

Mid-term Self Evaluation

Project: Developing the capacity of Employers' Organizations in the Arab Region to contribute to job rich growth through effective policy and social dialogue.

ILO Programme and Budget Outcome 9 "Employers' have strong, independent and representative organizations"

ILO Programme and Budget Outcome 3 indicator 3.1 " Number of member States that, with ILO support, reform their policy or regulatory frameworks to improve the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises"

DWCP Outcomes targeted in project document: RAB801, JOR 801, SAU 801, LBN801 PSE 801, OMN 801, YEM 801 and BAH801

Project duration: Initially conceived with a duration of 18 month, starting June 1, 2012 and ending December 31, 2013. A no-cost project extension was approved until 31 December, 2014 followed by a supplementary budget allocation of USD 400. 000 and project duration extension towards end of 2015 (date to be defined)

Budget: USD 750.000 (original project budget allocation)

Donor: Royal Government of Norway – as part of the ILO's Global partnership with Norway under a specific allocation for the MENA region.

Introduction and project background

The project was conceived on the background of ACT/EMP's global work on the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises. Prior to the launch of the technical activities in project RAB.12.50.NOR, ACT/EMP had, in collaboration with the ILO Enterprise Development Department, developed and deployed an Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprise methodology and toolkit (EESE) deriving from and based on the conclusions of the International Labour Conference discussion in 2007 on this theme. EESE is designed to enhance the policy capacity of the employers' organizations (Eos) to advocate for an enabling environment for sustainable enterprise and employment. It also has a range of capacity building components that EOs can utilize in their on-going operations

The EESE methodology – in a general sense, and utilized for work with ILO tripartite constituents, form as a basis for providing evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the business-enabling environment. The tool and methodology focus on the political, economic, social and environmental aspects of doing business. The EESE assessment typically involves the following steps:

Step 1: Analysing the existing capacity of governments and social partners (workers' and employers' organizations) to assess the enabling environment, formulate evidence-based reform proposals and carry them out.

Step 2: Analysing the prevailing conditions under which enterprises operate. Primary data is collected through enterprise surveys to understand the main opportunities and challenges businesses face. Primary data is also collected through interviews with key ministries and agencies responsible for business promotion to identify areas where policy reforms should be carried out. Secondary data is collected to look at the economic, political, social and environmental conditions within which enterprises operate in a given country. The economic elements relate to macroeconomic, trade and fiscal policies and the legal and regulatory environment. The social elements are the existence of adequate social protection, education and training opportunities, and social inclusion. The political elements relate to overall political stability, good governance and respect for universal human rights and international labour standards. The environmental elements consider the equitable consumption of natural resources.

Step 3: Preparing a country report based on the information gathered. The report outlines the main policy challenges facing enterprises, diagnoses stakeholders' capacity for reform, and makes policy recommendations.

Step 4: Organizing a high-level national policy dialogue based on the report. The aim of the workshop is to help stakeholders designing policy reforms by presenting various policy options and setting priorities for action along with a timeline.

Step 5: Supporting stakeholders in implementing the priority actions agreed upon.

Based on the Sustainable Enterprise methodology and toolkit (EESE), the project RAB.12.50.NOR was launched to further deepen this work at country level in the Arab region, and expand on the work done previously in the Arab states (through ILO-Sweden Partnership Agreement) with Oman Chamber Of Commerce And Industry (OCCI). It should be noted that there was no prior work done on Sustainable Enterprise methodology and toolkit (EESE) with any of the other Chambers of Commerce foreseen to be encompassed by this project, namely:

- Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI)
- Bahrain Chamber Of Commerce And Industry (BCCI)
- Jordan Chamber Of Industry (JCI)
- Saudi Council Of Chambers Of Commerce And Industry (SCCI)
- Federation Of Yemen Chambers Of Commerce And Industry (FYCCI)
- Federation Of Palestinian Chambers Of Commerce And Industry (FPCCI)

The self-evaluation report is structured according to the established terms of reference, and it seeks to address all core elements and questions asked. The self-evaluation report is structured according to the suggested “output” in the terms of reference, but without an executive summary due to the succinctness of the report. The report is kept succinct and based exclusively on desk review of documents.

Purpose and scope

The overarching objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of employers’ organizations (Chambers of Commerce) to engage in evidence-based policy dialogue and to effectively contribute to policy making processes that will lead to an enabling environment for sustainable enterprise growth and decent and productive work. More specifically, the project document states that this will encompass two main components, with the first focusing on basic roles and expectations of Chambers in the merging dispensation, and provide the Chambers with a clear understanding of what kind of organizations will be necessary in the emerging situation in the region. The second component is a policy part, which focuses on sound policy dialogue between Chambers and governments based on firm empirical evidence, to employment and enterprise growth, a series of national Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises and Employment reports (Hereafter “EESEE”) will be commissioned. These reports will assess and analyse the key current binding constraints on enterprise and employment growth. These EESEE reports will then form the basis for capacity building efforts which will take place both nationally and regionally with Chambers.

The terms of reference specifically puts 5 questions under purpose/objective of the mid-term evaluation of which 2 concerns the project’s coherence with the established objectives. The remaining 3 questions will be addressed under the heading of “review of project progress” and “conclusions, operational recommendations and lessons learnt”.

The project is fully in line with the established ILO Programme and Budget Outcome 9, and in a coherent manner aligned with ILO Programme and Budget Outcome 3 as regards Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprise (ESEE methodology) as outlined in the 5 steps under “introduction and project background”. From this perspective, it has contributed to Outcome 9. In a similar manner have results to dates contributed to achieving Outcome 9 strategy/target – and selected targets have been included in reporting for Outcome 9 in the ILO Programme and Implementation report for 2012-13 for the Federation of Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCIA).

Extract from ILO Programme and Implementation Report 2012-13, Outcome 9 – Employers have strong, independent and representative organizations – results under indicator 9.1 - Number of national employers’ organizations that, with ILO support, adopt a strategic plan to increase effectiveness of their management structures and practices

Palestinian Territory, Occupied/PSE801

Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organisations

1 The Federation of Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCIA) developed its 2013-2015 organizational strategic plan, which was endorsed by its board and presented to all other Palestinian Chambers that are Members of FPCCIA in August 2013. The plan identifies the organizational vision and specific objectives to be achieved including the introduction of annual Key Performance Indicators.

- The ILO provided technical and financial support to FPCCIA in conducting a capacity assessment in cooperation with board and staff members in a workshop in April 2013, and in developing and adopting its strategic plan.

Methodology

The self-evaluation was done through a review of all documentation listed under “consulted documents” with a particular attention paid to the project document, approach, setting of objectives and general scope of technical activities substantiated by a review of the Chamber assessment reports and the high level symposium and training workshop in Muscat (November, 2012) capturing the main elements of the technical activities. This supplemented by the extension proposal. There have been no specific consultations with the constituents as this was not deemed necessary.

Review of project progress

According to the project document, the technical activities foreseen were in broad lines as follows with an anticipated timeframe for implementation of 18 months from June 2012 to December 2013:

- Assessment undertaken in each country of national chambers
- Regional High level opening workshop – Role of Chambers in new Arab dispensation
- Regional Training workshop on The “Effective Employer Organization
- Survey work commissioned
- Presentation of EO Assessment Reports and of EESEE Reports
- Regional training on Research skills, Policy development & advocacy
- Engagement with Government and other actors on dialogue
- Regional training on social dialogue and negotiation skills for employers
- Regional training on Communication and media skills
- Regional final conference

However, due to two significant unforeseen circumstance and one aspect of too strong focus on regional events, only elements of the top five outlined points above were implemented during the initial foreseen period of project implementation (June 2012 – December 2013).

The first unforeseen circumstance was the fact that two Chambers, namely in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon did not engage into technical activities beginning with assessment of the Chambers. However, Saudi Arabia did participate in the Regional workshop in Muscat, but not beyond this participation. Subsequently, Bahrain Chamber withdrew due to the political situation in the country and the inability of the ILO to engage in technical activities at country level. The security situation in Yemen made it impossible to go to the country until May 2013, ie. UN security clearance could not be obtained for ILO staff or consultants, and between May and December 2013 the security situation have de-facto restricted further technical work to be undertaken.

The second unforeseen circumstance was due personnel situation as outlined in the extension proposal. The project was under the responsibility of the Employers’ Specialist (ES) of the Decent Work Technical Support Team for the Arab states, with technical support being provided by ACT/EMP (Geneva) and implementation support from a project officer in ROAS Beirut. However, an unanticipated two-month delay in the date of commencement of work of the newly-recruited Employer Specialist had a follow-on effect in the pace at which the project could proceed. Upon taking up the position, however, the new Specialist was – for personal reasons – unable to conduct his work from the Beirut office and, with exceptional permission, conducted his duties remotely from Amman, Jordan. The permission came to an end in December 2012, and given the continuation of the reasons that gave rise to it the Specialist resigned from his post in January 2013. Whilst the process to select a replacement has been fast-tracked, the identified replacement will only be able

to take up the position on 01 June 2013. This unforeseen and very exceptional situation has slowed the pace of project activities.

Prior to submission of the extension proposal, a reflective “cost-benefit” analysis was done of the technical relevance of the regional events versus country level events. This has led to a significant downscaling of number of initially foreseen regional events.

Presentation of findings

- Very significant delay in project implementation due the personnel situation as described above, with full project staff not in place before one year after project launch. *Project management assumption not met.*
 - The scope of countries/chambers encompassed is drastically limited. The project was foreseen to cover seven countries, of which two never commenced technical activities, one country withdrew for reasons related to the political situation in the country, one country has a security situation, which largely limited technical work to be done at country level. *Project development assumption only partly met.*
 - The project document and the scope of technical activities follow a set line of interventions and sequence (the EESE methodology). While coherence is sound, it can also appear a more selective use of the various elements in the EESE toolkit would have been more appropriate. This would also cater for very different levels of institutional developments of the Chambers encompassed in the project. *Project development assumption only partly met.*
 - Based on the past technical work in Oman, legitimate considerations and prospects for possibilities to embark on further deepen the work at country level in the Arab region were in place. *In retrospect, there should have been deeper consultations with Saudi Arabia and Lebanon on their engagement in the project.*
 - The project design and its validity appear to have been somewhat overambitious, and with too strong focus on regional events. This has been addressed in the revised design of technical activities to be undertaken within the revised logical framework of the project for implementation of activities, as amended to accommodate the proposed extended deadline of April 2014.
 - The two established risk factors in the project document are, in a general sense, relevant, but inherently very complex further verify. In review of the documentations, there is nothing that indicates anything in relation to the established risk factors in the project document.
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Conclusions, operational recommendations and lessons learnt

The extension proposal encompassed well the current contextual situation and implementation thus far. Constant adjustments will invariably be needed throughout 2014 and 2015, corresponding to complex national situations (political, security, Syrian refugee crisis impact) in the 4 remaining countries.

Some considerations should be given to how the methodology and the EESE toolkit can be utilized in the wider work of ILO in the ARAB states such as within ACI or technical cooperation projects.

List of consulted documents

- Project Document
- Regional Workshop Report Muscat Nov. 2012
- Regional Workshop Report Amman Dec. 2013
- Mission Reports to Jordan and Oman
- Minute sheet of the Approval Corrigendum of Additional MENA Region (Norway PCA) funding
- Extension Proposal March 2013
- Extension Proposal and Budget Revision Jan. 2014
- Progress Report
- Chamber Assessment reports (BCK, OCCI, FPCCI and JCI + regional paper)
- Report from High Level Symposium and training workshop – Muscat Nov 2012 – ITC Turin

Terms of Reference

Mid-term Self Evaluation

Project on Developing the Capacity of Employers' organization in the Arab Region to contribute to job rich growth through effective policy and social dialogue

Project RAB.12.50.NOR

1. Background and Rationale

The self-evaluation would allow to determine the progress of the project against the approved log frame and work plan; identify gaps and limitations in project implementation; and offer recommendations for project improvement to support the achievement of objectives. The project will also assess the extent to which results to date have contributed to achieving Outcome 9 targets.

The results would also feed into the planning for the next 2 years given that the Donor Norway has recommended the extension of this project and has increased its allocation for it. The results and evaluation report will also feed into a wider Outcome 9 independent evaluation currently being undertaken which is assessing Norwegian and Swedish donor funding support to the implementation of Outcome 9 goals and strategy.

An independent final evaluation is to be carried out at the end of the project.

2. Project Brief

With the support from the Government of Norway, the ILO initiated the regional project to strengthen Employers' Organizations and Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Arab region with the aim to increase the policy capacity of these organizations to engage in evidence based policy dialogue to create an enabling environment for sustainable enterprise and employment.

The project was designed to comprehensively build the capacity of participating organizations to research and assess the policy environment, develop concrete proposals and formulate and run advocacy strategies, utilizing a set of new tools and methodologies that the Employers' Bureau of the ILO have developed, all of which are in Arabic. The project has been remodeled to respond to constituent needs. EESE methodology has been significantly downscaled to allow for more efficient use of resources.

The principle outcomes from this project are increased capacity of Employers' Organizations and Chambers of Commerce and Industry to affect policy and regulatory changes. The targeted outcomes are clear indications of high level policy dialogue on identified issues that could lead to favorable policy or regulatory change for enterprise growth and jobs.

The project was originally foreseen to be implemented with Employers Organizations of 7 countries; namely:

- **Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)**
- **Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI)**

- **Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI)**
- **Saudi Council of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (SCCI)**
- **Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FYCCI)**
- **Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI)**
- **Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI)**

However, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia were dropped for non-cooperation while Bahrain was also later dropped for political reasons.

Although the original project design and implementation period of the project were foreseen for 18 months starting June 2012, the newly recruited ES, who started in September 2012 instead of June 2012, had to- for personal reasons- work from home from Amman and later resigned in January 2013. The position was filled 5 months later in June 2013 by a new ES. This exceptional situation leading to a 1-year delay in allocating the necessary project team for initiating the project, along with the institutional set up and absorption capacity challenges of EOs as well as the political situation in the region, have directly impacted the implementation of the project activities.

Project extension

The initiative is funded as part of ILO's Global partnership with Norway. Under this renewed partnership agreement, funding is no longer project but outcome-based and aligned with the Strategic Policy Framework (SPF) 2010-15 and the Programme and Budget (P&B) for 2012-13 and 2014-15.

In March 2013, a no-cost extension request until March 31, 2014 was put forward to PARDEV, on the basis that donor approval would be expected later that year. On November 19, 2013, the Government of Norway approved additional financial contribution to the TC programme in the MENA to be allocated for the duration of the biennium 2014-2015 in specific areas as determined in the initial MENA allocations by Norway, with a preferred recommendation to extend and increase the allocation for existing projects under which project RAB.12.50.NOR falls. An allocation of \$400,000 from the new contribution was accordingly decided for the RAB.12.50.NOR project by ROAS management for its extension for 2014-2015.

3. Purpose/Objective of the Mid-Term Evaluation

The RAB project self-evaluation seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- To examine the extent to which the initiative's objectives contribute to the P&B outcome 9;
- To assess the extent to which results to date have contributed to achieving Outcome 9 strategy/targets.
- To determine the progress of the project against the approved log frame and work plan;
- To identify gaps and limitations in project implementation and offer recommendations for project improvement to support the achievement of objectives;
- To identify lessons learnt to be taken advantage of under the current project as well as future similar initiatives.

4. Scope, Coverage and clients

The self-evaluation will examine the period of project implementation since project inception until December 2013. It will cover the EOs in 4 countries, namely,

Yemen(YEM801), Jordan (JOR801), Oman (OMN801) and Palestine (PSE801). The key project component that will be addressed is capacity building.

The clients and users of this self-assessment will include ILO project management based in Beirut, and ACTEMP as well as EVAL in Geneva, in addition to project partners/ stakeholders.

5. Criteria/key evaluation questions/ analytical framework

The self-evaluation will examine project implementation against the following criteria and addressing the following questions.

Relevance and strategic fit of the project

- To what extent do the project objectives/outcomes correspond to beneficiary needs, country needs, and regional priorities?
- To what extent do the initiative objectives contribute to the DWCP outcomes, as well as P&B outcome 9 or to other P& B outcomes?
- How well does it complement other ILO/other agencies' initiatives in the countries/regions?

Validity of Project Design

- To what extent are the project objectives/ outcomes realistic?
- What were contributing factors to the project one year delay? How can the planning for the next two years take into consideration these factors (risks and assumptions)?
- To what extent can the planned activities and outputs logically and realistically be expected to lead to the achievement of objectives and outcomes? Is the intervention logic coherent?
- Are regional concerns, including youth employment and skills mismatch and nationalization policies addressed in project implementation?
- How useful and appropriate have the P&B indicators for Outcome 9 been in assessing the progress towards achievement of targets under Outcome 9? Are the means of verification for the indicators appropriate?

Project progress and effectiveness

- To what extent is the project on track for achieving its immediate objectives?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? What have been the main factors and how can they be leveraged?
- To what extent have Outcome 9 targets been achieved under the 3 indicators?
- In which areas does the project have the least achievements? What have been the main constraints?
- How and to what extent have stakeholders (particularly EOs) been involved in project implementation?

Efficiency of resource us

- What are the timelines of delivery of the allocated resources?

- Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
- Have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost effective?

Effectiveness of management arrangements

- Are management, monitoring and governance arrangements for the project adequate?
- Is the technical, programmatic, administrative and financial backstopping from project management adequate?
- Has the project made strategic use of other ILO Projects, products and initiatives to increase its effectiveness and impact?
- Does the project have an M&E plan?

Impact orientation and sustainability of the project

- How likely are the project achievements going to be sustainable?
- How likely is it that the project will have effectively contributed to building capacity in relevant EOs to respond to the economic, social and political challenges in the country and region?
- To what extent are sustainability consideration taken into account in the design and implementation of the project activities?
- To what extent will EOs have strengthened their capacity to ensure sustainability of achievements beyond the project duration?

6. Outputs

A Self-evaluation report with the following sections:

- Cover page with key project data
- Executive/ Evaluation Summary
- Introduction and project background
- Purpose and scope
- Methodology
- Review of project progress
- Presentation of findings
- Conclusions
- Set of operational recommendations
- Lessons learnt
- List of Consulted documents

7. Methodology

The midterm self-evaluation will be carried out through the review and analysis of secondary data.

This will be based on the review of the project document, including progress report and extension proposals, training and mission reports, publications and others as deemed appropriate.

It will also incorporate inputs from meetings and discussions with ILO staff and constituents as deemed appropriate.

8. Management arrangements

The self-evaluation will be carried out by the ACTEMP desk officer for the region in coordination with the Employers Specialist as well as the Project Coordinator before March 31, 2014.