collectively addressing youth employment issues and identifying effective practice. New tools and information resources have been developed or adapted for use in the region and are leading to better targeted and more effective policies and programmes. New forms of local engagement have been tested that empower local partners to shape the delivery of programmes so that they better respond to local labour market needs. While these benefits are difficult to quantify in financial terms at this stage, the potential improvements – in labour productivity among youth, increased individual earnings, and more effective government service delivery – are considerable.

In terms of human resources, the project was efficiently coordinated by a small team in Moscow (CTA and two assistants) with an assistant in Kazakhstan. In addition, the ILO's National Coordinator in Azerbaijan devoted much of his time to the project. Backstopping from ILO HQ in Geneva was described by the Director of the Moscow office as being "absolutely first rate". Additional project staff funded by the Government of Sweden between 2014 and 2015 (one in Moscow and one in Geneva) were a bonus for the project. External human resources – expert advisors, trainers, researchers, consultants – were engaged to undertake specific tasks and, judging by the quality of their finished work and feedback from those consulted, these seem to have been performed very well.

The project's mid-term evaluation expressed some concerns about the very high workload of project staff, but this does not seem to have adversely affected delivery. Planned activities were nearly all implemented along with many additional elements organised in response to participant requests. For much of 2017, the project has been under-staffed - the CTA position has been vacant (while a recruitment exercise is carried out) meaning that other staff have had to fill this void. The mid-term evaluation also pointed out that, in the early stages of the project, the position of Senior Specialist on Employer Activities at ILO Moscow was unfilled and that there was some turnover of staff. It linked these to some early delays in the implementation of some unspecified activities, but they do not seem to have had an enduring effect. One stakeholder did mention that getting technical questions answered quickly was sometimes a problem, but whether this related to project staffing was unclear.

The original project document included a monitoring framework (as part of a "Logframe Matrix") which presumably was intended to be used as the basis for the "performance monitoring and evaluation plan" also described in the project document. This plan was not produced and although the annual reports provide a good description of *activities*, more attention should perhaps be given in the future to monitoring the *outcomes* of the project (in terms of project objectives). (See **Recommendation 8**) That said, the monitoring framework in the project document needs to be refined – some of the measures are either crude (e.g. "number of countries in the region that use knowledge") or nearly impossible to measure ("number of young men and women benefitting from improved public employment services and other youth employment initiatives").

The fact that, in most locations, the project was able to build on previous ILO development work was an important factor in efficient delivery. There was an existing momentum in youth policy and programme development which the project could harness. Relationships were established, local circumstances and priorities were understood, and so the project could fairly quickly mobilise stakeholder support to get things moving. Only in Kazakhstan did the project run into some difficulties, due to factors outside its control, in implementing action plans, but progress was made there in policy development nevertheless.

3.4 Sustainability of results and likelihood of long-term effects

The project was designed with a clear intention of creating durable results that would lead to overall improvements in the labour market situation of young people in the region. It would do this by building the capacity of participating countries to develop effective youth employment policies, strategies and action plans, by equipping them with effective programme tools, and by strengthening the key labour market institutions so that they can deliver and scale up these programmes to have an impact on youth unemployment. Although results varied among the participating countries, overall the project has been successful.

In Azerbaijan, the project has directly contributed to the development of a new national employment policy, enhanced tripartism in policy development through a new Commission, greatly enhanced PES effectiveness, proven the effectiveness of an active labour market programme, and seen this programme fully adopted, funded by the government and expanded tenfold. All of these are enduring results, representing major reforms at multiple levels.

Box 5: Institutionalization of Entrepreneurship Training in Azerbaijan

Following the project's successful pilot of an entrepreneurship programme based on the ILO's SIYB training curriculum, Azerbaijan is now scaling up the programme for national implementation backed by a \$4 million allocation from the President's discretionary fund. A second phase of the pilot, involving over 1500 businesses, has allowed the country to further develop its delivery and administrative systems and to adjust the model in line with lessons learned. The project has expanded the country's delivery capacity by training 142 trainers and contributing to PES expansion and reform.

From 2018, the scaling up of the programme will begin in earnest with 10,000 households expected to participate each year. Although the SIYB methodology has been used by the ILO for many years, there are not many examples of countries institutionalizing the programme so quickly and to such an extent. Azerbaijan will be something of a pioneer in this regard and has developed its own delivery approach, based on the country's needs and lessons learned in the pilots. Features include:

- Targeting of vulnerable groups – including youth, but also poor families, single mothers, refugees (from the Nagorno-Karabakh territories), and people with disabilities;
- Consolidating the training phase to one month – the 40 hours of training will now be delivered over one month, 2.5 days per week (rather than over 2 months, 1 day per week);
- Defending the business plan – before participants can be approved to receive assets (livestock, equipment etc.) provided by the programme, they must first defend their business plan. The pilots highlighted the risks of approving participants based more on their poor economic circumstances than on the viability of their plan. A new process will put more weight on the latter;
- Providing assets, not cash to the business – a procurement system will acquire the assets on behalf of the businesses. Ownership of the assets will remain with the government for the first year of the business, but once the business has proven its viability, this will transfer to the business. As the pilots highlighted that there can be delays in procurement, frustrating participants keen to get started, a new process will aim to accelerate delivery;
- Business and asset types – agricultural businesses will only be approved in the regions and livestock will only be provided to these. Poultry will not be provided as there is too great a risk that diseases can wipe them out, along with the business. In the cities, the programme will support businesses engaged in service and small-scale production.

Azerbaijani government officials indicated that they have a “long list of lessons learned” from the pilots and these may well help other countries seeking to scale-up entrepreneurship. The ILO should monitor and document Azerbaijan's experience to share good practice (See **Recommendation 7.**)

In the Russian Federation, building on earlier collaboration and support, a *Roadmap for Youth Employment Promotion* was developed and this is shaping future interventions. The project has supported continuing reforms in the vocational training system and in the setting of occupational standards and these have the potential to greatly influence youth employment approaches and outcomes, including by better management of school-to-work transition. At a sub-national level, the project is testing the implementation of various delivery models, including the involvement of local partnerships in delivering labour market programmes and these too seem likely to influence future planning and delivery. Funding in the poorer regions (such as Kalmykia) remains a barrier to sustainability in the longer term, but by helping to develop a record of success in programme delivery, the project is at least strengthening the case for continuing investment.

In Kazakhstan, even though the project's support for implementation has been held back, a National Youth Employment Action Plan has been endorsed. Assuming the issues there can be resolved, this plan is likely to shape future youth employment policy and practice in that country.

At a regional level, the project has built an effective mechanism for collaboration, knowledge sharing and joint-ventures among a group of countries with similar needs and a shared institutional heritage. The involvement of BRICS countries has extended these benefits. While the sustainability of the network meetings in the long term is still to be resolved (i.e. who will organise them and pay for them when the project ends?), the relationships seem likely to endure regardless and, through the project's approved second phase, will continue to offer benefits for at least another five years.

There might also be value in focusing more attention on the situation of young people who face extra challenges in securing work – for example, early school leavers, people with disabilities and others marginalised by society. Some locations are already considering these groups, but others may need awareness raising and expert input to introduce effective approaches. (See **Recommendation 6**)

4 Conclusions

4.1 Overall assessment

- a) This project was very well designed. It responded well to regional, national and sub-national needs in the field of youth employment policy and programmes and built on other past support provided by the ILO, delivered in line with its strategies and programming frameworks. The intervention logic was sound and, despite including a quite complex array of outputs and activities, these cohered well in the implementation, which was managed well by a relatively small team.
- b) The project broke new ground through the involvement of a major Russian company, LUKOIL, as the sponsor. The company has led the way in demonstrating the positive impact that can be made by the private sector in advancing global development goals. More needs to be done to tell this story to a wider audience (**See Recommendation 1**).
- c) A Regional Cooperation Network has been established, has met seven times and is proving to be an effective and efficient mechanism for cooperation, mutual learning, and the conduct of peer reviews of policy. The process for these peer reviews has been refined and incorporated into a toolkit with potentially global application. Changes brought about by the peer reviews could be better monitored (**See Recommendation 2**), but they are already helping the ILO to better target the assistance it provides within the region.
- d) The social partners and the key labour market institutions, including Public Employment Services, have all been active participants in the project at all levels and have benefitted from targeted capacity building activities and their direct involvement in programme development and piloting. However, new and emerging forms of work are posing new challenges for the social partners. As young workers may be disproportionately affected by these changes, a strategic response could be explored in the second phase of the project (**See Recommendation 3**).
- e) The Youth Employment Partnerships in the Russian Federation have been a useful experiment in local decision making and engagement and have generated some good results, albeit on a small scale. While progress in implementing an action plan in Kazakhstan was halted, due to factors outside the project's control, a pathway forward has at least been articulated and endorsed by key ministries. The project has achieved outstanding results in Azerbaijan, with its government now scaling up the project's entrepreneurship pilot for national application, which needs to be monitored so that good practice can be documented and shared (**See Recommendation 7**).
- f) Moving forward, continuing capacity building in monitoring and evaluation of youth employment initiatives is needed (**See Recommendation 4**) as is more support for addressing gender issues in design and delivery (**See Recommendation 5**) and in targeting programmes for people disadvantaged in the labour market (**See Recommendation 6**).

4.2 Factors influencing results

What helped:

- Skilled and responsive project staffing with a good understanding of regional and country needs;
- The choice of focus countries – these were relatively advanced in their policy, programme and institutional capabilities. For example, Azerbaijan has resources to invest in programme delivery that are not available in some other countries in the region;
- A committed donor that maintained an active involvement in the project without “pushing an agenda” that would distract the project from its primary objectives.

What hindered:

- Circumstances in Kazakhstan that meant that programme implementation was halted there;
- Turnover of key personnel in partner organizations (e.g. in Azerbaijan, there have been three heads of the employers' organization since 2015);
- Project performance monitoring framework – this was insufficiently focused on monitoring outcomes (See Recommendation 8).

5 Lessons Learned and Good Practices

- 5.1** Ensuring that project’s design builds directly on previous ILO work allows the project to “hit the ground running”, reducing the delays in project start-up that can occur when projects attempt to introduce activities where no ground work has been done.
- 5.2** In Azerbaijan, the project showed that bottom-up approaches can work – that is, using small scale pilot projects to demonstrate programme effectiveness in expectation that they will be scaled up by governments. While this is part of the “theory of change” in many technical cooperation projects, in practice it often does not happen. In Azerbaijan, a number of factors seemed to have helped:
- A local “champion” who was both an expert in the delivery of the programme in the country context and respected by key government decision makers
 - Demand from local municipalities – key local people (e.g. mayors) learned of the project and lobbied for its expansion
 - Support was given to develop the capacity of the PES to coordinate the programme at a local level and to train sufficient trainers to deliver it
 - A mechanism to fund the expansion – in this case, the President’s discretionary fund
- 5.3** Involving members of the Regional Cooperation Network in peer reviews allows participating officials the opportunity to study familiar policy and programme challenges in unfamiliar contexts. In the process, the exchange of ideas and approaches allows them to see existing practices through fresh eyes. It energises the Network and makes it task-focused.
- 5.4** The establishment of two sub-regional Trade Union youth networks – the Arctic Circle network, involving the northern regions of the Russian Federation and selected Scandinavian Countries, and the Caspian Sea network, involving Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation – helped focus attention on specific youth employment issues in these regions and on the development of Trade Union positions on these.

6 Recommendations

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority / Timeframe	Resource Implication?
1	<p>Promote the project as a model of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Russian Federation and globally</p> <p>The ILO should work with LUKOIL and RSPP to develop a strategy to communicate the success of this project to other potential donors and to the wider community. This is in keeping with the agreement between the ILO’s Director General, Mr Guy Ryder, and LUKOIL’s CEO, Mr Vagit Alekperov, that the “unique cooperation between the ILO and LUKOIL should be promoted globally” (as recorded in the minutes of the Project Partnership Committee meeting of December 2016)</p>	PPC, DWT/CO Moscow, ILO PARDEV, RSPP	High Ongoing from now	Yes (shared between ILO, LUKOIL and RSPP?)
2	<p>Identify how best to monitor the changes made as a result of the peer reviews in youth employment policies</p> <p>Working through the Regional Cooperation Network, consider how best to measure the impact of peer reviews. A number of options are outlined in the Toolkit (Section 4.2).</p>	Regional Cooperation Network members, DWT/CO Moscow	Medium At 2018 Network meeting	Possible
3	<p>Consider further research into how new and emerging forms of work are affecting young people in the labour market and what policy responses might be needed in CIS countries</p> <p>Given the pace of change in this field and the fact that the second phase of the project runs for five years, this forward-looking research could be used not only to ensure appropriate protections are in place for young people employed in this way, but also to maximize any benefits or opportunities they might present.</p> <p>This is in line with the ILO’s “Istanbul Initiative” announced in October 2017.¹¹</p>	Regional Cooperation Network members, DWT/CO Moscow	Medium At future Network meeting	Yes Research costs
4	<p>Continue to build the capacity of stakeholders (especially in pilot locations) to monitor and evaluate the youth programmes they pilot</p>	DWT/CO Moscow	High Stage 2	Yes
5	<p>As recommended in the Mid-Term Evaluation, enhance the gender sensitivity of future project implementation including through specialist expertise (e.g. in review of research and tools produced), capacity building for stakeholders in programme design and management, and in project performance monitoring</p>	DWT/CO Moscow	High Stage 2	Yes

¹¹ See: http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_579904/lang--en/index.htm

6	Encourage/support countries to give more attention to the needs of people disadvantaged in the labour market (e.g. people with disabilities, low levels of education, or facing discrimination) in the design and delivery of youth employment programmes, including by sharing international good practice and specialist expertise	DWT/CO Moscow	High Stage 2	Yes
7	Monitor and document Azerbaijan’s experience in “mainstreaming” and scaling up entrepreneurship training as a means of sharing good practice and lessons learned to other countries (in the region and elsewhere)	DWT/CO Moscow ILO ENTERPRISE	Medium From 2018	Yes
8	Ensure project monitoring in Stage 2 gives more attention to measuring outcomes/effectiveness of outputs and activities by revising the current performance indicators and reporting accordingly. These should include a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures. (The current quantitative measures provide an inadequate indication of the value the project is adding.)	DWT/CO Moscow	Medium Stage 2	No
9	Reinforce the application of International Labour Standards in all Stage 2 outputs and activities Opportunities for promoting and reinforcing these standards should be systematically reviewed at all stages of implementation, especially activity design/commissioning. A checklist could be prepared that helps project staff and others responsible for delivery to identify these opportunities (e.g. in publications, toolkits, meetings and events) and provides guidance on how to use them to promote the standards.	DWT/CO Moscow ACTRAV ACT/EMP	High Stage 2	No

Annex A – List of Persons Interviewed

Date	Location	Person Interviewed	Position/Organisation
25/9/17	Moscow	Irina Sinelina	Evaluation Officer, ILO, DWT/CO Moscow
		Vlado Curovic	Snr Specialist, Employers' Activities, ILO, DWT/CO Moscow
		Olga Koulaeva	Director, ILO, DWT/CO Moscow
		Natalia Klimova	Director International Department, Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia
		Nina Kuzmina	Deputy Chairperson, Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia
		Rolf Buchel	CTA, Decent and Safe Jobs Project, ILO, DWT/CO Moscow
		Mikhail Pouchkin	Senior Employment Specialist, ILO, DWT/CO Moscow
		Julia Surina	Youth Employment Officer, YE Project, ILO, DWT/CO Moscow
		Oleg Romanovsky	Head of Personnel Evaluation and Talent Management, LUKOIL Oil Company
26/9/17		Prof. Tatiana Razumova	Head of Department of Labour and Personnel Economics, Moscow State University
		Natalia Hoffmann	Advisor, Department of Labour Market and Social Partnership, Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP)
		Irina Melekh	Programme Officer, ILO, DWT/CO Moscow
27/9/17	Elista, Kalmykia	Elza Nakhatinova	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Development, Labour and Employment of the Republic of Kalmykia
		Elza Ivanovna	Vice-Rector, Kalmyk State University
		Faizier Raim	Director of Innovation and Analytical Department, Kalmyk State University
		GROUP DISCUSSION/ OBSERVATION	10 Members of University Graduates' Employment Facilitation Council (Youth Employment Partnership)
		GROUP DISCUSSION	5 Youth Participant of Entrepreneurship Pilot Programme
28/9/17	Yashkul, Kalmykia	Galina Shininova	Deputy Head of Yashkul Region
		Telman Khaglyshev	Head of Yashkul Region
		OBSERVATION	Presentation of business plan by 3 participants of Entrepreneurship Pilot Programme to 12 Members of Youth Employment Partnership
2/10/17	Baku, Azerbaijan	Yashar Hamzayev	National Coordinator, ILO Azerbaijan
3/10/17	Hajiqbul, Azerbaijan	Azad Ragimov	SIYB Master Trainer
		Cengiz Hasmov	PES Director
		Xalod Dadashov + 2	SIYB Trainers
		2 participants	SIYB Training
	Baku, Azerbaijan	Talia Iben + 1	SIYB Trainers
4/10/17	Baku, Azerbaijan	Mr Alandiyev and Azad Ragimov	SIYB Trainer; and Master Trainer
		Alessandro Fracassetti	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP
	Shemmakha, Azerbaijan	Vugaz Suleymanov and Rahim Ibrahimov	SIYB Trainers
		3 participants	SIYB Training
2/11/17	Baku, Azerbaijan (via Skype)	Elnur Suleymanov	Head of Employment Policy and Demographics Department , Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Azerbaijan

Annex B – Inception Report

1. Context

- 1.1 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries continue to face significant challenges in addressing the needs of young people (aged 15 to 29) in the labour market. Despite some improvements since the global financial crisis, youth unemployment rates continue to be unacceptably high, too many work in the informal economy or in low-quality, precarious or hazardous jobs, and, as a result, many have limited access to social security. The social and psychological effects of this situation is of great concern and has sparked fears that social exclusion and entrenched inequality might lead to disaffection and anti-social behaviours. The situation is even worse for disadvantaged young people who face an even higher risk of social exclusion.
- 1.2 At the same time, youth employment policy is of critical importance to the health of the overall labour market and national and regional economic performance. Despite the high youth unemployment rate, there is unmet demand for skilled workers in many areas, pointing to a misalignment between the skills of graduates exiting education and training institutions and skills in labour market demand.
- 1.3 While these issues are by no means unique to CIS countries, policy makers and labour market institutions in these countries share similar challenges, both in their capacity to realign established services to current needs and to design, implement and monitor effective policy and programme responses. These shared circumstances and challenges lend themselves to a collaborative policy response that would foster a regional approach to the problem, identify and share knowledge of “what works” and would test new policy/programme responses. The project responds to these issues and opportunities.
- 1.4 The project’s development objective – *to contribute to the creation of decent work for youth in CIS countries* – is underpinned by **two Immediate Objectives (IOs)**.
 - IO1 focuses on the **adoption and/or revision of policies and strategies** for Decent Work for youth in line with priorities identified by a collaborative regional network. In the original project document, IO1 had **six “Expected Outputs”** and listed **36 planned activities**. In broad terms, these outputs related to:
 - Establishing a regional cooperation network
 - Conducting peer reviews
 - Elevating youth employment in trade unions’ agenda
 - Engaging employers’ organisations in servicing young entrepreneurs
 - Disseminating good practice
 - Developing/adapting youth employment tools for CIS countries
 - IO2 focuses on the **implementation of youth employment action plans and programmes** in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. It had **five “Expected Outputs”** and **37 planned activities**. These outputs related to:
 - Reviewing youth employment policy and implementing recommendations
 - Developing and implementing initiatives in Russia and Kazakhstan
 - Establishing three regional Youth Employment Pacts in the Russia
 - Piloting/implementing national package of labour market policies in Azerbaijan

2. The Evaluation – Type, Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This is the final independent evaluation of the project. A mid-term evaluation was conducted in February-May 2015 which identified some deficiencies in the project’s design, but which was broadly satisfied with the project’s progress at that time.
- 2.2 In line with the OECD/DAC criteria, the purpose of the final evaluation will be to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the initiative. This reflects the need to be accountable to the donor, ILO management and constituents. It will focus on the end results of the project and assess overall performance. A second phase of the project commences in January 2018 and lessons learned from the evaluation will inform the implementation of this phase. It will integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting concern.

2.3 The primary audience for the evaluation results are the ILO management, technical specialists (in HQ and the field), project staff, tripartite constituents in the target countries, the donor (LUKOIL), direct beneficiaries (including policy makers and practitioners), and ultimate beneficiaries, including young people.

2.4 The timeframe to be considered by the evaluation is 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2017.

3. Evaluation Methodology

3.1 The evaluation will adhere to ILO Evaluation Policy, ILO Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation, ILO High-Level Evaluation Protocol for Outcome Strategy Evaluation, UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards, Ethical Guidelines, Code of Conduct; and will address OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria.

3.2 In line with the Terms of Reference, the evaluation will be sensitive to any differential power relations and ensure that all stakeholders can have their say. A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods will be used (see below) and data will be disaggregated by sex to the extent possible. An assessment will be made of how the project has contributed to gender equality and non-discrimination and ensure that both women and men participate freely in the evaluation.

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 **Analysis of key documents and information resources** supplied by the ILO and/or obtained during the field visits from other stakeholders. These will include the mid-term evaluation (and any documented response to this), performance reports, project documents, resources/publications/papers produced as a result of the project, any feedback/evaluation questionnaires conducted at the conclusion of project events, country situation analyses, and any documents relating to policy and programme changes that have been made as a direct result of the project. As the evaluation will not include visits to all project countries and sub-regions, efforts will be made to source documents that provide current data on delivery status and outcomes in these locations.

3.3.2 **Field visits and interviews** - Field visits will be made to Russia (Moscow and Kalmykia) and Azerbaijan (Elista and a region) where interviews will be conducted with ILO staff (project staff, management, technical specialists, CTAs of other relevant projects), project partners/stakeholders (tripartite constituents), direct beneficiaries (i.e. policy makers and practitioners who participated in regional networks and capacity building initiatives), ultimate beneficiaries (i.e. young people participating in pilot initiatives), other UN agencies working in related areas in the field, and a representative of the donor.

3.3.3 **Observation** – as per the Terms of Reference, the field visits may afford the opportunity for the evaluator to attend a project activity (e.g. an event, meeting or training programme). Language barriers might present some difficulties in this respect, but such observational methods can provide opportunities to assess the interactions of event participants and their receptiveness towards the material being presented. Ad hoc interviews (with an interpreter) might also be used in these situations (e.g. in event breaks).

3.3.4 **Comparative analysis of stakeholder feedback** – to ensure that any areas of agreement or disagreement are identified among different stakeholders or between different data sources, a comparative matrix will be developed that highlights any significant divergence in the results. This reasons behind this will then be explored and discussed before a conclusion is drawn and detailed in the Evaluation Report.

3.3.5 **Analysis and drafting of the Evaluation Report** - This stage will synthesize the data collected to produce the evaluation report and any instructive case studies that might emerge. Feedback received on the draft may provide further insights and clarifications to enhance the evaluation.

3.3.6 **Data collection plan** – As per the ILO's Checklist 3 (on *Writing the Inception Report*), the table below sets out a Data Collection Plan that sets out how the above methods will be used to answer the Evaluation Questions included in the Terms of Reference. Indicators are included in this Data Collection Plan that reflect the diversity of both the project activities and the different stakeholder perspectives being sought.

Table 1 – Data Collection Plan

RELEVANCE

Question 1: Relevance to countries' needs in youth employment; national development objectives

Indicator: Alignment with stated/documentated stakeholder priorities & national development objectives

Sources: Documents; tripartite representatives

Methods: Document review; interviews

Comments: Will also explore the relevance of the project's regional collaboration approach

Question 2: Fit with ILO programming & implementation frameworks

Indicator: Alignment with P&B, DWCPs, ILO-Russia Programme of Cooperation

Sources: Documents; ILO management, technical specialists and project staff

Methods: Document review; interviews

Comments:

EFFECTIVENESS

Question 3: Achievement of immediate objectives; effective in fostering adequate responses to the challenges

Indicators: Delivery of the IO1 and IO2 outputs; extent these outputs led to adoption/revision of policies/programmes

Sources: Documents; government stakeholders; ILO management/staff

Methods: Document review; interviews

Comments: To avoid a focus on outputs (not outcomes) evidence will be sought that demonstrates impact on policy

Question 4: Contributing factors or obstacles

Indicator: Stakeholder perceptions of what has helped or hindered project outputs and outcomes

Sources: Previous reports and mid-term evaluation; tripartite stakeholders

Methods: Document review; interviews

Comments: Again, emphasis will be on factors affecting achievement of policy/programme outcomes

Question 5: Has gender been taken into account in implementation

Indicators: Extent to which gender issues were included in project activities and reported on; gender disparities in feedback

Sources: Documented/reported gender-inclusiveness of project; tripartite stakeholders

Methods: Document review; interviews; comparative analysis of stakeholder feedback

Comments:

Question 6: International labour standards? How social dialogue/tripartite approach contributed to implementation?

Indicators: Extent project observed/promoted standards; examples of how tripartite approach benefited implementation

Sources: Documented alignment of project outputs & activities with standards; tripartite stakeholders

Methods: Document review; interviews

Comments:

EFFICIENCY

Question 7: Efficiency of project resource use

Indicators: Resource allocation efficiency (cost:benefits); production efficiency (cost of outputs)

Sources: Budget and expenditure reports; other reports; stakeholder perception

Methods: Document review; interviews

Comments: Longer-term benefits of investment can be unclear in such projects

SUSTAINABILITY/IMPACT

Question 8: Likelihood of durability and use of project results

Indicators: Policies, programmes, tools are mainstreamed (including a funding allocation)

Sources: Documented adoption of policies, programmes, tools; stakeholder feedback

Methods: Document review; interviews

Comments:

Question 9: Likelihood of long-term impact on target groups, institutions, gender equity results

Indicators: Target group outcomes from pilots; evidence of institutional reform; results disaggregated by gender

Sources: Performance reports; evidence of impact of similar initiatives elsewhere; target groups; institutions

Methods: Document review (including international literature); feedback from stakeholders, institutions, youth

Annex C – Evaluation Terms of Reference

I. Background

This is an independent evaluation of Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS project to be conducted in the final year of its implementation, in accordance with the provisions of the Project Document (PRODOC) and ILO evaluation policy that requires projects with budgets over USD 5mln to undergo independent evaluations twice in their lifecycle – at the midterm (2015) and final stage (2017).

The project is the result of a public/private partnership between the ILO and the Open Joint Stock Company LUKOIL.

Project Background

The global economic crisis had an impact on the situation 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 about one-third of total youth employment is 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 in CIS countries.

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 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.

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 in CIS countries. 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 institutions, the social partners and other actors. These partnerships promote decent work for youth at the level of the regions. The

three pilot regions in the Russian Federation are Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Region, Perm Territory 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 (the post is presently vacant, recruitment underway), one Youth Employment Officer who supports all the project activities, and three assistants (two based in Moscow and one in Astana/Kazakhstan).¹²

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 the ILO and donor representatives.

Major events and milestones of the project

The project has made progress under each of two main objectives in 2013-2017.

The sub-regional meeting in Almaty in October 2013 marked the project's launch in the CIS and establishment of a network which has been convening bi-annually and performed voluntary peer reviews on youth employment policies. Regular sub-regional meetings (conducted in September 2013, April and October 2014, April and October 2015, May 2016 and January 2017) facilitate the functioning of the 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 July 2014 followed by 4 more rounds (totally 5 rounds).

¹² In addition, a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) based in Moscow and funded by the Government of Sweden, and a part-time Junior backstopping Officer in the HQ provided input into the technical documents, situational analyses and narrative reports, as well as advice on the implementation of the project strategy in its initial years of implementation, 2014-2015.

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 included further work on the draft policy review in Kazakhstan and meetings with a team of national stakeholders aimed at developing an 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.

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

Immediate Objective 1

The *sub-regional component* served as a cooperation platform for nine countries involving representatives from the Ministries of Labour, Public Employment Services and social partners, as well as representatives of BRICS. It was implemented through voluntary peer reviews within which countries examined the policies and programmes for youth employment of each other (5 peer reviews conducted). It aimed to foster mutual learning, identify good practices and lead to concrete policy recommendations. Solid research on the topics prioritized by the constituents resulted in a number of publications with recommendations to policy makers.

Immediate Objective 2

The *country component* addressed specific needs and challenges facing the three target countries of the project (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia):

- In Azerbaijan, the project supported the development of a new National Employment Strategy 2017-2030. The initiatives expanded from the piloting of two active labour market programmes for young jobseekers to the institutionalized country-scale programme of entrepreneurship development supported by the President Fund that will target around 10,000 households. The technical support included the package covering macroeconomic approaches, employment policy, economy diversification measures, modernization of PES and facilitating transition to formal economy. The country has been selected as a pilot within the SDGs implementation. Interagency cooperation with UNDP has been started to promote the initiatives.
- In Kazakhstan, the project provided advisory services for the development and adoption of an Action Plan for Youth Employment based on the in-depth youth employment policy review with recommendations. The plan became a result of the 'tripartite plus' discussions and was adopted by four Ministries focusing on several key areas, such as strengthening the system of career guidance and vocational training for youth, promoting entrepreneurship among young people, as well as strengthening public employment service. Support in strengthening labour market institutions has been rendered. As a response to the national policy priorities a number of analytical studies were developed where Kazakh experience was analyzed.
- In Russia, the project supported the development of youth employment policy in line with the State Employment Promotion Programme 2013-2020 through the development on a 'tripartite plus' basis of a Roadmap for the promotion of Decent Work for Youth, including demand- and supply-side initiatives targeting the most disadvantaged young people. Technical expertise and policy advice were provided on skills development through the support to the modernization of occupational standards and development of qualifications assessment instruments. Entrepreneurship promotion on a country-wide scale has been also supported by the project.

The *sub-national component* supported youth employment initiatives in three pilot regions of Russia (Khanty-Mansy Autonomous Region, Perm Territory and the Republic of Kalmykia) through

establishing partnerships for youth employment promotion in order to support implementation of the priorities endorsed by the government, social partners and private sector entities involved in the process on the level of the regions. A number of active labour market measures targeting youth were piloted and assessed, including youth guarantee scheme, wage subsidies and entrepreneurship.

II. Purpose, Scope and Clients of Evaluation

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

The midterm evaluation in 2015 investigated the appropriateness of project design, progress in implementation and suggested adjustments to be made in order to better achieve the project's objectives. It allowed to fine-tune the implementation approach for the remaining duration of the project, 2015-2017.

Purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation is accountability to the Donor, ILO management and constituents, as well as project improvement, particularly in view of the second phase starting in January 2018.

In accordance with the PRODOC statement (Chapter 5, Monitoring and Evaluation), the final evaluation will help to determine the relevance and achievement of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. It will concentrate on the end results of the project to assess its overall performance.

Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation are to:

- a. Assess the relevance of the project implementation strategy;
- b. Assess the achievement of both quantitative and qualitative results and immediate objectives (effectiveness);
- c. Determine the efficiency of the project;
- d. Assess the sustainability of results and likelihood of long-term effects on the beneficiary institutions, national systems, policies;
- e. Identify the supporting factors and/or barriers, constraints;
- f. Identify lessons learned, especially regarding models of interventions that can be replicated in the region and globally;
- g. Provide technical recommendations regarding the most appropriate next steps in the project main subject areas.

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 2017. Field research will be conducted in two target countries: Azerbaijan and Russian Federation, to assess the national and sub-national components. The results of the project's work in Kazakhstan will be assessed based on the documentation available. Assessment of the regional component (regional cooperation network) will be also done based on documentation review (desk research).

The evaluation will integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology and all deliverables, including the final report.

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 inform the second phase of the project starting in 2018. It should be used by the Project team and line managers responsible for the implementation of the project at the HQ, regional and country level.

III. Evaluation Questions based on OECD/DAC evaluation criteria¹³

✓ Relevance

Has the project been relevant to the target countries' needs in the area of youth employment? Did it correspond to the broader national development objectives as they evolved from 2013 to the present?

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

✓ Effectiveness

Have the project outcomes (immediate objectives) been achieved? Has the project been effective in fostering adequate policy responses to youth employment challenges?

Have there been any contributing factors or obstacles?

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

How have the relevant international labour standards concerning, for instance, employment, discrimination and informality, been taken into account during the implementation and how have the social dialogue and tripartite approach contributed to project implementation?

✓ Efficiency of resources use

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

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

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

Is it likely that the project will have long-term effects (impact) on the target groups and institutions, and more equitable gender relations?

- ✓ Recommendations¹⁴

In view of the upcoming second phase, what are the recommendations for the next steps in the technical areas covered by the project?

IV. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted in a participatory manner by engaging various groups of stakeholders at different levels of power relations and ensuring that they have a say about the implementation of the project, can share their views and contribute to the evaluation process itself.

The evaluation will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods (i.e. desk review, interviews, surveys etc.) to gather and analyze data which will be disaggregated by sex to the extent possible. It will pay attention to which groups benefit from and which groups contribute to the project and provide an assessment of how the project is functioning in regards to gender equality and non-discrimination (e.g., if and in which way do the project outputs contribute to gender equality and non-discrimination). It will also strive to make sure that both women and men provide information, participate in interviews and express their views freely.

During the analysis stage, feedback from the stakeholder groups would be compared to determine areas of agreement as well as areas of divergence. The Evaluator will draw conclusions based on triangulation of evidence from different methods and data sources. A set of analytic methods to be applied will be further elaborated in the Inception report.

The following is the proposed evaluation methodology.

1. Documents review

Desk review of appropriate materials, including the project document, Logical Framework, progress reports, midterm evaluation report (2015), mission reports, activity reports, surveys, studies and other outputs of the project, concept note and/or PRODOC for the 2d phase of the project, ILO DWCPs/Country Cooperation Programmes, progress reports of other ILO projects implemented in the countries and relevant materials from secondary sources (e.g., national research and publications).

2. Inception report

¹⁴ Recommendations should be clear, concise, actionable and specify who is called to act upon.

At the end of the desk review the evaluation consultant will prepare an inception report indicating the methodological approach to be followed in each of the countries (list of evaluation questions) that will be discussed with the ILO prior to the field missions¹⁵.

3. **Planning meeting**

A planning meeting will be conducted (possibly, on distance) with the participation of the ILO representatives prior to field research. 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.

4. **Interviews**

Individual or group interviews (in person or on distance) will be conducted with the following stakeholders:

- a) Project staff
- b) ILO management, technical specialists, National Coordinators, CTAs of other ongoing TC projects in the subregion
- c) Project partners from tripartite constituents organizations in the target countries
- d) Project partners and direct beneficiaries, i.e. those who received training from the project pilots or participated in project events and activities
- e) UNDP or other UN partners and agencies working in the field
- f) The Donor

5. **Field visits**

Field visits to Russia (Moscow and one of the pilot regions, the Republic of Kalmykia) and Azerbaijan (Baku and possibly a region) 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. **Observation**

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

7. **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 and constituents for comment.

Note: While the evaluation consultant can propose adjustments in the methodology, any such changes should be approved by the ILO.

¹⁵ See ILO Evaluation Office guidance on Writing the Inception Report at http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165972/lang--en/index.htm

V. Management arrangements

Evaluation team

The evaluation will be conducted by an International Evaluation Consultant who will be assisted by country based interpreters if necessary.

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
- 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)
- Prepare the inception report
- 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 and submit it to the ILO evaluation manager
- Conduct briefing to the ILO on findings, conclusions and recommendations
- Prepare a final evaluation report based on comments obtained on the initial draft report and submit it to the ILO evaluation manager

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 consultant selection memo for submission to the management, RO Evaluation Focal Point for approval and HQ Evaluation Office for final clearance
- Hiring the consultant
- Providing the consultant with the general 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 report
- Submitting the final draft report to RO/Europe and EVAL for approval
- After EVAL's 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) and project staff are 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 (i.e. visa, tickets, travel and lodging)
- Preparing 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

29,5 work days (non-consecutive) during the period of two months approximately, with the submission of the draft report within two weeks from the end of the field research mission.

Below is the tentative schedule (to be adjusted):

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Duration/days</i>	<i>Provisional Timing 2017</i>
I Desk review & inception report	7	September (TBD)
II Pre-mission briefing	0,5	September
III Field research missions: Russia (Moscow and a pilot region, and Azerbaijan)	9	September - October
IV Preparation of draft report	8	October
V Briefing on findings and recommendations (on distance)	1	October
VI Consultation on draft report	<i>(2 weeks)</i>	
VII Finalisation of report	4	November
Total	29,5 Days of work	

VI. Evaluation outputs/deliverables

The expected deliverables are:

- Inception report
- Draft evaluation report (electronic version) in English that should comply with ILO Evaluation Office requirements¹⁶ and include:
 - ✓ Executive Summary with key findings, conclusions and recommendations¹⁷
 - ✓ project background¹⁸
 - ✓ evaluation methodology
 - ✓ findings
 - ✓ conclusions and recommendations (identifying which stakeholders are responsible)
 - ✓ lessons learnt & good practices
 - ✓ annexes including the TORs, inception report, a list of those consulted
- 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 Russian (to be done by the project)

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

Quality of the report will be assessed against ILO Evaluation Office checklists 5 & 6.

VII. Norms and standards

The evaluation will be carried out in adherence with the ILO Evaluation Policy, ILO Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation¹⁹; UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards, Ethical Guidelines, Code of Conduct; and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria.

In accordance with ILO Guidance note 4: “Considering gender in the monitoring and evaluation of projects”²⁰ the gender dimension should be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and, if feasible, the evaluation team. Moreover the evaluator should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve lives of women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.

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.

¹⁶ 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

¹⁷ 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, recommendations, important lessons learned, and good practices.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_168289/lang--en/index.htm

²⁰ http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165986/lang--en/index.htm

Annex D – Performance Indicators

Immediate Objective	Indicators
1. Policies and strategies for Decent Work for youth are adopted and/or revised as a result of priorities identified within the regional network	Number of country-based policies and strategies that implement recommendations stemming from peer reviews and/or knowledge and policy learning developed through the activities of the network
	Number of recommendations that promote social dialogue and tripartism on youth employment
2. Action plans and programmes promoting Decent Work for Youth are implemented in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation	Number of adopted or updated national youth employment plans or national employment programmes with focus on youth
	Number of new or revised evidence-based youth employment programmes and services
	Number of young men and women benefiting from improved employment services and other youth employment initiatives
	Number of private-public partnerships on youth employment established

Annex C – Lessons learned templates

ILO Lesson Learned 1

Project Title: Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS

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

Name of Evaluator: Tony Powers

Date: November 2017

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

<p>Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)</p>	<p>Project design – continuity with previous ILO work</p> <p>Ensuring that project’s design builds directly on previous ILO work allows the project to “hit the ground running”, reducing the delays in project start-up that can occur when projects attempt to introduce activities where no ground work has been done.</p>
<p>Context and any related preconditions</p>	<p>Recent ILO work in relevant technical area in the country</p>
<p>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Various – benefits overall effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation</p>
<p>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</p>	
<p>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</p>	<p>Ability to maintain effort over time towards policy goals</p>
<p>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</p>	<p>Design</p>

ILO Lesson Learned 2

Project Title: Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS
Project TC/SYMBOL: RER/12/01/LUK

Name of Evaluator: Tony Powers

Date: November 2017

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)	Sustainability and impact – factors supporting The project highlighted some important factors supporting the institutionalisation and scaling up of programmes successfully piloted. In Azerbaijan these were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A local “champion” who was both an expert in the delivery of the programme in the country context and respected by key government decision makers ▪ Demand from local municipalities – key local people (e.g. mayors) learned of the project and lobbied for its expansion ▪ Support was given to develop the capacity of the PES to coordinate the programme at a local level and to train sufficient trainers to deliver it ▪ A mechanism to fund the expansion
Context and any related preconditions	Country in this case was relatively well resourced
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Various
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	As above – local champion, support/lobbying of key local people, PES capacity to deliver, funding mechanism available

ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Implementation, sustainability
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ILO Lesson Learned 3

Project Title: Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS
Project TC/SYMBOL: RER/12/01/LUK

Name of Evaluator: Tony Powers **Date: November 2017**

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)	<p>Benefits of peer review in regional cooperation</p> <p>Involving members of the regional cooperation networks in peer reviews allows participating officials the opportunity to study familiar policy and programme challenges in unfamiliar contexts. In the process, the exchange of ideas and approaches allows them to see existing practices through fresh eyes. It energises the Network and makes it task-focused.</p>
Context and any related preconditions	Establishment of a regional cooperation network in the CIS
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Constituents of the participating countries

Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The project invested in a structured process for the conduct of the peer reviews including guidelines and expert support
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Implementation

ILO Lesson Learned 4

Project Title: Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS
Project TC/SYMBOL: RER/12/01/LUK

Name of Evaluator: Tony Powers **Date: November 2017**

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)	<p>Trade Union involvement in youth employment development</p> <p>The establishment of two sub-regional Trade Union youth networks – the Arctic Circle network, involving the northern regions of the Russian Federation and selected Scandinavian Countries, and the Caspian Sea network, involving Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation – helped focus attention on specific youth employment issues in these regions and on the development of Trade Union positions on these.</p>

Context and any related preconditions	Broader strategy implemented through the project supported regional cooperation among the constituents
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Trade Unions, youth
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Commitment of trade unions in addressing regional youth employment challenges
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Implementation