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Improving quality – adding value

Matching skills and jobs for economic progress

Final evaluation of ILO/China South-South Cooperation Project to Expand Employment Services and Enhance Labour Market Information in Cambodia and Lao PDR

**Don Clarke (international consultant),
Kolakot Venevankham (national consultant Lao PDR)
and Sok Somith (national consultant, Cambodia)**

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Limitations of the evaluation

Due to the overall timeframe and resource parameters within which the evaluation was carried out, there were certain areas in which there were limitations on the depth and scope of investigations. As a result, it was not possible to:

(i) Engage with

- other UN and international development partners on the ground who were working in the same field, to discuss synergies and assist with the triangulation of feedback
- other government counterparts, particularly in respective Finance and Planning Ministries as well as Ministries of Education
- Women’s and Youth Unions and disability NGO(s) in Lao PDR and relevant NGOs (international and national), in Cambodia
- counterparts in the Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MoHRSS).

(ii) Conduct a more rigorous study of the changes in the quality of service delivery – ideally employing a survey questionnaire methodology, focus groups and a larger sample of jobseeker and employer users of the employment services, as well as schools and tertiary institutions.

Furthermore, as described in the Executive Summary, this evaluation report was being completed as dialogue was commencing on a new but broader Project phase which would encompass the building of social protection floors in Asia, with Myanmar coming in as an additional country partner. While mindful of these significant developments, the focus of this report remains on the progress, challenges and lessons of the period of Project delivery from January 2014 until April 2016, in line with the Terms of Reference. In this context, the findings and recommendations can be seen as offering insights and inputs which are relevant to the public employment services (PES) and labour market information (LMI) aspects of a future expanded Project phase.

With the above limitations in mind, every effort has been made to ensure a diversity of feedback, triangulation of inputs and information, and balanced engagement with tripartite partners across both countries in order to provide an assessment of integrity and value from learning, accountability, performance improvement and future planning perspectives.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Overview of key findings

1.1.1 Background summary: Strengthening quality of employment services and LMI

The ILO/China South-South Project to Expand Employment Services and Enhance Labour Market Information in Cambodia and Lao PDR ran between January 2014 and April 2016. The Project had a dual strategic focus in both countries on:

- strengthening the capacities of the respective institutions and staff to deliver quality public employment services (PES)
- improving labour market information (LMI) collection, analysis and dissemination for (i) better information to jobseekers and enterprises and (ii) to design programmes addressing the needs of youth, women, migrant workers and people with disabilities.

The core Project partners were the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MoHRSS) of the People's Republic of China, which provided USD 1 million in funding for Project implementation as well as access to Chinese experience and expertise; the National Employment Agency (NEA) of Cambodia and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) in Lao PDR, particularly its Department of Skills Development and Employment (DSDE). A major focus of the Project was the engagement of the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA), the Cambodian Trade Union Council (CTUC) and other Cambodian unions, the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) and Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU). The ILO played the core Project oversight, facilitation, project management and technical backstopping role, drawing on its global normative mandate, technical expertise and tripartite membership base.

The Project was not an isolated or stand-alone intervention, but built on progress under previous ILO engagement in both countries. It further tapped into and complemented other current initiatives on employment services and related areas by the ILO and other international partners. The essence of the Project was to provide the South-South Cooperation platform to draw on China's extensive PES and LMI experience and expertise to strengthen the quality and value of such services in Cambodia and Lao PDR, with a focus on adding-value and momentum to developments already largely underway in both countries.

A key element of the wider Project context was the commitment to eligibility for graduation from LDC status by 2020 in both countries, with an associated prioritisation of the strengthening of workforce skills and matching these to the requirements of rapidly evolving labour markets, including in context of the introduction of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). At the global level, the Project period coincided with the formulation and adoption of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (or Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) which provide a key framework for ongoing development of employment services and LMI in both countries.

The final Project evaluation was conducted in April-July 2016 and consisted of consultations with tripartite partners, ILO staff and other stakeholders, as well as an extensive documentation review. Validation sessions with tripartite partners were held in each country in July 2016. These endorsed the evaluation draft findings and recommendations. Feedback from these sessions is reflected in the following report.

1.1.2 Dialogue on future directions

At the time of completion of the evaluation, a wider process of dialogue was underway between MoHRSS, NEA, MoLSW and the ILO to establish the basis of a follow-up South-South Cooperation phase. The intention is for this to integrate a focus on the building of social protection floors in Asia and the participation of Myanmar as a country partner. Such an approach builds on the integral links between employment and social protection in policy and implementation terms which are encompassed within the ILO Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No.88).

As a bridge towards future cooperation which builds on the current Project, MoHRSS has provided a USD 200,000 funding package for the holding of an ASEAN+3 meeting on employment services in late 2016/early 2017, as well as a wider ILO/China International Conference in 2016 on building Social Protection Floors in Asia. The latter aligns with the Chinese Government's "One Belt, One Road Initiative" that inter alia aims to enhance connectivity and cooperation between China and Asia more broadly.

1.1.3 Summary of evaluation findings

Relevance

Project relevance is examined through two lenses: (i) alignment with country priorities as demonstrated by national policy, legislation, strategies, plans and programmes and (ii) the degree of country ownership demonstrated around the Project and its outcomes. The Project was found to be highly relevant in both countries, with the delivery of high quality public employment services and LMI embedded in core national policies, strategies and plans, many of which have been renewed or launched in the past 12 months. Furthermore, solid evidence was available of country ownership of the Project and its outcomes (encompassing both the governmental institutions concerned as well as employer and trade union counterparts).

Effectiveness

Despite the unevenness of Project delivery as summarised in the report (Section 6), with the LMI component slower to progress in both countries, the Project can be assessed overall to have been effective, particularly with respect to improving the quality of delivery of employment services to jobseekers and employers. One important aspect of Project effectiveness has been the strengthening of foundations and generation of momentum, lessons and initial good practices for future development of employment services and LMI provision in both countries.

Particular areas noted as requiring specific in-depth attention in a second Project phase include the next steps in the development of LMI systems and related skills in both countries; the development of a national employment services strategy and phased increases in national budget support in Lao PDR; addressing the specific needs of women, migrant workers and persons with disability; and the documentation and dissemination of good practices to strengthen service quality and impact, including in a wider ASEAN context.

Efficiency

The achievements of the ILO/China SSC Project, as summarised in this report, have been supported by a relatively small resource base, both financial and human, during a short (and truncated) implementation period. One factor in the ability of the Project to deliver to the extent it did was the supplementation of the core financial contribution from China (USD 1 million over 28 months) by technical and administrative contributions in-kind from MoHRSS (especially in support of the China Study Tour), NEA and MoLSW/DSDE. The Project was also able to leverage supplementary funds from other ILO sources to support activities in key areas.

Information available to the evaluation from reports to the NPSC meetings and internal ILO reporting indicated that Project resources (human and financial) have been allocated in accordance with the Project objectives and outputs as set out in the Project Document in a strategic, economical and transparent manner. It is possible to track the application of Project resources through from inputs into outputs and results, as summarised in Section 6 of this report. At the same time, the evaluation found scope to further improve the efficiency of Project delivery from financial and coherence perspectives. Examples provided in stakeholder feedback included the need to address (i) the tendency towards activity-by-activity approaches which was prevalent in the delivery of Project support; (ii) the impact on Project delivery of lack of coordination amongst and within relevant government ministries / agencies; (iii) the lack of coordination amongst international partners; and (iv) the need for greater integration of general employment and labour migration services.

Impact and sustainability

As the summary of Project implementation in Section 6 indicates, there is clear evidence that the Project has had a positive 'added-value' impact on the capacity of both the NEA and MoLSW/DSDE to deliver effective

employment services ; reach out more widely to jobseekers and employers; and strengthen labour market information provision, albeit from very different starting points. The simplest indication of this impact in both countries is the bottom line increase documented in the registration of jobseekers and employment vacancies, as well as job placements, during the Project period. In the case of Cambodia, for example, the Project period saw vacancies recorded by the NEA increase by 322 percent over baselines; jobseeker registrations increase by 544 percent over baselines; and job placements increase by 628 % over baselines. These figures demonstrate enhanced NEA impact in linking skills with labour market requirements, with benefits to jobseekers and employers.

Feedback received from stakeholders in both countries linked this improvement to the improved outreach, supported by the Project to jobseekers and employers at provincial, district and community levels through means such as job fairs, employment forums, mobile teams and visits to school and tertiary institutions. The evaluation further strongly validated the value-addition of the South-South Cooperation modality underpinning the Project, including as a vehicle for knowledge-sharing across different country contexts. A clear demand was expressed by tripartite stakeholders for an expansion and deepening of such opportunities. The importance of paying attention to institutional strengthening dimensions of capacity development, impact and sustainability was also highlighted.

Challenges, lessons and good practice

A number of challenges at general and country-specific levels were identified by the evaluation and are set out in the report, along with lessons learned and examples of current and emerging good practice which can be linked to Project objectives and contributions. Amongst the latter are the institutional model adopted by the NEA in Cambodia and its ongoing strengthening; the tripartite National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) model adopted to oversee the Project at country level; the use of district job fairs and job forums as a dual outreach and direct recruitment mechanism; the partnership developed by one provincial job centre with a national youth NGO to extend outreach at community level; the integration of employment and labour migration (MRC) services in another job centre; and the establishment of a network of youth focal points in selected trade unions in Cambodia. These are elaborated in Annex VII.

1.2 General recommendations across all Project areas

The following recommendations arising from the Project evaluation process take account of the assessment of progress at the most recent meetings in each country of the National Project Steering Committees; the priorities for a next Project phase indicated by the MoLSW /DSDE and NEA at these meetings; and the findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Project Review, the Follow-up Assessment of ESJCs in Lao PDR and other relevant studies carried out during the Project period.

While mindful of the wider dialogue between Project partners to develop a broader second Project phase which incorporates the building of social protection floors in Asia and participation by Myanmar, the following recommendations arise from the evaluation as it played out in the current context, focused on the progress, challenges and lessons of the period of Project delivery from January 2014 until April 2016. In this sense, they can be seen as offering insights and inputs which are specifically relevant to the PES and LMI aspects of a future Project phase.

The general recommendations below are elaborated in detail in Section 9 of this report, which also sets out additional detailed recommendations for each of Cambodia and Lao PDR.

Recommendation 1: Extend the ILO-China South-South Cooperation Project 2014-2015 for three years with an expanded budget as a key component of implementing employment creation and labour market information commitments under the DCWPs in both Lao PDR and Cambodia.

Note: The following recommendations at overall Project and country levels are premised on an understanding that there will be a second Project phase, with the final duration and extent of resourcing yet to be determined.

Recommendation 2: Continue the dual focus on employment services and labour market information in a next Project phase, but elevate the specific attention given to the strengthening (and in the Lao PDR case, establishment as required) of LMI systems and capacities.

Recommendation 4: Establish a new priority focus within the next phase of Project design on the integration of general employment and migrant labour services. This should encompass (i) steps to develop the necessary policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks and (ii) inclusion of such a priority within the long-term institutional development and resourcing plans of the NEA and MoLSW/DSDE.

Recommendation 5: Draw on the internationally-grounded service standards of the respective national public employment services to strengthen the quality of the wider national employment services and LMI environment in both countries (public and private).

Recommendation 6: As part of the capacity development orientation of a next Project Phase, incorporate a specific focus on strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) policy, systems, processes and skills in the respective PES institutions, drawing *inter alia* on the approaches and lessons already developed in the NEA context to date.

Recommendation 7: Introduce an explicit focus on organisational development (OD) approaches into the next Project phase, with a view to sharpening awareness of the state of institutional 'health' and options for ways forward within the respective public sector environments.

Recommendation 8: Building on progress under the Project to date, consider next steps to (i) apply C.88 in practice and (ii) prioritise attention to its eventual ratification vs a vs C.122 and other relevant ILO Conventions.

Recommendation 9: Ensure that long-term sustainability policy, strategies and measures are in place by the end of the next Project period.

Recommendation 10: Continue the current Project management architecture and arrangements for the next phase, taking into the account the adjustments proposed under this recommendation in Section 9 (including an increase in resourcing for the Project management and administrative roles).

Benchmarks for future Project design

It is further proposed as part of the full set of recommendations in Section 9 that the following benchmarks underpin the design of a next Project phase:

- (i) explicitly draw on the challenges, lessons and good practices identified under the first Project phase, recognising that these arise from extensive stakeholder feedback through the current evaluation process as well as meetings of the NPSC , the Mid-term Project Review and other previous reviews and studies
- (ii) ensure joint formulation of the design to the extent possible to enhance ownership, commitment and common understandings, including in the areas of specific outputs and indicators
- (iii) in this context, ensure joint attention to the formulation of SMART indicators, with a particular focus on how they will be measured and mechanisms for regular monitoring and review
- (iv) ensure integrated approaches to the ongoing development of operational policy, systems, procedures and staff capacity with respect to employment services and LMI, so that both components 'move in sync together,' with staff fully aware of their interdependence
- (v) incorporate a deepening of the South-South cooperation/knowledge sharing dimensions of the Project, including through increased opportunities for Cambodia-Lao PDR mutual learning and support; inter-agency secondments (between MoLSW and NEA as an initial priority); setting-up immersion learning opportunities in China and other countries as relevant (with the necessary attention to the communication challenges); further hands-on coaching by China expert (s); and job centre twinning for mutual benefit (e.g. Luang Prabang and Siem Reap based on their shared tourism focus)
- (vi) ensure enhanced synergies within and around the Project, including:
 - with other components of the respective DWCPs, especially Decent Work employment creation; social protection strengthening and expansion; labour migration; and skills development initiatives

- between the relevant specialist and programme/project management staff in Bangkok (including staff servicing the GMS TRIANGLE Project)
 - with other internationally-supported projects and initiatives, including mapping these; jointly identifying specific areas for collaboration; establishing mechanisms as necessary for regular dialogue and review; and (to the extent possible) incorporating appropriate specific commitments into the Project design for the next phase
- (vii) incorporate specific provision/requirements for strengthening the relationships within each country between relevant ministries, departments and agencies, particularly between the NEA, MoLVT, MoES, social protection agencies, TVET institutions and NIS in Cambodia; and the MoLSW/DSDE, MoES, social protection agencies, TVET institutions and LSB in Lao PDR
- (viii) ensure every aspect of Project design recognises and includes specific provision as appropriate for the strengthening of tripartite cooperation, mindful of the strong commitments stated by employer and union representatives in both countries to greater practical engagement in support of national public employment services and improvement of the availability, credibility, dissemination and use of LMI
- (i) ensure specific attention (reflected in Project outputs and indicators), to more systematically and visibly mainstreaming gender and addressing the particular needs and priorities persons with disability. The latter area, being that most neglected in implementation to date, should receive special attention in Project design and implementation.

2. ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAMFEBEA	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations
C-BED	Community-based Enterprise Development
CO	Country Office
CoP	Community of Practice
CPO	Country Programme Outcomes
CSES	Cambodia Social and Economic Survey
CTUC	Cambodia Trade Union Council
DGTVET	Directorate General of Technical Vocational Education and Training (Cambodia)
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Team
ES	Employment Services
ESJCs	Employment Services Job Centres
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IDP	Industrial Development Policy (Cambodia)
ILO	International Labour Organization
KAB	Know About Business
LBS	Lao Bureau of Statistics
LFTU	Lao Federation of Trade Union
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LNCCI	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment (Lao PDR)
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoF	Ministry of Finance (Cambodia)
MoEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance (Lao PDR)
MoHRSS	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (China)
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (Cambodia)
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (Lao PDR)
MRA	Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ASEAN)
NEA	National Employment Agency (Cambodia)
NEP	National Employment Policy (Cambodia)
NIS	National Institute of Statistics (Cambodia)
NPCO	National Project Coordination Office
NPSC	National Project Steering Committee
NSDP	National Strategy Development Plan (Cambodia)
NSEDP	National Social and Economic Development Plan (Lao PDR)
NTB	National Training Board
OD	Organisational Development
PARDEV	Department of Partnerships and Development Cooperation (ILO)
PES	Public Employment Services
PFM	Public Financial Management
PSM	Public Sector Management
PTO	Project Technical Officer
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
RS	Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SSC	South-South Cooperation

SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
STED	Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRIANGLE	Tripartite Action to Protect Migrants within and from GMS from Labour Exploitation
TVET	Technical and Vocational Training
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDF	United Nations Partnership Framework
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

3. INTERNATIONAL AND COUNTRY CONTEXT

3.1 The international context

3.1.1 South-South Cooperation

The UN General Assembly in 2015 urged UN organisations and multilateral institutions generally to intensify their efforts to effectively mainstream the use of South-South cooperation in the design, formulation and implementation of their regular programmes and to consider increasing allocations of human, technical and financial resources for supporting South-South cooperation initiatives. In a statement marking the UN Day for South-South Cooperation on 12 September 2015, International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director-General Guy Ryder said there is a lot of room for scaling up South-South cooperation and for strengthening interregional cooperation in the global South. “Today the International Labour Organisation highlights the role of South-South cooperation in helping to raise the living standards of millions of women and men through decent jobs as we confront the challenges of delivering the 2030 Development Agenda,” he stated.

The sharing of expertise and experience among tripartite constituents within and between countries has strong roots in the ILO’s mandate and history, with a growing demand in recent years for intensified South–South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)^a in areas ranging from vocational training to labour administration and employment promotion. SSTC is furthermore integrally linked to the ILO’s own knowledge management system, where knowledge is regarded a “product that is gathered through and can be used directly by constituents.” One important aspect of developing SSTC approaches therefore concerns the regular review, identification and dissemination of lessons to inform future planning and implementation.^b

The ILO-China South-South Cooperation for Cambodia and Lao PDR Project (2013-2016) is underpinned by these understandings and developments, with learning from relevant Chinese institutions, experience and expertise at the core of implementing the Project’s objectives. China has gone through a similar process of developing employment and labour market information systems, capacities and services, experiencing many similar issues to those currently being addressed by that Cambodia and Lao PDR, such as assisting rural migrant workers to find decent jobs in the cities.

From 2002 to the end of 2011, for example, 32,000 local institutions in charge of labour and social security affairs were established in 34,000 villages and towns across China. These agencies mainly follow a “Three in One” model, which consists of ensuring training, employment and labour rights for migrants. The original Project design also envisaged the fostering of knowledge sharing and adaption of good practices among ASEAN countries more broadly, particularly those with more developed ES experiences such as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines, with a view to promoting greater regional cooperation and solidarity among member countries.

3.1.2 Status of ILO Employment Service Convention C. 88

The role of public employment services (PES) was fully elaborated with the adoption of the ILO Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No.88) which is premised on the maintenance of a free public employment service. C.88 is not yet ratified in either Cambodia or Lao PDR, although the Project has assisted in bringing the convention more fully to the attention of the tripartite partners. However, even before the completion of respective ratification processes, both countries have indicated a legislative commitment to C.88 through a Decree on Employment Promotion in the case of Lao PDR and integration of provisions into the revised Labour Law (2014) in the case of Cambodia. This commitment is demonstrated in practice through the establishment in both countries of national public employment services, based on a network of employment services centres which carry out most of the core functions set out in C.88, such as job search assistance and placements; provision of

^a SSTC can be defined as collaboration between two or more developing countries that is guided by the principles of solidarity and non-conditionality, aimed at implementing inclusive and distributive development models that are driven by demand: Summary Note: High Level Visit to ILO ROAP, 18 May 2016

labour market information; and administration of labour market programmes.^c The effective development and operation of PES in Cambodia and Lao PDR is embedded in national policy and strategy as well in in the respective DWCPs.

Evaluation discussions in both countries indicated a preference to focus on the substance (implementation in practice) of C.88, rather than pushing for ratification in the near or mid-term, with decisions to be taken nationally about the relative prioritisation of C.88 alongside C.122 (on employment policy) and other conventions already under consideration with links to the respective DWCPs.

3.1.3 Challenges and opportunities of ASEAN integration

A key factor in the national context of both countries is the introduction of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) at the end of 2015, opening the ten member countries up to the freer movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour and capital, combined with enhanced regional connectivity.

The likely impacts of the AEC on ASEAN economies and labour markets are analysed by the 2014 ILO/ADB study on *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity*.^d

Economic modelling employed by the report projects that, under the AEC, aggregate GDP in the ASEAN region in 2025 will be 7.1 percent higher than the 2010 baseline. However, the gains vary substantially by country, with Cambodia and Lao PDR both standing to benefit by close to 20 percent. Total employment in Cambodia is projected to increase by 1.1 million over the baseline, which represents 9.8 percent of total employment in 2025. The change in employment levels projected for Lao PDR, however, is projected to be negligible.

An important factor in these variations is the degree of economic and labour market dependence on international trade. There are also gender differences: in Cambodia women account for half or more of potential job gains, but in Lao PDR they account for 40 percent. Vulnerable employment as a share of the additional job gains under the AEC will be about 55 percent for Cambodia and over 35 percent for Lao PDR (compared with about 65 percent for Vietnam). This raises important issues for future labour market and employment generation planning, including with respect to the formalisation of both economies.

Changes in the distribution of employment between sectors are also projected. Trade and transportation accounts for about one third of the increase in employment in Cambodia and about one fifth in Lao PDR. Agriculture, on the other hand, accounts for the largest share in Lao PDR. In Cambodia the construction sector is projected to account for about 20 percent of the job gains. The ILO/ADB simulation also points to relatively large gains over the baseline in other sectors, particularly textiles, apparel and chemicals in Cambodia; and vehicles, metals and private services in Lao PDR.

Alongside sectors in which there are likely to be employment gains, job losses are also projected by the ILO/ADB simulation in Cambodia and Lao PDR, particularly in food processing.

In terms of structural changes in the respective economies, the share of agriculture in total employment in Cambodia is projected to decline from 55 percent to 48.3 percent under the AEC in 2025, despite absolute employment gains in the sector. Agriculture as a proportion of total employment would also fall in Lao PDR as increases in non-agricultural employment prove to be larger than those in agriculture.

In tandem with the proportionate decline in agricultural employment, the AEC is projected to see the share of industry in total employment in Cambodia rise to 19.4 percent, driven primarily by construction. Structural change in Lao PDR is projected to be slower, with the AEC adding only a further half a percentage point in growth of industrial employment to what would be expected in a baseline scenario without the AEC. The largest employment growth would be in wood products.

^c The Project did not include the administration of unemployment insurance, another function included under C.88, as the operation of the employment services systems of both Cambodia and Lao PDR are not at a level where such a function would be feasible.

^d International Labour Organisation and Asian Development Bank (2014). *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity*. Bangkok, Thailand: ILO and ADB

As a result of such changes, the ILO/ADB report highlights the likelihood of considerable churning in the labour market across ASEAN, bringing particular risks to vulnerable workers. With projected structural changes pointing to an increase in demand across the region for higher skills (with the fastest growing occupations likely to be in semi-skilled or high-skilled jobs), further investments in skills and training will be needed.

3.1.4 Sustainable Development Goals

A key element of the international landscape which came into place during the Project period was the adoption of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (commonly referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) which will provide an important underpinning for the implementation of the next Project phase in both Cambodia and Lao PDR. As well as setting out expectations for government policy and programmatic directions, the SDGs will have a significant influence on global priorities and modalities for development cooperation at multilateral, South-South and ODA levels. Of particular relevance to the future development of employment services and labour market information systems in Cambodia and Lao PDR is SDG Goal 8 on the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

3.2 Cambodia background

3.2.1 Country context

Significant reduction in extreme poverty

The Cambodian economy has continued to benefit from high GDP growth rates over the past decade (7.4 per cent in 2015), which has been facilitated by a stable macroeconomic environment, the progressive development of regulatory and policy frameworks, private sector investment and the strong performance of key sectors, particularly agriculture, but also the garment industry, tourism and construction. This growth has led to significant improvements in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, including a dramatic decline in poverty from about 47.2 per cent in 2007 to 18.6 per cent in 2012. As measured by the Gini coefficient, overall inequality has decreased from 0.411 in 2007 to 0.313 in 2011. However, regional, gender and age disparities remain, underpinned by an inequitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth.^e

These overall significant achievements demonstrate the country's capacity to promote economic growth as well as the RGC's effective response to the impacts of the Global Financial Crisis 2008-2009 and the food and fuel price crises in 2008. The country has further growth potential through its rich natural resources and agricultural base, geographic location, and its young, growing population.

The sustainability of Cambodia's gains in poverty reduction are precarious however, as a large proportion of the Cambodian population subsists at income levels just above the poverty line and is highly vulnerable to shocks such as climate change induced natural disasters, protracted illness and rising food prices. Social protection coverage for poor and vulnerable households remains limited, although it is increasingly a major focus of government policy and programmes.

Cambodia's economic growth furthermore remains narrowly based and focused on low-skilled labour-intensive production in the garment industry, agriculture, tourism and construction. While garments dominate Cambodian exports, the agricultural sector provides employment for the majority of the population, of which the largest proportion is involved in subsistence farming. As demonstrated by government data, poverty is highest in rural areas where the vast majority of Cambodia's population resides, with the highest rates recorded in the North-Eastern provinces where indigenous communities mainly dwell, and the lowest in Phnom Penh.

^e Key source for the Section 3.2.1 of Cambodia Country overview is the Cambodia UNDAF 2016-2018, Phnom Penh, 2015

Labour market and skills development

Decent work creation is a priority in Cambodia, particularly for women, who are more likely than men to remain in vulnerable employment (70 percent females; 59 percent males) and who continue to be concentrated in lower-skilled occupations and informal, often unpaid, work. Estimates of the percentage of the overall working age population engaged in employment range from 67 per cent (Labour Force Survey 2012) to 84 per cent (CSES 2012, for population aged 15-64).

Youth under the age of 24 make up about 52.2 percent of the population. With approximately 173,000 young job seekers entering the labour market annually between 2010-2015, they are a key factor in any economic development and job creation planning. About two-thirds of young people find employment in agriculture, many of whom have dropped out of formal education. According to the Cambodia's National Employment Policy, it is estimated that almost 60 per cent drop out of primary education and 32 per cent from lower secondary education.

Skills/jobs mismatch

A recent youth profiling study carried out by the NEA indicates a stark mismatch between the preferred jobs of young people and the requirements of the labour market.^f The top youth employment preference was professional occupations (35.7 percent), followed by clerical and support workers (15.1 percent) and technicians and associate professional (13.3 percent). On the demand side, most of vacancies registered by the NEA were in craft and related trades (36.4 percent), technical and associated professional (19.4 percent) and services and sales workers (11.9 percent). Agriculturally related occupations scarcely featured in either category.

The February 2016 edition of *ASEANForum* further highlights the skills/jobs mismatch. It notes that the main challenge in the shift towards a more light manufacture-driven economy is the skills and human resources gap that exists, with the lack of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) skills amongst young people a key factor. A Cambodia Development Resource Institution education report in 2015, highlighted an urgent need for students to study subjects that the labour market requires. According to figures from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), just three percent of the 250,000 post-secondary graduates in 2014 came from technical and vocational fields such as agriculture, science and engineering. Data from the World Bank's East Asia Pacific at Work 2014 also reveals that less than six percent of Cambodian university students were enrolled in a scientific major, such as biology or engineering. In October 2015, Education Minister Dr Hang Choun Naron stated that at least a further 3,7000 secondary school teachers were needed in STEM subjects to help bridge the gap.^g

Efforts to address these trends have included the inaugural Science and Engineering Festival in Phnom Penh in March 2015, which attracted more than 10,000 people over three days, rather than the anticipated 3,000. The festival was coordinated by NGO STEM, a recently established NGO with national outreach and focus on promoting STEM as an option for Cambodian youth, with a particular focus on young women. The second festival was held in March 2016.^h

Agriculture remains backbone of livelihoods

Despite notable growth in Cambodia's industrial and service sectors (from around 43 percent in 2004 to 55 per cent in 2014) , agriculture nonetheless remains the major single sector on which Cambodians continue to rely for their livelihoods. For instance, in 2014, agricultural employment amounted to more than 3.7 million workers, representing around 45 percent of total employment.

According to the international definition, total unemployment in Cambodia is very low, around 0.1 per cent in 2014 and the overall employment rate was relatively high, above 80 per cent since 2004. However, the difference between women and men was about 10 percentage points with an employment rate of 79 per cent for women and 89 for men.

^f NEA (May 2015). *Summary of Youth Profile (Draft)*

^g (Carruthers, Marissa. *Bridging the Gap*, ASEANForum, Phnom Penh (February 2016): p 16-17

^h Ibid

Economic growth in neighbouring countries and in Cambodian cities has led to significant emigration and rural-urban migration, particularly among youth. There are more than one million Cambodian migrant labourers outside the country, mainly working on an undocumented basis in Thailand.

In this context, Cambodia's highly concentrated industrial sector remains weak, with most manufacturing activities still family-based and with limited capacity to compete in the international market. The sector is further characterised by high levels of informality; a "missing middle structure" between large and small enterprises; a weak entrepreneurship culture; a concentration in urban areas; low value addition and low levels of technology application.

Micro-enterprises which make up over 97 per cent of enterprises provide only 30 per cent of job creation and generate 12 per cent of total turnover. Large enterprises which make up only 0.6 per cent of enterprises create some 63 per cent of jobs and generate some 76 per cent of turnover. More than 63 per cent of large manufacturing enterprises are the result of foreign direct investment and are export-oriented, with 68 per cent located in Phnom Penh and 13 per cent in Kandal province.ⁱ

3.2.2 National policy and institutional frameworks

Core points of reference for the ILO-China South-South Cooperation Project in Cambodia are provided by Cambodia's national development policy framework and both the current and upcoming United Nations development frameworks for Cambodia. The key policies in this regard are as follows:

Rectangular Strategy III and National Strategic Development Plan

The Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency (RS – now in Phase III) provided the overarching socio-economic policy agenda of the Royal Government of Cambodia during the Project period, setting out its long term vision for the country's development. It's four main growth-related components during 2014-2015 were: (i) agricultural development, (ii) infrastructure rehabilitation and development, (iii) private sector development and employment creation; and (iv) capacity building and human resource development.

The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) serves as Cambodia's principle medium term national development plan. Now extended until 2018, it provides the roadmap for implementation of the Rectangular Strategy and serves as Cambodia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper as well as a framework for harmonisation and alignment of official development assistance to Cambodia.

Industrial Development and National Employment Policies

The relevant policy architecture in Cambodia was further strengthened during the Project period by the recent adoption of two closely related policies – the Industrial Development Policy (IDP) 2015-2025 and the National Employment Policy (NEP) 2015-2025. These provide key policy cornerstones for the next decade of Cambodia's development. As such they are key reference points in the next phase of development of employment and labour market information services in Cambodia, within the broader architecture of the RS III and the NSDP.

The Industrial Development Policy sets out a vision to transform the paradigm of Cambodia's industrial structure from a low value-added, low wage and labour intensive base to a skill-driven mode by 2025, in the context of Cambodia's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2020. The policy identifies key challenges for the development of Cambodia's weak and unbalanced industrial sector. Amongst these are (i) lack of leadership, coordination and effective decision-making with respect human resources and skills; (ii) the scarcity of basic technical knowledge and skills; and (iii) issues related to the labour market and industrial relations which are key to labour market stability, adequate supply of labour, increased productivity and better livelihoods . One thrust of the IDP is the diversification of the country's industrial base and increasing the exports of manufactured products other than garments, with a goal of reducing the export share of garments and footwear to 50 percent of total merchandise exports by 2025.

The policy elaborates policy and practical measures, actions plans, performance indicators, timeframes and responsible institutions. It further identifies four key concrete measures to be achieved by the end of 2018. Of particular relevance to a continuation of the Project is a commitment (measure 3) to:

Further strengthen labour market mechanisms and skills training development to ensure stability of the labour supply, increase productivity and improve living standard of workers by promoting skills training programmes, strengthen the mechanism for setting minimum wage and enhancing harmony in industrial relations based on the principles of positive union and the kindness of employers towards their employees. This can be done through existing mechanisms, including the Labour Advisory Committee and the Cambodia Productivity Committee.

Leadership and coordination of IDP implementation will be the responsibility of the Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC), which is charged with policy decision-making, designing and implementing plans, and addressing challenges in the industrial sector.

The National Employment Policy launched by the RGC on 22 October 2015, was developed with extensive ILO support over several years, including technical advice and the facilitation of policy dialogue. It sets out the following three goals, with related objectives and measures:

- To increase decent and productive employment opportunities – covers macroeconomic policy and sectoral development policies supporting decent/productive employment; and formalizing informal businesses.
- To enhance skills and human resource development – covers core employability skills; quality of and access to education and TVET; and alignment of education and TVET to the labour market .
- To enhance labour market governance – covers labour market information; employment services; working conditions and protection of workers; industrial relations and wage setting mechanisms; unemployment insurance; and migrant workers.

Oversight and coordination of the NEP is the responsibility of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), which also has as one of its functions the ‘Examining and providing recommendations on Decent Work Country Programme for Cambodia.’

The National Youth Policy of Cambodia (2011) likewise includes amongst its 12 strategic areas a focus on education, training and capacity-building as well as entrepreneurship and the labour market.

UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2011 - 2015

The UNDAF provided the framework for coordinated UN development assistance, including that of the ILO, during the Project period. Five overarching priorities formed the core of the UN’s support to Cambodia from 2011-2015, in line with the RS and NSDP: economic growth and sustainable development; health and education; gender equality; governance and social protection.

The ILO’s contribution to addressing these UNDAF priorities through implementation of the DWCP 2011-15 included (i) the ILO/China SSC Project in the areas of employment policies (including those with a specific focus on women, young people and migrant workers), labour market information and employment services; (ii) entrepreneurship and SME promotion; (iii) training and skills development (including life skills for at-risk and disadvantaged groups); and (iv) women’s empowerment and rights at work.

3.2.4 National Employment Agency of Cambodia (NEA)

The National Employment Agency (NEA) is a Public Employment Service Agency established in 2009 via a sub-decree by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). Established as a Special Operating Agency under the jurisdiction of the National Training Board (NTB), its main function is to provide “Employment Services and Labour Market Information” to job seekers, employees, employers, education and training providers, policy makers and planners and the public in Cambodia. In 2010, the NEA was mandated by Sub-decree No. 117 ANKR.BK on ‘The Collection and Compilation of Labour Market Information’ as “the Designated Statistical Unit”

responsible for developing a national LMI system. Under the same Sub-decree, employers are furthermore required to register vacancies with the NEA. The NEA advised that active follow-up is needed to ensure that this requirement is adhered to.

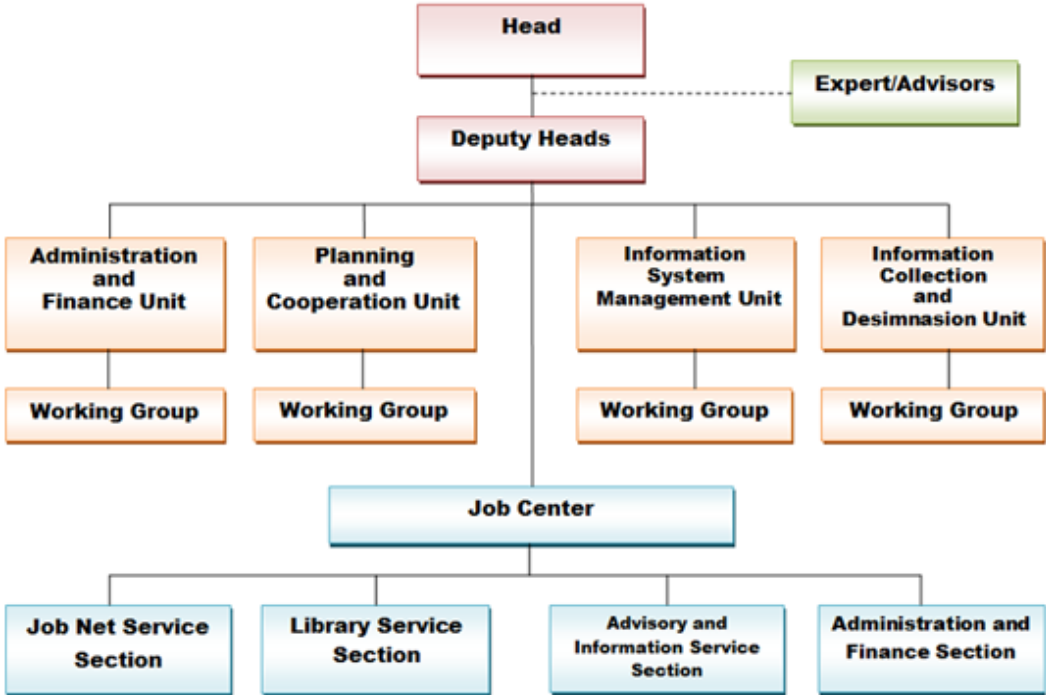
The National Training Board was formally constituted in 1996 in recognition by the RGC Royal that a coordinated, long-term development plan was needed for technical vocational education and training (TVET). The legislation establishing the NTB ensured that it could take effective action and not simply receive reports. Senior officials of each ministry with training responsibilities were appointed to the board, with the Deputy Prime Minister taking a key leadership role.

The NEA is widely regarded as a success story for ILO engagement in Cambodia, with additional momentum provided by the fact that Cambodia was identified as a priority country globally for attention to jobs and skills for youth. It was established following the retrenchment of some 70,000 workers from the garment industry during the global financial crisis. In a relatively short period of time, the NEA has shown itself to be an effectively managed agency which has grown rapidly in response to national demand, showing good results, with a sustainability plan and strong focus on organisational learning to support ongoing improvement.^j

Through its network of job centres, the NEA has focused on growing the reach and quality of services to jobseekers and employers through the development of new and updated tools; improving labour market information; and capacity building for NEA and the job centres' staff. During the period 2013 until May 2015, the NEA recorded an increase of over 30 per cent in meeting client demand, assisting some 5,000 young people to obtain employment through career counselling and employment services. The NEA also assists specific target groups which include young workers, migrant workers and persons with disabilities.^k

The role of the NEA is embedded within the National Economic Policy and is further critical to the implementation and tracking of Cambodia's Industrial Development Policy. Currently the NEA has a mixed funding basis of national budget and donor support.^l

Figure 1: NEA organisational chart



^j Clarke, Don and Suk, Somith (2015). *Cambodia Decent Work Country Programme (2011-2015): Review Report*. Bangkok

^k Ibid

^l Ibid

Location of NEA Job Centres, Cambodia (as at 30 April 2016)

Phnom Penh (ILO- started in 2009); Battambang (ILO-started in 2009); Siem Reap (ILO- started in November 2010); Kampot (ILO- started in December 2010); Svay Rieng (NEA Budget- started in 2012); Kampong Cham (SIDA project- started in November 2014); Takeo (SIDA project-started in November 2014); Kampong Thom (SIDA Project- started in March 2016); Prey Veng (NEA Budget- Started in 2016).

3.2.5 Wider context of public sector reform

The establishment and operation of the NEA sit within a wider process of public sector management reform in Cambodia. Within the framework of the Rectangular Strategy III, the National Program on Sub-national Democratic Development 2009–2019 guides implementation of decentralisation reforms, with a 3-year implementation plan covering the period 2015–2017.

A particular issue within the public sector reform context is that of low pay levels, which in turn are a key factor in staff turn-over and loss of stability and institutional memory. A World Bank report^m on public sector salary reform notes that, despite fiscal constraints, the RGC has attempted to improve matters by applying across-the-board 20 percent annual increases in basic salaries for several years. However, civil service pay remains low and does not adequately support civil servants' daily living requirements.

The government has adopted a set of measures to address these and related issues, but the public sector reform process is a complex undertaking, with many fiscal, social and financial dimensions. In the meantime, the NEA provides an institutional model which has proved effective in the employment services field and is cited as an example of good practice in this report (refer Annex VII).

3.3 Lao PDR context

3.3.1. Country context in Lao PDR

Progress and challenges

Lao PDR has made significant progress in poverty alleviation over the past two decades with poverty rates declining from 46 percent in 1992 to 23 percent in 2012. Key drivers of poverty in Lao PDR are largely attributed to the agricultural sector. Factors that have proven to contribute towards poverty reduction include small sustained shifts to non-agricultural activities, expansion in education and targeted government investment in poverty related interventions.ⁿ

The significant gains made over recent years in economic growth (averaging more than seven percent for the past five years) and social development have paved the way for continual improvement in human development in the country. Between 1985 and 2012, substantial progress has been made in the main Human Development Index (HDI) indicators: life expectancy increased by 19 years, mean years of schooling increased by 2.5 years and Gross National Income per capita increased by 310 percent. Consequently, Lao PDR has seen steady improvement in its HDI value over time, making Lao PDR one of the HDI growth leaders in the medium human development category, where it currently sits. Lao PDR was ranked 141 out of 188 countries in the 2015 Human Development Report.

One of the main development challenges is ensuring that the benefits from high economic growth are evenly distributed and translated into inclusive and sustainable human development.^o Widening gaps between rich

^m World Bank. 2013. *Public service pay in Cambodia : the challenges of salary reform*. Cambodia policy note ; public sector reforms. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2013/09/18595098/public-service-pay-cambodia-challenges-salary-reform>

ⁿ The Country Context summary is largely extracted from the Situational Analysis set out in *A Partnership for Sustainable Development: Lao PDR – United Nations Partnership Framework 2017-2021*. Vientiane, Lao PDR (Draft 25 March, 2016)

^o According to National Economic Research Institute (NERI), GDP in Lao PDR will grow by 7.9 percent in 2016-2017 as the hydropower and service sectors continue to foster economic growth. Gross Domestic Product per capita reached 15-4

and poor, women and men, ethnic groups, and residents of different regions of the country need to be addressed.

Lao PDR's economic boom is driven primarily by foreign direct investment in natural resource extraction and hydropower. Ensuring that this is pursued in an environmentally sustainable way which takes account of the rights of communities and individuals, and that the revenues generated benefit everyone, is critical for the long-term development of the country.

Politically the country has opened up considerably in recent years, ratifying seven out of the nine core human rights treaties which require active and meaningful engagement with international mechanisms, and creating a more conducive legal environment for civil society. In 2015 the Government accepted recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review on strengthening the enabling environment for civil society and media, promoting the administration of justice, and combatting corruption.

A landmark achievement for Lao PDR was its formal accession to the World Trade Organization in 2013, resulting in closer integration into the regional and global economies with a substantial increase in trade of goods and services. Key issues for improvement relate to the country's skills deficit, reliance on the agricultural sector and much needed investment in machinery.

Labour market and skills development

65 percent of the Lao PDR workforce is in the agriculture sector and 35 percent in the construction, manufacturing and mining sectors, making Lao PDR the most agrarian economy in East Asia. 61 percent of the population is composed of farmers but agriculture generates 27 percent of the GDP.^p

While Lao PDR wants to be the "battery" of ASEAN through its rapidly growing FDI-fueled hydropower sector, it will need qualified technicians in many occupational areas to achieve such goal. Currently the natural resources sector as a whole generates about 18 percent of GDP but accounted for only 22,000 jobs in 2013.

Tourism is the sector with the highest potential to create additional income for the poor. No other sector has an equally positive combination of high GDP contribution, high employment generation, and high growth rate. With indirect and induced impacts included, the total contribution of tourism to GDP stood at 17 percent in 2012, and it directly and indirectly provided for half a million jobs, accounting for 16 percent of the total employment.

Tackling key workforce and productivity issues is particularly pressing given that Lao PDR is undergoing a major demographic transition. The population is projected to increase by 38 percent from 6.4 million in 2010 to 8.8 million in 2030. 96,000 young people will be available to join the workforce annually in the next decade.

According to the TVET Development Plan 2016-2020, there have been no recent nationwide studies on labour needs, with the most recent being made by ADB in 2009- 2010, covering 819 companies in eight provinces.

One of the main conclusions of this study remains relevant: "Major shifts in labor market distribution foreshadowed in the NSEDP will require increase in the numbers of skilled workers. They will also require major improvements of skill levels of the Lao workforce to effect increasing application of modern technology in production, especially improving the value-added of products with export potential...Enhanced skills development for infrastructure will also be required..."

A recent report of the World Bank further argues that the number one priority for Lao PDR is to help improve the livelihoods of its large agricultural workforce by increasing productivity and skills levels in the agricultural sector, thus releasing a large 'reserve labour pool' for employment in the growing manufacturing and service sectors.^q

million Kip (about US\$1,903) in 2014-2015. An upsurge in retail and wholesale; construction; agriculture and livestock breeding; electricity and water supply; and the processing industry have contributed to economic growth. *Vientiane Times*, 24 March 2016.

^p The summary presented in this section is drawn from the *Lao PDR TVET Development Plan 2016-2020*

^q World Bank (2014). *Lao Development Report: Expanding Productive Employment for Broad Based Growth*.

In the meantime, Lao PDR remains beset by labour shortages in key areas. In the provinces, a recent local labour market appraisal by GIZ[†] showed that employers in the construction sector are in dire need for workers and that there are priority needs also in agriculture. The garment industry, Lao PDR's fourth biggest industrial sector, currently has a shortage of about 30,000 workers.

Labour costs have been rising over the last few years despite the low level of skills, in part due to large increases in the minimum wage, but without increase in productivity. At same time, the LFTU points out that a significant gap remains between the current minimum wage of 900,000 Kip per month and the estimated costs of living for a worker and their family of about 2 million Kip per month.

A degree of complexity is brought to skills development plans and resourcing in the country by the fact that two parallel qualification systems currently coexist – one under the Labour Law (2014) applying to MoLSW programmes and one under the TVET Law. This is compounded by the number of often parallel donor projects supporting the development of occupational and competency standards, as well as development of curricula and training materials.

Lao PDR is further involved in the process of ASEAN skills recognition called “Mutual Recognition Arrangements” (MRAs) which provides guidelines to recognise eight occupations among ASEAN members and facilitates labour mobility. However, the impact of MRAs on current employment trends in Lao PDR is limited as the overall number of persons working in occupations that they cover is around 38,000, about 1.3 percent of total employment in the country.

3.3.2 National policy and institutional frameworks

7th National Social and Economic Development Plan (NSEDP)

The Lao Government's 7th NSEDP (2011 to 2015) provided the overarching development policy agenda in the country during the ILO/China SSC Project period. It aimed to achieve sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty and inequality in line with the country's MDGs as well as the longer term objective of graduating from LDC status by 2020. To achieve this, the plan set an annual target of at least 8 percent GDP growth, together with comprehensive reforms to broaden the country's productive base - to be achieved through, among other things, economic diversification, human capital investment, enhanced labour productivity and greater inclusion (in development processes and economic activities) of vulnerable and geographically remote groups.

Alongside the MDG commitments, the NSEDP also reinforced the importance of ensuring that growth is inclusive and environmentally sustainable, as well as of maintaining peace and political stability, sustaining economic openness and promoting integration both into the ASEAN community and world economy. Employment creation, skills development and enterprise development all formed integral areas of the NSEDP.

8th National Social and Economic Development Plan 2016-2020 (NSEDP)

The 8th NSEDP which was adopted during the course of the evaluation builds on its predecessor and provides the overarching policy framework within which a Project follow-up phase will be implemented. The following summary highlights references relevant to areas aligned with ILO priorities:

The NSEDP seeks to “facilitate eligibility for graduation from least developed country (LDC) status by 2020 and consolidate regional and international integration in the context of launching of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015.” Amongst the directions to achieve this goal, the focus will be on education reforms, human resources development and livelihood promotion, with an emphasis on training to produce skilled workers. The NSEDP identifies the following performance indicators to improve public-private labour force capacity in five years: (i) provide skills development to 658,000 persons; and (ii) facilitate recruitment for 716,000 new workforce entrants. Critical to achievement of these indicators will be the considerable upgrading of Public Employment Services (PES) and Labour Market Information (LMI) systems as well as the development of demand-driven training programmes linked to skills standards and certification in strategic sectors.

The plan further includes intentions to enhance the effectiveness of public governance and administration, including opportunities for all government officials to upgrade their capacity; increase the use of ICT in government staff management; and improve government staff evaluation processes by assessing achievements

[†] GIZ (2014). *Vocational Education in Lao PDR for Disadvantaged Youth, A rapid socio-economic and labour market appraisal in Sekong and Salavan Provinces*, Vela.

against responsibilities. Such measures are relevant to improving the performance of government programmes and initiatives in areas covered by the Project.

UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), 2011-2015

To maximise the effectiveness of its contribution to the 7th NSEDP and to the achievements of MDGs in Lao PDR, the UN system identified key outcomes to which it could bring a comparative advantage in supporting the achievement of government priorities. The following are the UNDAF outcomes of particular relevance to the ILO/China Project in the period concerned:

Outcome 1: By 2015, the Government promotes more equitable and sustainable growth for poor people in Lao PDR.

Outcome 2: By 2015, the poor and vulnerable benefit from the improved delivery of public services, an effective protection of their rights and greater participation in transparent decision making.

Outcome 3: By 2015, under serviced communities and people in education priority areas benefit from equitable quality education and training that is relevant to the labour market.

Lao PDR – UN Partnership Framework, 2017-2021

As this evaluation was being completed, the UN Partnership Framework (UNDF, renamed, from UNDAF previously) for the next period was being finalised. Its key outcomes relevant to a second Project phase are:

Outcome 1: All women and men have increased opportunities for decent livelihoods and jobs

Outcome 4: Children and youth enjoy better access to inclusive and equitable quality basic education and vocational skills

Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2016-25)

This document was adopted during the November 2015 High-level Round Table Meeting of the Lao PDR Government and development partners. This meeting renewed the commitments from both the government and development partners to ensure effective development cooperation.

The Declaration aligns Lao PDR's cooperation principles with the global agenda on effective development cooperation, including the 2012 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, the 2014 Mexico High Level Meeting Communiqué, the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the SDGs.

3.3.3 Ministry of Labour Social Welfare (MoLSW)

The responsibility for oversight and implementation of public employment services in Lao PDR sits with the Department of Skills Development and Employment (DSDE) within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW).

Specific MoLSW/DSDE frameworks in this context include the MoLSW Master Plan 2007-2020, the MoLSW Strategic Plan on Skills Formation and Employment Promotion, the MoLSW 5 Years Goal on Employment Promotion 2016-2020 and various related decrees and regulations on skills development and employment promotion.

Under the 5-Year Goal on Employment Promotion, the aim is to build a labour market information system which is both centralised and has nationwide coverage; and to provide effective and quality employment to jobseekers (aiming to service about 143,239 jobseekers per annum on average). Also closely linked are the recently adopted TVET Development Plan 2016-2020 and Ministerial Decree on TVET and Skills Development, 2011.

Figure 2: Structure of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), April 2015

Minister of MoLSW (April 2015)								
Vice Minister 1					Vice Minister 2			
Cabinet office	Skills Development/ Employment Dept (DSDE)	Labour Management Dept	Planning & Cooperation Dept	Inspection Dept	Personnel Dept	Dept of Pension, Veterans & Disability	Social Security Organisation	Social Security Department
	Employment Services Centre (ESC)				Social Welfare Dept			
	Employment Services Job Centres (ESJCs)							
<p>Note 1: It is planned that that DSDE will split into two Departments: (i) Skills Development and (ii) Employment.</p> <p>Note 2: The Social Security Organisation (SSO) has subsequently merged with its private sector counterpart as part of a wider process of reform in the social welfare/social protection spheres.</p>								

The Employment Services Job Centres (ESJCs) were set-up under the Department of Skills Development and Employment of the MoLSW with the following core functions: ⁵

- promoting job placement
- facilitating and assisting employers to seek and match job-seekers
- coordinating and promoting public and private vocational training
- collection and analysis of LMI.

At the time of the evaluation, nine ESJCs were operational at Vientiane Capital or provincial level. The provincial centres were located in Vientiane Province, Champasack, Savannakhet, Khammoun, Borikhamxay, Luang Prabang, Oudomxay and Xayaboury.

The Project also provided support to the establishment of the national Employment Service Centre (ESC) in 2014. As indicated in the MoLSW organigram above, the ESC was envisaged as providing the primary MoLSW/DSDE linkage with the ESJCs as well as overall technical and administrative guidance. The ESC has the following core mandated responsibilities and functions:[†]

- directing, managing and monitoring Job Centres (JC) and Migration Resources Centres (MRC)
- collecting, analysing and disseminating LMI (for which purpose it has been carrying out surveys of employers and TVET institutions)
- matching jobseekers and employment opportunities
- dispatching Lao labour abroad and issuing work permits
- providing pre-departure training
- issuing work permits to foreign labour within Lao PDR
- monitoring, supporting and managing the recruitment agencies licensed by MoLSW (see below: this currently includes efforts to establish an association of such agencies)
- coordinating with Embassies and Consular Offices, etc.

Discussions with the ESC indicated that the first role listed above has yet to be realised, with only ad hoc links currently established with the ESJCs, including through the facilitation of referrals from one centre to another. The DSDE advised that the ESC has been tasked with developing a plan for the transfer of the necessary functions, roles and resources to the ESC over the next five years. In the meantime the main management and administrative links between central government and the ESJCs is directly through the DSDE at national and

⁵ Keoxayavong, Vanny (7-10 April, 2015). *Employment Service in Lao PDR*: Presentation to ToT on Employment Services, Vientiane, Lao PDR

[†] Ibid

provincial levels. Likewise, there are very limited links currently between ESC and the recently established LMI Unit within MoLSW. Supporting the clarification of these respective roles and how they can best complement each other would be a logical focus within an extended ILO/China SSC Project.

Another important part of the employment services landscape is the group of 14 recruitment agencies which have been established under MoLSW licenses. These focus primarily on labour migration, with two providing internal employment services.

3.3.4 Wider context of public sector reform

The broader public sector of which the MoLSW is a key component is marked by a significant lack of resources and capacity constraints, which undermine the effectiveness of public sector management.^u The ADB notes that underlying institutional weaknesses exacerbate expenditure inefficiencies in the achievement of better budgetary outcomes, and affect quality of frontline services.

Amongst issues highlighted by the ADB are skewed planning, weak public financial management and an ad hoc system of intergovernmental fiscal arrangements affect strategic allocation of resources. Weakened institutional capacities also arise in part from significant inadequacies in financial resources. Despite recent progress in public finance, and increased allocations for education and health services, budget resources are grossly inadequate when compared with the needs identified in sector development plans, a major constraint identified by the ILO-China Project in seeking to ensure longer term sustainability of employment service services.

To address such issues, improving governance was made a strategic priority under the 7th NSEDP. The government has adopted several measures, including a long-term strategic plan, to implement public sector governance reforms. The National Governance and Public Administration Reforms (NGPAR), 2011–2015 sought to ensure an accountable and effective civil service at all levels. Major political reforms are under way to strengthen districts as the primary administrative units for service delivery, as a precursor to fundamental reforms in intergovernmental financial arrangements.

The later development has direct relevance to the thrust of recommendations in this and other reports report for a strengthening of the employment service focus at district and village levels. As noted above, the 8th NSEDP, which will be in place during the second phase of the Project, includes intentions to enhance the effectiveness of public governance and administration, including opportunities for all government officials to upgrade their capacity.

^u ADB (September 2012). *Proposed Programmatic Approach, Policy-Based Loan and Grant, and Grant Assistance for Subprogram 1 Lao People's Democratic Republic: Governance and Capacity Development in Public Sector Management Program*: <http://adb.org/sites/default/files/projdocs/2012/46059-001-lao-rrp.pdf>

4. PROJECT BACKGROUND

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Objectives and strategy

The overarching **Development Objective** of the ILO/China SSC Project was to improve labour market efficiency and enhance linkages and information flows between job seekers and employers, which will contribute to the reduction of unemployment and, ultimately, of poverty of Cambodia and Lao PDR.

The Immediate Objective 1 was to improve the quality and delivery of employment services provided by the responsible government institutions and their network of job centres to their clients; improve capacities of government, job centre officials and social partners.

The Immediate Objective 2 was to improve data collection, analysis and dissemination to allow for better job matching of the jobseekers with enterprises who need workers to fill their job vacancies.

Although initially scheduled to begin in June 2013, the actual start date of the Project was January 2014. The current phase of the Project ended in April 2016. The total budget for the Project was USD 1 million, provided by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS).

Implemented under the ILO South-South Cooperation Framework, the Project brought financial resources together with a wide range of knowledge exchange initiatives based on experience at both national and provincial levels in the People's Republic of China. Core to this cooperation was the provision of technical assistance and advisory services as well as the sharing of good practices and experiences by the People's Republic of China with the public employment services of Cambodia and Lao PDR. Training in Thailand on labour market information services was also part of the Project.

The Project was underpinned by ILO expertise, programme management resources and links with the experience of other relevant countries, including within ASEAN. ILO engagement was in line with its global mandate to promote decent and productive work opportunities for women and men, with the enhancement of employment services a core component in this regard.

In both Cambodia and Lao PDR, the Project was part of broader ILO Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) which encompassed the creation of Decent Work opportunities, market-related skills development, labour market governance and industrial relations, minimum wage mechanisms, the strengthening and expansion of social protection, ratification of ILO Conventions, and the strengthening of tripartite approaches and mechanisms, including through the strengthening of capacity of tripartite partners (refer Annex I).

In **Cambodia**, the Project was a key element of implementing the following DWCP 2011-2015 Outcomes:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Outcome 2.1 | Development of a National Employment Policy and relevant institutional framework for promoting equitable employment and protection |
| Outcome 2.2 | Enhanced employability of men and women through improved skills development and public employment services |

In **Lao PDR**, the Project was a key element of implementing the following DWCP 2011-2015 Outcome:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Outcome 1.1 | Increased opportunities created for decent and productive employment, particularly in rural areas. |
|-------------|--|

Both DWCPs were reviewed within approximately the same time timeframe as this current ILO/China SSC Project evaluation. This enabled the application of a holistic and inter-connected approach which sought to take account of and identify wider synergies and linkages between the various components of the respective DWCPs. The potential for strengthening such synergies and linkages is addressed in the analysis and recommendations of this report.

The essence of the Project was the addition of value and momentum to initiatives in both countries which were already underway, both building on a wide range of earlier ILO engagements in both countries and drawing from and complementing other concurrent projects and resources of both the ILO and other international partners (e.g. the ADB and EU in Lao PDR and SIDA and the ADB in Cambodia).

Relevant ILO projects under the respective DWCPs during the Project period included:

Lao PDR - the Rural Employment Creation Pilot Project in Sekong Province

Cambodia - the implementation of the National Employment Policy, the Skills for Economic and Trade Diversification (STED) Project, the Garment and Footwear Sector Bulletin produced in association with the Better Factories Cambodia Project

Both countries - the GMS TRIANGLE Project on safe labour migration, initiatives to expand and strengthen social protection, C-BED and KAB entrepreneurship initiatives, as well as longstanding engagements on skills development, gender equality and minimum wages.

To this end, the Project strategy had two principles aspects. These were:

- strengthening the capacities of the respective institutions and staff to deliver quality services
- improving labour market information collection, analysis and dissemination to support jobseekers and enterprises and to design specific initiatives addressing the needs of youth, women, migrant workers and persons with disabilities.

Core to successful implementation of the strategy was the expansion of partnerships to link employment services with employers' organisations and trade unions in Cambodia and Lao PDR. In Cambodia, the principle partners in this respect were the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Association (CAMFEBA) and the Cambodian Trade Union Council (CTUC). In Lao PDR, the principle partners were the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) and Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU).

4.1.2 Building on previous ILO support for employment services and LMI

Cambodia

Prior to the ILO/China SSC Project, the ILO provided a range of support to the MoLVT and the NEA in establishing a network of job centres in Cambodia, including through its Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA). Specific support initiatives included:

- Support to the MoLVT in the establishment of two pilot centres in Phnom Penh and Battambang in 2009 to provide employment services to about 70,000 retrenched women workers in the garment sector during the global economic crisis, as well as to new jobseekers.
- Ongoing support beyond the crisis to government efforts to expand access to public employment services through establishing more job centres and improving the quality of services and outreach.
- Support to the establishment, operation and development of the NEA through a range of capacity building programmes in areas including employment services, employment counselling and employer relations.
- A first Study Tour to China in 2010 for NEA staff to learn from the organisation and operation of regional, provincial and district level job centres.
- The development of a number of employment service tools, including manuals on the operation of the job centres, guidelines on employment counselling and employer relations, and a guide for young jobseekers.
- Support to improved outreach through job fairs and forums, media exposure and the development and dissemination of promotional brochures, leaflets and resource cards.

In addition, the ILO played a key role in the design, conduct and support of the first national Labour force Survey (2012), as a cornerstone in developing the country's LMI base.

Lao PDR

Prior to the ILO/China SSC Project, the ILO provided a range of support to the MoLSW/DSDE in establishing a network of job centres in Lao PDR, including through its Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA).

Specific support initiatives included

- Support to the MoLSW in the establishment of three pilot employment services job centres (ESJCs) in 2009 in Vientiane capital, Champasack, and Savannakhet. Alongside other core PES functions, the ESJCs provided general information on labour migration.
- Expansion of the number of ESJCs to six, with support from ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Project, adding ESJCs in Vientiane Province, Khammoun and Bolikhamxay. As in Cambodia, the ILO conducted a number of capacity building activities on employment counselling and employer relations trainings. In addition, the first editions were developed of manuals to guide operations, employment counselling and employer relations.
- Assistance in the revision of a decree on employment promotion, with focus on both local and overseas employment in the country.

The ILO also played a key role in the design, support and conduct of the country's first and second national Labour Force Surveys (the latter included a focus on child labour), providing core foundations for the development of the country's LMI base.

4.2 Project management architecture

The Project was administered by the **ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR (CO-Bangkok)** in its premises in Bangkok, Thailand. CO-Bangkok was responsible for the effective implementation of Project activities and its financial management. The Project was technically backstopped by the Decent Work Team for East, South-East Asia and Pacific through its Senior Skills and Employability Specialist who provided technical guidance and facilitated knowledge exchange linkages with similar initiatives undertaken in Asia and other regions. The Project also drew on the expertise of other DWT Technical specialists in relevant fields, particularly on employment and labour statistics. The Skills and Employability Department in Geneva provided specific expertise available at HQ level.

A part-time **Project Technical Officer (PTO)** position was established in CO-Bangkok to provide direct support to the country operations and to the South-South knowledge exchange initiatives as required in keeping with the SSTC principles and *modus operandi*. The position was initially budgeted for the first 18 months of the Project, but was extended following the recommendation of the Project Mid-term Review. Part time support was provided by existing administrative staff positions in Bangkok, Phnom Penh and Vientiane.

The **ILO National Coordinators in Cambodia and Lao PDR** liaised with the National Project Coordinators appointed by the partner institutions and provided *in situ* support in close consultation with the Project Technical Officer. They also maintained an overview of the Project's development within the respective DWCPs and its linkages with other ILO engagements on the ground.

Each counterpart institution set up a **Project Coordination Task Team** based in a **National Project Coordination Office (NPCO)** to liaise with the Project.^v The Task Team was headed by a Project Coordinator (already assigned by national counterparts in Lao PDR and Cambodia prior to project commencement) who helped to ensure close liaison and provide operational support to the Project's activities. The Task Team and other staff involved in the Project provided an in-kind counterpart contribution to Project implementation. In turn, the Chinese expertise which was provided to the Project was also on an in-kind basis. Travel and accommodation expenses were covered by Project funds.

A **National Project Steering Committee (NPSC)** was established in each country consisting of senior representatives from national tripartite partners, MoHRSS and the ILO. National Project Coordination Offices in the two countries provided secretariat services. The first NPSC meetings were convened in both Cambodia and Lao PDR in April 2014 (24 April 2014 and 28 April 2014, respectively). In Cambodia, the second NPSC meeting was convened again in 2014 (8 September 2014) to complement the high level visit by H.E. Mr Xin

Chang-Xing, Vice Minister, MOHRSS. Lao PDR's second NPSC meeting took place in Vientiane Capital on 17 November 2015; and Cambodia's third NPSC meeting took place in Phnom Penh on 19 November 2015.

5. REVIEW BACKGROUND

5.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the **relevance** of Project design; **effectiveness** (progress made against the performance plan as well as management and monitoring and evaluation arrangements); **efficiency** in use of resources; providing a basis to assess the **impact** of the Project to date in relation to policies, legislation, regulations, processes, capacities, behaviours of different actors and, ultimately, the individual lives of job seekers in Lao PDR and Cambodia.

The evaluation further assessed the **sustainability** of the Project benefits, with a view to providing lessons and good practices for future reference as well as recommendations that will help strengthen effectiveness and impact in the longer term should the Project move into a follow-up phase.

In line with the Terms of Reference, the evaluation considered the following broad areas:

- progress in delivering against Project's immediate objectives, outcomes, expected outputs, indicators and targets
- the validity of the Project strategy and design as set out in the Project Document
- the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are in place
- strategic use and leverage of ILO/China SSC funds in support of Project implementation at all levels
- effectiveness of Project implementation and management arrangements at all levels (regional and national)
- impact and sustainability, including sustainability of the outcomes (e.g. public budget provision or expansion of services/practices introduced; prospects for co-payments or revenue generation; client satisfaction), and
- recommendations and/or the way forward for future efforts on employment services and LMI in the context of a follow-up phase of the Project.

In this context, the evaluation also assessed:

- the contribution of the Project to, and its synergies with, the respective DWCPs of Cambodia and Lao PDR
- progress in developing employment services delivery to the principle clients (jobseekers and employers)
- the collection, sharing and dissemination of labour market information (or the progress in this direction)
- the national policy and legislative basis supporting and assuring the effective delivery of public employment services and labour market information
- how the Project has engaged with the tripartite constituents and direct beneficiaries (including the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU), Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) and selected trade unions in Cambodia)
- any factors that materially impacted on the extent and pace of Project implementation and achievement of its objectives
- lessons learnt and good practices to inform future Project design and implementation, should a follow-up phase be agreed.

5.2 Review methodology

5.2.1 Linkages and synergies with Lao PDR and Cambodia DWCP reviews

A key feature of this evaluation was the synergy and value-addition derived from close integration with the reviews conducted of the respective Lao PDR and Cambodia DWCPs for the period 2011-2015.

In particular, there were mutual benefits and efficiencies for both processes in the case of Lao PDR due to the fact they are being conducted in a similar timeframe with overlapping stakeholder consultation programmes and timeframes. In the case of Cambodia, the DWCP report completed in late 2015 includes several references to the work of the NEA, including a 'good practice' case study. A focus on synergies and mutual reinforcement

between the ILO/China SSC Project and wider DWCP frameworks, both during the duration of the Project to date and (potentially) in the next DWCP periods, was an important feature of the evaluation process.

5.2.2 Core approaches

The evaluation was conducted primarily as a qualitative participatory assessment of the implementation of the Project. The credibility and accuracy of review findings relied on open collaboration from the national tripartite constituents and other relevant stakeholders, including Project beneficiaries. Accordingly, the full, open and active participation of all key stakeholders was encouraged throughout the evaluation at all levels.

A semi-structured interview / engagement process was followed within the broad focus areas and assessment points set out in the Analytical Framework (Annex III). The process involved a mixture of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). One example of the latter was a multi-trade union session conducted in Cambodia. There was a focus in evaluation interview and focus group processes on the triangulation of information, analysis and perspectives from a range of perspectives

Stakeholder consultations were underpinned by existing data and analysis available through Project documentation. The latter includes NEA and MoLSW/DoLSW data in the respective countries; other independent evaluations and studies carried out of the Project in the respective countries; ILO internal Project reporting to Bangkok and Geneva; National Steering Committee reports; relevant DWCP studies, reporting and data; and other relevant reports, studies and background information.

5.2.3 Key evaluation steps

Desk review of relevant documentation

The desk review included :

- relevant national policies, strategies, legislation, Ministerial decrees and action plans
- studies and data produced under the auspices of the Project and/or by Project stakeholders^w
- mid-term and other evaluations and studies produced under the auspices of the ILO^x
- relevant evaluations and other agency studies
- UNDAF reports and evaluations
- reports provided to and by National Steering Committee Meetings
- internal ILO reports, studies, publications and other relevant material.

Interviews with relevant Bangkok-based ROAP, CO and DWT staff

These were set-up both pre and post the country missions, in some cases in overlapping with consultations required for the Lao PDR DWCP review.

In-country missions

The in-country evaluation schedules were arranged by CO-Bangkok. Meetings included:

^w Key amongst these were:

Boontinand, Vachararutai (2015): Mid-term Review of ILO/China SSC Project

Duran, Mitchell, (Sept 2015). *Communications Plan for ILO-China South-South Cooperation Project to Expand Employment Services.*

Salter, Bill (Sept 2015). *HR Development Plan for ILO-China Project.*

MoLVT/DSDE (2015). *Follow-up Assessment on Current State of Employment Service Centres: (Analysis of survey data as part of ILO-China Project, 2015).*

^x Key amongst these were:

Clarke, Don and Venevankham, Kolakot (22 April 2016). *Lao PDR Decent Work Country Programme 2011-2015: Review Report (Draft)*

MoLSW, LNC-RDPE, Sekong Provincial Authorities and the ILO (31 March 2016). *The draft Documentation of Rural Employment Creation in Sekong Pilot Project for Testing ILO's Integrated Approach: Interim Results (Draft v1)*

- tripartite partners in each country at appropriate levels, including individual employers and selected workers' organisations
- NEA, MoLVT and MoLSW/DSDE staff, including in the provincial job centres
- other relevant ministries, departments and government agencies
- employer and jobseeker beneficiaries
- tertiary institutions and (one) secondary school
- relevant ILO staff in Vientiane and Phnom Penh, including of Technical Cooperation Projects managed from Geneva or Bangkok
- the Asian Development Bank (Lao PDR).

5.3. Analytical Framework for the review

The review was grounded in UN Evaluation Norms and Standards as defined by UNEG, as well as OECD DAC evaluation quality standards. It addressed the ILO evaluation requirements in the areas of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for results based evaluation, 2013.

The questions set out in the Analytical Framework underpinned all evaluation consultations, with feedback and analysis across the full set of questions integrated throughout the report text.

The framework had the following two main components

- generic core reference questions (Annex III)
- targeted questions and a checklist for the job centres in both countries

The application in practice of the above-mentioned components took account of:

- the particular role, perspectives and circumstances of each of the core constituency groups and other interlocutors interviewed for the purpose of the evaluation (requiring appropriate adjustment and nuancing of the generic questions set out in Annex III)
- the degree of development of tripartite culture, relationships, understandings, mechanisms and institutions
- progress in addressing the particular constraints and recommendations identified by mid-term and other relevant reviews and studies in each country
- the particular perspectives, experiences and realities of women from a gender mainstreaming perspective.
- the engagement of the Project with youth and persons with disability
- existing and potentially new and/or strengthened partnerships and links with other organisations (domestic and international), working in the same field
- opportunities in the emerging domestic, regional and global contexts (including the introduction of AEC and adoption of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development) which the next phase of the Project can leverage for implementation and partnership building purposes.
- emerging challenges and risks to be mitigated in the next Project phase, if one is agreed.

The evaluation further took account of findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Project Review.^y These included the need:

- to strengthen and develop strategic collaboration with trade unions and employers' organisations
- for effective communications campaigning and out-reach
- for continuous capacity building activities enabling quality employment services delivery
- for quality and reliable labour market data and information, including analysis and effective management of the labour market information system
- to establish synergy with other relevant projects and initiatives
- for more active engagement with and by the NPSC in each country

^y *Boontinand, Vachararutai (2015): Mid-term Review of ILO/China SSC Project*

6 . PROJECT DELIVERY

6.1 Project achievements:

6.1.1 Summary overview

At the respective last meetings of the National Project Steering Committees, the Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) commented as the principle donor that “this Project has been productive in a meaningful way and implemented with good collaboration from all sides”.² MOHRSS acknowledged the useful tools on employment services which had been produced and applied under the Project and observed that the framework of activities which had been developed provides a good platform for ongoing support by China. MOHRSS further noted the continuing importance and relevance of effective employment services in the Asia and the Pacific region as countries like Cambodia and Lao PDR strive to better promote and prove employment in the context of the new opportunities which will be created by the introduction of the ASEAN Economic Community.

An important reference point for the application of Project resources were the assessments of job centre capacity conducted in each country in 2014, with a follow-up assessment carried out in Lao PDR in 2015 to update the analysis and track progress. The latter noted that there had been an overall improvement during the Project period, with all 9 ESJs now rated as “fair to good,” compared with previous rating showing all were under-performing. It is proposed that a similar follow-up assessment be conducted for Cambodia in the next Project phase.

As noted earlier in this report, the essence of the Project was the addition of value to initiatives in both countries which were already underway, both building on previous support provided by the ILO (and other international partners) and linking to other ongoing relevant Projects, developments and resources..

The following detailed summaries of Project implementation by output focus on the changes which can be attributed to the Project itself, taking into account the broader and dynamic context in which they were achieved. Drawing on these summaries, it can be concluded that the ILO-China South-South Cooperation Project added value to the delivery of employment services and LMI across the two countries in the following key areas:

- staff and systems capacity at all levels, including ‘front line’ ES delivery
- manuals, tools and guidance for staff, including Communications and Human Resource Plans to guide and provide a basis for assessment of initiatives in these areas
- internal systems for performance monitoring and measurement
- ability to organise job fairs at national and provincial levels
- outreach to district and community levels via means such as job forums, mobile teams and partnerships with NGOs and employers
- outreach to youth via schools and tertiary institutions
- job centre visibility via improved branding and signage as well as media presence.

In addition, there were particular country-specific achievements that can be linked to Project support in the following areas:

Cambodia

- strengthened core strategic leadership and management capacity, particularly through access to ILO ITC training in Turin (the ILO also separately funded relevant Masters level study by one senior staff member)
- assessment of LMI capacity and steps to address gaps, including cooperation with NIS and plans for the launch of six-monthly Labour Market Update
- steps to improve the NEA website and use of social media

² ILO CO-Bangkok (16 April 2016): *Technical Cooperation Progress Report: December 2013-November 2015*

- increased collaboration with employers and unions (e.g. the recent publication of NEA/CAMFEBA job seeker guidance booklets and establishment of NEA union youth focal points)
- research to inform NEA policy, planning and service delivery (e.g. profiling studies on the migrant labour and youth). A parallel but fully synergistic study on ‘what works for youth’ was a further key contribution in this regard. This was supported by ILO RBSA funds.

Lao PDR

- establishment of the Employment Service Centre (ESC) to provide the institutional basis of future management and administrative support for the ESJs, with the MoLSW/DSDE planning for this role to be realised over next 5-year period
- increased collaboration with employers, with the LNCCI Employer Skills Needs Survey covering four provinces as a key focus
- key initial steps to improve LMI capacity via the establishment of a dedicated unit in the MoLSW and the completion of the Lao National Standard Classification of Occupations (LNSCO) to 6-digit level.

6.1.2 Benefits of exposure to China’s PES experience

Feedback from NEA, MoLSW/DSDE, employer and union participants in the October 2014 PES Study Tour to China, as well as from other NEA and MoLSW/DSDE staff, highlighted improved understanding and knowledge in areas including:

- the components of PES and how they fit together
- interrelationships between employment services and LMI
- the importance of tailoring services to the client (skilled/ unskilled; rural / urban & female / male)
- the importance of job centre space management to provide a welcoming setting for clients and ensure private space for counselling purposes
- high quality data management based on clear job classifications
- proactive outreach/communications to community level
- the importance of having the right IT equipment and skills in place for both LMI and outreach purposes
- the operation (and potential for Cambodia and Lao PDR) of the China Job Bank, an online labour exchange and job matching facility.

A more intangible benefit was the “sense of possibility” that Study Tour participants developed, providing both enhanced motivation to improve PES in their own countries and a clear vision of what can be achieved. NEA senior management referred to qualities such as improved motivation, confidence and tacit knowledge of staff as being observable benefits of the China Study Tour and training and exposure visits to Thailand under the Project.

Feedback, including by NEA and MoLSW/DSEDE staff who did not participate in the Study Tour, verified that attention was given in both countries to following-up to the visit through the development of collective work plans and the sharing of experience and findings more widely through interaction at national and job centre levels.

The hands-on coaching provided by a PES expert from China in Cambodia and Lao PDR further reinforced and extended the Study Tour learnings. Due to the complexities of handling multi-lingual communications (Khmer, Lao, Chinese and English), the planned immersion component of the Study Tour did not eventuate, highlighting a challenge to be addressed in future such planning. A lack of resources and other priorities under the Project also mitigated against the annual coaching programmes by a Chinese expert that had been proposed in the Project Document.

The feedback from those in both countries who had benefitted, directly or indirectly, from the study tour experience was emphatically in favour of extending the approach with China and relevant ASEAN countries into the next phase of the Project.

Box 1: Bottom line: Results for employers and jobseekers

During the period January 2014 – November 2015, improvements in the quality of outreach and services to jobseekers and employers were reflected in increases in vacancies recorded, jobseeker registrations and job placements by the respective employment services during 2014-2015.

Evaluation consultations indicated that the contribution of the ILO-China South-South Cooperation Project to the strengthening of ES and LMI capacities in each country was a significant contributor.

Vacancies recorded, jobseeker registrations and job placements by respective PES, 2014-2015

Cambodia (results 2014 to Dec 2015)	Baseline 2013	
35,020 jobseeker registrations	6,442	(544 % increase)
117,218 vacancies recorded	36,301	(322 % increase)
4,320 job placements	688	(628 % increase)

Lao PDR (results 2014 to Dec 2015)

13,000 vacancies recorded
2,000 job placements

Although verifiable baseline data was not available to the Project evaluation in the case of Lao PDR to enable percentage calculations, scrutiny of the Project reporting provided by the MoLSW indicated an overall trend of increasing jobseeker registrations, job placements and recorded vacancies during the Project period. Particularly standing out from the MoLSW reporting is the increase in jobseeker registrations and vacancy figures at the time of job fairs, job forums and other recruitment events.

Internal ILO reporting also notes^{aa} that the number of job seeker registrations at ESJs and of placements made had increased during the Project period, indicating not only better record keeping but also improved ability to facilitate the matching of jobseekers with employers.

Low levels of direct client visits to job centres

All provincial job centres visited in Cambodia and Lao PDR reported low numbers of direct visits to the centres, compared with registrations by other means, such as job fairs and job forums. 2015 numbers ranged from 45(29 female) in the Vientiane Capital ESJ in Lao PDR to about 200 in the Cambodian job centres in Siem Reap and Svay Reang. In Savannakhet, Lao PDR, the ESJ advised that 84 job seeker registrations had been received directly to date via the centre in the first quarter of 2016, with 10 job placements having been made.

Public Private Partnership approach in Lao PDR

In this context, a notable feature of the experience of the provincial job centres visited by the evaluation team in Lao PDR was the facilitative support they provided to the recruitment efforts of large foreign-owned employers who were facing labour shortages (500 vacancies out of a total 800 staff capacity in the case of a foreign-owned garment factory in Vientiane Province).

Services provided by the ESJs included the facilitation of arrangements for meetings with village leaders and job-seekers through district level events, as well as linkages with ESJs in other provinces. This approach in many ways can be said to constitute a form of ‘Public Private Partnership’ with ESJ staff accompanying company representatives on district visits, as well as setting-up arrangements with local authorities, obtaining the necessary approvals, etc.

^{aa} ILO CO-Bangkok (16 April 2016): *Technical Cooperation Progress Report: December 2013-November 2015*

Box 2: A job centre at work: Example of Battambang Job Centre, Cambodia

In the period 28 Nov 2014-17 Dec 2015, the Battambang Job Centre in Cambodia reported the following data to the NEA head office:

Job seekers registered:	Total 585, of whom 352 female and 395 high skilled
Pre-employment workshops:	59 participants, 34 female
Jobseekers referred to employers:	366, of whom 192 female
Employment services (career advice, etc):	887 jobseekers, of whom 423 female
Job announcements disseminated:	2,793
No of readers of job board (busy street front):	5408
Telephone calls from jobseekers:	363, of whom 285 female
Telephone calls to jobseekers:	798, of whom 541 female
Telephone calls to employers:	153
Visits to employers:	283
Participants in workshops at tertiary institutions:	327, of whom 171 female
Mobile job centres set up:	16
Visits to mobile job centres:	308
Job forums held:	6
Jobseekers present at job forums:	410, of whom 235 female

A notable feature of the above figures is number of readers of the job board, which is located on a busy street front. Staff frequently spent time by the board to informally interact with job seekers who stop to read the notices.

The number of high skilled jobseekers registered above contrasts with the low levels of high skilled registrations reported by other job centres visited in Cambodia: For example, Svay Reang reported 1,120 registrations in 2015, with only 60 of these being high skilled.

As in the case above, the Svay Reang and Siem Reap Job Centres also reported low numbers of visits to mobile job centres at community level. The Battambang Job Centre noted that this approach was still new and being developed, with factors such as location and timing potentially affecting their success to date.

The Svay Reang Job Centre recorded a particularly high level of job forums at district level: 30 in 2015 and already 11 in 2016 (8 were provided for in the work plan). The centre reported that job forums attract 200-300 people on average, with companies carrying out interviews on the spot. One recent district job fair saw 65 people recruited from the 300 present at the event, which was organised in partnership with the local authority and a national youth NGO.

The job centre in Siem Reap reported that their poor physical location meant put an even greater spotlight on the importance of their outreach activities through job fairs, job forums, mobile teams and other means.

All Cambodia job centres visited reported zero jobseeker registrations via the NEA website.

6.2 Project implementation by output: Cambodia

6.2.1 Summary of progress under Immediate Objective 1

Improve the quality and delivery of the employment services provided by the responsible government institutions and their network of job centres to their clients; improve capacities of government, job centre officials and social partners.

Taking into account the detailed summary of progress by output in Table 1, the evaluation assessment of implementation of this Objective in Cambodia is that a 'Well Met' rating is justified.^{bb} This assessment concurs with that of the ILO's internal assessment of Project implementation, which provided an 87 percent completion rating for Immediate Objective 1.^{cc}

This overall assessment takes into account three activities that had been assessed by Project partners as 'not applicable' in the monitoring table, as they were more suitable for implementation in the next phase of the Project, being (i) follow-up assessment of NEA staff capacity; (ii) compile and jointly publish good practices; and (iii) organise a workshop at regional level to share experiences and good practices among China, Cambodia, Lao PDR and other ASEAN countries. The latter will be incorporated as part of the ASEAN + 3 workshop on employment services, funded by China, in the latter part of 2016 or early 2017.

Table 1. Immediate Objective 1: Summary of Project progress

Outputs	Achievement / Products	Comment
Employment services tools are developed and utilised by NEA and its job centres.	<p>Assessment of the current state of Job Centres (2014).</p> <p>Public Employment Services Checklist.</p> <p>Procedural Manuals on Employment Services upgraded / adapted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employer Services Manual - Career Services Manual - Job Centre Operations Manual. <p>Project performance sheet enabling routine monitoring and evaluation of job centre's performance.</p> <p>Compilation of interviews and services provided, with evaluation of these.</p>	<p>Follow-up assessment on lines of that in Lao PDR did not eventuate due to lack of resources and other commitments. Recommend that it be prioritised as an early action in next Project phase.</p> <p>Feedback from four job centres visited indicated that the updated manuals, backed-up by staff training, are used as reference in everyday work.</p> <p>The regular internal NEA monitoring and reporting requirements by month, quarter and year are taken seriously by the job centres. Activities appear to be well</p>

^{bb} For the sake of consistency, the rating scale adopted by this evaluation for assessment of progress in project implementation aligns with that used by the country partners and ILO internal reporting. Hence the classifications used are 'Unmet, Met and Well Met.' 'Unmet' is used when less than 50% of indicators are achieved, 'Met' is used when 50-80% of indicators are met; and 'Well Met' is used for 80% or above achievement.

^{cc} ILO CO-Bangkok (16 April 2016): *Technical Cooperation Progress Report: December 2013-November 2015*. The NEA overview presentation to the Cambodian National Project Steering Committee on 19 November 2015 also proposed a 'well met' assessment for Immediate Objective 1. The areas most progressed, according to NEA statistics, were increased staff capacity to deliver employment services; the development and initial implementation of a national communications plan (both under Immediate Objective 1); and expansion of outreach of the computer-based database to more users (under Immediate Objective 2).

	<p>Career Guidance Manual.</p> <p>Manual on Career Guidance for Cambodian Youth.</p> <p>Employers' Kit (upgraded with CAMFEBA).</p> <p>Booklets for jobseekers (joint NEA/CAMFEBA project)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting started with job - First career tips - Career building and maintaining job. <p>Career self-evaluation guidelines for high school students.</p> <p>Studies conducted to inform NEA policy and programme development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis and profiling conducted of returned migrant workers and Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand - profiling study of Cambodian youth. <p>In addition, an RBSA-funded assessment on 'what works for the Cambodian Youth' (focus on Public Employment Services) was conducted to inform NEA policy and programme development.</p>	<p>monitored and documented in line with requirements.</p> <p>The recently produced NEA/CAMFEBA job seeker booklets have only recently been received by the job centres, so it is too early to assess their relevance and impact. Likewise, the Manual on Career Guidance for Youth was in production as this evaluation was under way. User testing of these publications is an important part of the process.</p> <p>Feedback from user perspectives was not available for other youth and job seeker tools, as those interviewed had not yet had exposure to them.</p> <p>The analytical studies provide an important basis for NEA strategic and programme planning, as well as for input into national policy processes, TVET planning, international development partner planning and design of next phase of the Project.</p> <p>In response to client feedback that the provision counselling services was slow, NEA took action to recruit interns and volunteers and step up training of staff in the job centres.</p>
<p>A communication plan is developed among the general public, employers and trade unions</p>	<p>Three year Communications Plan for NEA developed and first steps taken towards its implementation.</p> <p>Promotional/outreach campaigns with employers and workers included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 trade unions established focal points to liaise with NEA, including promotion of NEA in the workplace and receiving new job seeker registrations (refer Annex IV for detailed description as well as focal point feedback). Highlighted as a Project good practice (refer Annex VII) - collaboration with CAMFEBA, including company visits in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, promoting vacancy announcements, job matching, participation in meetings of 	<p>Evidence that Communication Plan is influencing outreach approaches and messaging.</p> <p>Feedback from union youth focal points indicated active initiative in promoting NEA and receiving job seeker registrations amongst memberships. Concern expressed however at lack of NEA acknowledgement and follow-up once registrations submitted, causing "disappointment" and job seekers to turn to other options.</p> <p>CAMFEBA indicated strong commitment to NEA but internal membership survey indicated some concerns at lack of follow-up once job requirements submitted (see above). This was balanced by indications from provincial Job Centres visited of close and regular</p>

	<p>CAMFEBA HR Club, placement of an intern within CAMFEBA and production of above-mentioned job seeker booklets.</p> <p>Annual National Career Fairs in Phnom Penh and at provincial level in Siem Reap.</p> <p>Active organisation of job fairs and forums at district levels as key outreach modality (e.g. 30 held in Svay Reang province in 2015). Mobile job centres at community level organised on regular basis (e.g. 16 in Battambang in 2015.)</p> <p>Video clip and radio spots developed for Siem Reap Job Fair and National Career Fair in Phnom Penh.</p> <p>Collaboration with national youth NGO a key element of job centre outreach and presence at community level in Svay Reang Province.</p> <p>Active interaction with local government and commune councils, including in organisation of district job fairs and forums.</p> <p>Active programme of visits to schools (levels 10-12), universities and TVET institutions maintained. Aim to cover all schools in Phnom Penh and selected schools at provincial level.</p> <p>Monthly NEA Bulletin produced and disseminated.</p> <p>Promotional materials printed and disseminated via job fairs, career fairs, employment forums, career guidance, school and university visits etc (60,000 leaflets, 1,000 folders, 1,000 poster, 345 banners, 11 backdrops distributed).</p> <p>Public Service Announcements broadcast on 6 channels and 3 times on selected radio channels on weekly basis, targeted at young graduates. Anecdotal evidence from evaluation that the national TV presence leads to client relations at provincial job centre level.</p>	<p>relations with some employers, with potential to expand these.</p> <p>Need identified to supplement CAMFEBA relations with outreach to Chambers of Commerce which have provincial memberships (recommended by President of Siem Reap Chamber of Commerce).</p> <p>Evidence provided by employers and job seekers interviewed at provincial level that TV advertising does have an impact, with some client relations established as a result.</p> <p>The street front location of the job board in Battambang is a key source of job seekers. Constant flow of job seeker interest in the job board observed. Reinforces the value of visible and accessible location.</p> <p>Job fairs, forums and similar activities at national, provincial and district levels a key source of job seeker registrations and venue for job-skill matching in provinces visited. Mobile job centres at community level organised regularly but rated as not as successful in attracting job seekers to date. Issues such as location and timing of these cited as possible factors.</p> <p>The cost of national and provincial fairs is high (USD 60-70,000 per event), requiring funding from both government and employer sources (in addition to the Project, to date).</p> <p>Feedback from schools and TVET institutions indicated that NEA visits and ongoing linkages valued. One school director highlighted value of the 'direct' approach and inclusion of small group sessions in the programme. The importance of continuing such visits on regular basis, linking them to job fairs and forums by encouraging students to attend, was highlighted.</p> <p>Printed materials attractively produced and well disseminated in various venues, including schools and tertiary institutions, although</p>
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	<p>Website maintained and planning underway to upgrade the site to make it more 'user friendly and dynamic' in response to feedback on deficiencies. Improvement of the LMI 'page' within the website a key focus in this context.</p> <p>Translation of the ILO Convention No. 88 on PES as basis for discussion with tripartite partners on implications of and process for ratification.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>scope for expansion of such outreach on a continuous basis.</p> <p>Website in urgent need of upgrade according to feedback from employers (including CAMFEBA), jobseekers and NEA staff. Found to be difficult to access, uninteresting and limited in what it offers compared with other employment websites (e.g. Bongthom and Khmer 29). No job seeker indicated that the NEA website was helpful in their search, with some jobseekers and the NEA trade union youth focal points indicating that Bongthom and other sites were preferred. One prominent national NGO indicated that they use other website options to promote staff vacancies.</p> <p>Steps required to develop consensus and way forward on implementation and eventual ratification of ILO Convention No. 88 vis a vis other conventions such as C.122 on employment policy.</p>
<p>Comprehensive staff capacity building programme is implemented</p>	<p>Human Resources Development Plan adopted for 3 years in response to gaps identified in job centre assessment and mid-term Project review.</p> <p>Assessment of the current staff capacity and training needs (2014).</p> <p>Capacity development initiatives to date have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three weeks study tour and training programme in China from 13-31 October 2014, covering Beijing, Jiujiang and Shanghai. - coaching session on China's PES by Chinese expert - three trainings in the area of career counselling - Training of Trainers and regional workshop on employment services - two study tours on employment services - training on employer relations - sub-regional training on employment counselling 	<p>Quality of staff as key foundation of effective PES highlighted by NEA management and all stakeholders. Considerable focus on developing core NEA management team (e.g. through ILO Training Institute in Turin and current Masters study by a senior staff member). These developments funded by the Project and other ILO sources. Broader staff training (particularly of job centre directors) conducted on regular basis with expectation that it be brought back to job centre staff.</p> <p>Staff turnover remains a key issue for attention, particularly through increasing job satisfaction. Teaching staff at TVET institutions hosting job centres are a key source of new staff.</p> <p>Positive staff feedback on trainings across all areas listed, with indications that 'other country' and Phnom Penh-based training and exposure is fed back to provincial job centre staff. Good use is made of those who go to other countries for exposure and training, including</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - study tour and training on LMI in Thailand - training for selected staff at Turin International Training Centre (Career Guidance Policy and Practice, Skills Anticipation, LMI) - national training on skills anticipation - Training of Trainers on ‘soft skills’ - training on operational analysis of youth database - training on basic IEC production - training on data cleaning, analysis and management as well as on ISCO (provided by NIS) - training on labour migration issues and services at Battambang job Centre (not directly funded by Project, but closely related). <p>Key trainers nominated by NEA to participate in most of the Project-supported training activities as a basis for developing an ongoing internal training programme. The intention is for the designated trainers to conduct knowledge sharing sessions and provide training to existing and new NEA staff. The most recent such event took place in Takeo province.</p> <p>Staff at the Phnom Penh Job Centre formed an internal team for ES training on return from TOT training in Lao PDR.</p> <p>The strengthening of in-house’ training capacity for NEA staff highlighted as a priority by NEA senior management. “Instead of going to the ILO for specialist training, we are developing our own internal professional development capacity, as well as capacities in research:” Senior NEA management.</p>	<p>workshops held in Phnom Penh to share experience and lessons. Job centre staff also advised that they can request training in specific areas if required.</p> <p>Benefits cited for China Study Tour included better understanding of the various components of PES and how they fit together; the potential for local application of the China ‘Job Bank’ model; importance of tailoring counselling and other services to the client; job centre space management; importance of clear job classifications; developing client-centred approaches; good data management; and good outreach/communications. The CAMFEBA representative highlighted need for further in-depth follow-up with view to more systematic adaption of China’s approaches to Cambodia context.</p> <p>Three weeks study tour was to include a job immersion component which it was not possible to provide in full due to particular factors such as the complexity of the language requirements. This is seen as an option for the next project phase. One coaching session by a Chinese expert was provided in November 2015, but the planned annual sessions did not prove possible.</p> <p>Need identified for more training on labour migration issues, drawing on Battambang Job Centre experience where PES and Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) services have been successfully integrated.</p> <p>NIS validated the value of LMI/ISCO/data management training for NEA staff, noting that “getting the coding right” was a major issue for attention.</p>
<p>Good practices are documented and shared on the job centres performance among the China and ASEAN community</p>	<p>Mid-term and end-of Project evaluations conducted as source of feedback, including potentially on emerging good practices.</p>	<p>The need to share identified good practices via a regional platform remains to be addressed . The ASEAN +3 regional workshop planned for 2016/2017 with funding from China will provide a relevant vehicle in this regard.</p>

	<p>National Project Steering Committee meetings held to review and plan (3rd NPSC meeting held on 19 Nov 2015).</p> <p>Recording of good practices by NEA is on-going, with intention to more systematically compile and disseminate these in next Project phase.</p> <p>Uploading of Project’s activities on the ILO Community of Practice for Skills and Employability.</p>	<p>Limited opportunity yet for good practices to emerge which are directly attributable to the Project. Good practice examples observed by the evaluation team which had been reinforced by Project resources are summarised in Section 8 and Annex VII). These include four examples from Cambodia Project experience.</p>
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6.2.2 Summary of progress under Immediate Objective 2

Improve the data collection, analysis and dissemination to allow for better job matching of the jobseekers with enterprises that need workers to fill their job vacancies.

Taking into account the detailed summary of progress by output in Table 2, the evaluation assessment of implementation of this Objective in Cambodia is ‘Met.’ This a higher rating than that of the NEA’s own internal assessment in November 2015, due to progress made in implementation as summarised below in the period November 2015 – April 2017. This evaluation assessment concurs with that of ILO’s internal rating for Project implementation under Immediate Objective 2.

Of those outputs that remained active under Immediate Objective 2^{dd} for the duration of the Project, the delivery rate was 100 percent. This figure takes into account six outputs that were not pursued after discussion between stakeholders. In one case this was due to deferral to the next Project phase, being the organisation of vocational trainings for women job seekers and persons with disabilities in rural areas, including youth. A further five listed outputs were considered to not be applicable as they were already part of the NEA’s routine work, albeit with issues to be addressed, in areas such as data management and cleansing; strengthening database links between the NEA and the job centres; dissemination of information via publication of newsletters; providing semi-annual data monitors and bulletins in the job centres; and producing updated reports on the number of job seekers, vacancies and placements on a monthly basis.

Table 2. Immediate Objective 2: Summary of Project progress

Outputs	Achievement / products	Comment
A web-based database on jobseekers, vacancies and job placements is up-scaled to cover more registrants in the concerned regions	<p>Work underway on upgrading database, NEA website and related skills. Both seen as priorities by NEA and stakeholders.</p> <p>LMI-related capacity development initiatives included training for selected staff on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data management and cleaning - ISCO/ data analysis - skills anticipation and LMI via ITC Turin courses and in-country training. 	<p>Ongoing development of data-base, linked to upgraded website, seen as priority for next Project phase, as part of wider focus on LMI at all levels within NEA.</p> <p>Immediate requirements in this context are data management and cleaning as well as addressing issues in establishing links between NEA and its job centres.</p> <p>NIS indicated its strong commitment to continuing to work with the NEA in this and other LMI-related areas.</p>

^{dd} ILO CO-Bangkok (16 April 2016): *Technical Cooperation Progress Report: December 2013-November 2015*

	<p>LMI assessment team from Thailand spent time with the NEA in July 2014, with follow-up study tour; training on LMI by MOL in Thailand in August 2014; and further training by two LMI experts from Thailand and three from ILO.</p> <p>Further LMI training provided with ILO support to NEA staff included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic level (Nov 2015) - laying the basis for the planned Labour Market Update and messaging for target audiences (April 2016). <p>One more training was planned in June 2016.</p> <p>IT assessment conducted across NEA: <i>inter alia</i> noted that most job centres make IT equipment available to job seekers.</p>	<p>Training on IEC approaches and tools was also related to LMI – packaging material for dissemination (December 2015).</p> <p>In addition to LMI training and other support under the Project, Sweden provided two LMI experts to work with the NEA, highlighting the need for harmonisation of approaches and coordination/ information sharing amongst international partners in this area.</p> <p>The 3 LMI trainings between November 2015 and June 2016 followed a step-by-step approach from basic to more advanced as part of planned progression. This responded to NEA lessons and needs identified in this respect</p> <p>LMI training in Thailand (with the Ministry of Labour, Department of LMI) is regarded by NEA staff as particularly relevant, as the Thai job centres cover PES and LMI in an integrated way.</p>
<p>Expansion of outreach of the computer-based database to more users</p>	<p>Launch of Mobile App aimed at job seekers.</p> <p>Promotion of website via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘rebranded’ promotional material - at least 14 outreach campaigns conducted by the job centres, including school and tertiary institution visits - collaboration with 12 trade union confederations via youth focal points (see above) - collaboration with CAMFEBA, including one day NEA workshop for CAMFEBA on PES; routine submission of vacancy announcements and job matching; visiting CAMFEBA members in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap to raise awareness; launching of job seeker booklets detailed above; and Employers’ Kit on PES (also see above). <p>Tracking mechanism initiated to better measure results and impact on the labour market.</p>	<p>At the time of the evaluation validation meeting on 28 June 2016, the NEA Mobile App was under further development, with intention to allow identification of job opportunities in the location of the jobseeker.</p> <p>As noted above, feedback from jobseekers and employers on website indicates that improvement needed (including in context of strong competition).</p> <p>Majority of jobseekers and employers consulted for evaluation had not looked at the website. No business received via the website at the three provincial job centres visited by evaluation team.</p> <p>Ongoing support required to strengthen NEA capacity building in web development and IT programming. Request from NEA LMI team for one (preferably two) Cambodia-based experts to provide hands-on mentoring and advice. ILO committed to providing a consultant on LMI and data analysis for 2.5 weeks in June 2016.</p>

<p>Regular data updates and publications disseminated</p>	<p>Labour Market Update template developed as basis for 6 monthly publication. Will draw on data from NIS, targeted surveys (eg under ILO STED project), other ILO projects such as the ILO Garment and Footwear Sector Bulletin; the annual Employers Skill Needs surveys (refer opposite); the MoLVT LMI Department and the job centres. Will feed into job centre services, TVET priorities and planning and government policy development.</p> <p>Reports on job search, vacancies and placements provided in monthly Bulletin.</p>	<p>Labour Market Update will be a significant initiative with potential to influence policy and planning processes at national level in the context of RS III, the NSDP; the IDP and the NEP. The effectiveness and credibility of the Update will in turn depend on the planned strengthening of the NEA's LMI systems and analytical capacities.</p> <p>The Update will complement and draw on other publications in this field, such as a the third national Labour Force Survey (when conducted) and the annual reports on <i>Skill Shortages and Skill Gaps in Cambodian Labour Markets: Evidence from Employer Skills Needs Survey (last published in May 2015)</i> with support from the Swedish Public Employment Service and SIDA.</p> <p>Feedback indicated limited impact of monthly bulletin. Useful for internal communication purposes for job centres.</p>
<p>Labour market programmes designed benefitting specific groups</p>	<p>The focus under the Project to date has been on women, migrant labour and youth. As a result of sheer demand and resource limitations, activities targeting youth have predominated to date, including attention to sex disaggregated data.</p> <p>Relevant <u>outreach</u> activities initiatives included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - district level job fairs and mobile job centres to reach job seekers in remote and rural areas - the various youth-related activities listed above, including guidance on job search techniques; a self-assessment tool for high school students to determine professional preference; and the youth focal point system in 12 unions - support provide by job centres for internships and practical work experience placements - employment forums organised in 2014 for migrant workers - 4 day special outreach mission at district to migrant workers by Battambang Job Centre in May 2016 (more planned). <p>Activities with a specifically labour market programme focus included:</p>	<p>Collaboration between the Svay Reang Job Centre and a national youth NGO has been a core element of outreach to local communities in the province (with the NGO mobilising local youth and the job centre bringing ES information and advice).</p> <p>The youth and migrant labour analytical studies provide important references for NEA and wider policy and programme development.</p> <p>Strong employer support indicated in evaluation consultations for increased availability of pre-employment training, including soft skills training (IT skills also highlighted).</p> <p>Attention to the particular needs of persons with disability appear to have been limited, with job centre feedback indicating low employer interest and no advocacy efforts undertaken on commitments under Cambodian law to employ persons with disability.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-employment training aimed at young jobseekers, including soft skills training, progressively rolled out to job centres - two core skills training and career counselling activities aimed at women job seekers. 	
<p>Additional points from NEA staff feedback on LMI dimensions of the Project in Cambodia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NEA LMI team is currently lacking capacity in LMI analysis. Internal capacity is being built at a higher level through staff training in Turin on macroeconomic and labour market analysis as well as through the step-by-step LMI training currently underway with ILO support. - The overall focus now within the NEA is on basic LMI (how to produce data and data management systems) with a view to progressing in terms of both systems and internal capacity on a step-by-step basis. At the same time, the China training opened NEA eyes to “what’s possible, what’s important and what steps are necessary in Cambodia context.” - The job centres are not yet in a position to produce systemic LMI and analysis and largely rely on NEA HQ. - ISCO in Cambodia remains at four digit level (Thailand and Lao PDR are at six digit level). An important focus for the next Project phase would be to support the finalisation of ISCO in Cambodia to 6-digit level (also recommended by the NIS, which has prepared a proposal to the ILO on this basis). - Synergies with other relevant LMI projects is critical, for example the recent skills survey supported by the NIS in two sectors under the ILO STED Project. 		

6.3 Project implementation by outcome: Lao PDR

6.3.1 Summary of progress under Immediate Objective 1

Improve the quality and delivery of the employment services provided by the responsible government institutions and their network of job centres to their clients; improve capacities of government, job centre officials and social partners.

Building on previous ILO support for the development of the Employment Services Job Centres at provincial level in Lao PDR, progress in Project implementation was most advanced under Immediate Objective 1. Taking into account the detailed summary of progress by output in Table 3, the evaluation assessment of implementation of this Objective in Lao PDR is ‘Met.’ This concurs with the ILO’s internal assessment of Project implementation, which provided a 78 percent delivery rating for Intermediate Objective 1.^{ee}

This assessment takes into its reckoning the findings of the ‘Follow-up ESJC Assessment in Lao PDR’ conducted by the MoLSW in 2015^{ff} which showed that all 9 ESJCs are now considered to be operating at a ‘fair to good’ level, compared with all ‘under-performing’ in first such assessment in 2013. This improvement is directly

^{ee} ILO CO-Bangkok (16 April 2016): *Technical Cooperation Progress Report: December 2013-November 2015*. The MoLSW/DSDE’s own overview presentation to the Lao PDR National Project Steering Committee on 17 November 2015 also proposed an assessment outcomes under Objective 1 were generally met, while those under Objective 2 remained to be met (rated as ‘unmet’).^{ee}

^{ff} MoLSW. (2015). *Follow-up Assessment on Current State of Employment Service Centres: (Analysis of survey data as part of ILO-China Project)*

attributed by the report to the impact of Project deliverables. The findings of this evaluation fully validate this attribution.

Also taken into account in the overall assessment are the fact that one activity that was considered by project stakeholders to not be applicable (the above-mentioned regional workshop that is now scheduled for 2016/2017 under separate funding from China) and two outputs with completion rates of between 0 percent and 10 percent which were proposed for the next Project phase. These were (i) promotion of ratification of C.88; and (ii) compilation and joint publication of good practices.

Table 3. Immediate Objective 1: Summary of Project progress

Outputs	Achievements / products	Comment
<p>Employment services tools are developed and utilised by MoLSW and its job centres.</p>	<p>Initial benchmark survey and follow-up assessment on current state of ESJCs.</p> <p>Public Employment Services Checklist.</p> <p>Procedural Manuals on Employment Services: (a) Job Centre Operations, (b) Employer Services, and (c) Counselling Services (translated).</p> <p>Translation of ILO materials: (a) <i>Minute Guide for Young Jobseekers</i>, (b) <i>Guiding Youth Career: A Handbook for those who help young jobseekers</i> (these materials in the pipeline but not yet received yet by ESCJCs during evaluation period).</p> <p>Introduction of systems for collection of data for performance monitoring / measurement.</p> <p>ESJCs developed experience and skills to deploy a wider range of employment outreach mechanisms including job fairs, employment forums, recruitment events, social network and the use of media.</p>	<p>Follow-up ESJC assessment indicates overall improvement during Project period, with all 9 ESJCs now rated as “fair to good.” This compares with previous rating showing all were under-performing.</p> <p>The top areas of improvement were ESJC signage, office first impressions, registration forms and procedures, interview capacities, making referrals and coordinating/relating with relevant agencies to share and collect LMI.</p> <p>Other notable areas of improvement included career advice and counselling; ESJC visits to employers and education/training institutions; and ESJC staffing levels, with at least two now per ESJC (although raising this further to a core of 5 per ESJC is proposed by assessment report).</p> <p>It should be noted in the above context that that ESJC staffing is not on a full-time dedicated basis, but makes-up only a portion of the time of each assigned staff member. Staff turnover further remains a major constraint, although MoLSW is aware of this issue and has consistently worked with the DLSW to encourage minimal staff rotation.</p> <p>Variable ratings were given for outreach to remote areas and job fair programmes (lack of DoLSW support cited as a factor in low scores in these two areas).</p> <p>Areas still requiring attention include job matching (despite the improvement of forms and procedures) and improvement of ESJC facilities, including private space for counselling.</p>

		<p>Potential for increased tripartite collaboration at provincial level shown by inclusion of ESJC matters in meetings of the Savannakhet Provincial Tripartite Committee.</p> <p>Evidence provided that manuals used by ESJCs (particularly the operations manual), but feedback that further refinement/simplification to enhance relevance still required.</p>
<p>A communication plan is developed among the general public, employers and trade unions</p>	<p>Communications plan and strategy developed (3 years) in response to gaps identified in ESJC assessments and mid-term Project review.</p> <p>Improved visibility of ESC and ESJC via standard signage. Brochures, posters and cards developed/disseminated.</p> <p>Successful initiation of National Job Fairs. Provincial Job Fairs organised in Oudomxay and Champasack provinces by the respective ESJCs.</p> <p>Recruitment events organised in Xayaboury, Bolikhamxay and Savannakhet by the respective ESJCs.</p> <p>Labour requirement survey conducted of Special Economic Zone, Savannakhet Province (indicated a demand for 5,000 further employees).</p> <p>ESC conducted surveys of employers and TVET institutions as part of its LMI mandate and visited schools, training institutions and universities to promote employment services.</p> <p>ESJCs using social media (e.g. Facebook) for local outreach, as well as local radio and village level speaker facilities.</p> <p>ESJCs participating in Provincial DLSW team visits to districts in some provinces.</p> <p>Vientiane Capital and Bolikhamxay ESJCs relocated to improve access.</p>	<p>ESJCs visited had all submitted their individual Communications Plan to MoLSW for approval.</p> <p>Need for increase in job fairs as outreach mechanism at all levels, including district - highlighted as priority in all feedback, including from LNCCI, who indicated that employers value this mechanism for recruitment purposes.</p> <p>LFTU involvement currently limited - offered its district level staffing structure and increased use of national and local media resources for ESJC support.</p> <p>Only ad hoc links between ESC and ESJCs. No links indicated at the evaluation time of between ESC and the LMI Unit in MoLSW/DSDE.</p> <p>Poor location within government facilities in most cases, and a lack of resources, including dedicated staff and transportation, continue to hinder ESJC outreach.</p>
<p>Staff capacity is increased through the implementation of a comprehensive training</p>	<p>Human Resources Development Plan adopted for 3 years in response to gaps identified in ESJC assessments and mid-term Project review.</p>	<p>Staff interviewed by the evaluation reported favourably on training received and showed positive commitment to improving the performance of the ESJCs.</p>

<p>programme under the triangular cooperation framework</p>	<p>Capacity development initiatives to date have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three weeks study tour and training programme in China from 13-31 October 2014, covering Beijing, Jiujiang and Shanghai. - coaching by Chinese expert - Training of Trainers on Employment Services - regional workshop on Employment Services - sub-regional Training on Counselling - two study tours on ES experience - training for selected staff at Turin Centre on Career Guidance and Policy - training on Basic IEC Production - training on Education and Career Guidance in Korea - orientation on Employment Services for high level provincial officials (<i>inter alia</i> aimed at generating financial support from Provincial DLSW budgets). <p>A total of 88 ESJC staff had benefited to date from ILO supported training opportunities.</p>	<p>Some concerns raised about training sessions being too short and having limited impact on once-off basis, especially when there is limited opportunity to apply in practice.</p> <p>Feedback from China visit positive: one key learning highlighted in evaluation feedback concerned improvement in ability to relate to different client groups (e.g. rural/urban) appropriately. Other areas noted included a strengthened understanding of PES and its various components and the operation of the China Job Bank.</p> <p>Request from ESJCs for more interaction with Cambodian counterparts, building on initial limited interaction supported by the Project to date.</p> <p>ESJC staff reported increased contact / mutual support amongst themselves via an ESJC Facebook Group, a 'China alumni' Facebook Group and the opportunities provided by annual meetings of MoLSW staff in Vientiane (suggested these could include a structured session for ESJC staff and be rotated around the provinces).</p>
<p>Good practices are documented and shared on the job centres performance among the China and ASEAN community</p>	<p>Mid-term review conducted, providing basis for assessment of what is working well and what is not, and planning for remainder of Project period.</p> <p>2 National Project Steering Committee meetings organised for review and planning purposes. All stakeholders indicated support for extension of Project to next phase at the last meeting.</p> <p>Uploading of Project's activities on the Community of Practice for Skills and Employability.</p> <p>Initial analysis conducted of other relevant experiences in Philippines and Singapore, as part of the study conducted to draft the HR Plan, which the next phase of the Project could tap into.</p>	<p>The need to identify good practices and share these via a regional platform remains to be addressed . The ASEAN regional workshop planned for 2016/2017 under an extension of Project funding provides a relevant vehicle in this regard.</p> <p>Limited opportunity yet for good practices to emerge in light of focus to date on capacity building and consolidating foundational work. Likely to be more visible in the next stages of implementation. However, two good practices were identified (see Section 8 and Annex VII) which include Lao PDR experience.</p> <p>As indicated above, ESJC staff themselves are increasing interaction in various ways for mutual support and information sharing purposes.</p>

6.3.2 Summary of progress under Immediate Objective 2

Improve the data collection, analysis and dissemination to allow for better job matching of the jobseekers with enterprises who need workers to fill their job vacancies.

Taking into account the detailed summary of progress by output in Table 4, the evaluation assessment of implementation of this Objective in Lao PDR is 'Unmet - but important foundations put in place for future progress.' This rating generally concurs with that of the ILO's internal reporting and assessment system, which as of October 2015 indicated a delivery rate under Immediate Objective 2 of 50 percent.

This assessment takes into account six out of 14 outputs which were considered by Project Stakeholders to not be applicable in the current Project phase due to factors such as lack of budget (e.g. for provision of the necessary equipment of the national computer-based database system); and issues related to lack of resources, skills and time for completion of planned work in areas mainly related to the maintenance and use of the database system.

This result is reflective of a number of factors. Key amongst these are the country's capacity deficits and lack of readiness in the area of data collection and management. The areas of progress under this objective are mainly those which least depend on the adequacy and use of ICT. These include direct outreach to clients (i.e. employers and jobseekers) via the ESJCs and ESC; and development of the Lao National Standard Classification of Occupations (LNSCO) with the Lao Statistics Bureau.

As indicated below, the LNSCO has been the primary focus of the newly established LMI Unit within MoLSW/DSDE and provides a cornerstone for future LMI system development. It is proposed that this aspect of the Project should be given greater priority in a second phase, which in turn should be designed to be fully complementary to a planned ADB project which will have a particular focus on the development of the national LMI database (refer Box 2).

Table 4. Immediate Objective 2: Summary of Project progress

Outputs	Achievement / products	Comment
A database on job seekers, vacancies and job placements is developed	<p>MoLSW has a basic database but this requires comprehensive upgrading and is not well connected internally within the ministry or with the ESC and ESJCs.</p> <p>Establishment of new LMI Unit within MoLSW/DSDE to provide the national hub for development and operation of LMI systems.</p> <p>Lao National Standards Classification of Occupations (LNSCO) finalised, with input provided by national multi-stakeholder committee involving all ministries, LSB, LNCCI and LFTU, with active advice and feedback from the ILO specialist and Project Manager in Bangkok. This task was the primary focus to date of newly established LMI Unit.</p> <p>Training and study tour on LMI to Thailand.</p>	<p>Completion of the LNSCO provides a cornerstone of LMI development and will be used by all relevant stakeholders, including by the LSB in the design and carrying out of the 2016 national Labour Force Survey.</p> <p>Other cornerstones of the LMI system include 1) comprehensive national database system incorporating the ESJCs (to be established); 2) the Labour Force Survey (2nd planned for 2016) and 3) regular additional surveys and data-gathering, including via the ESJCs.</p> <p>The lack of necessary ICT infrastructure, equipment and related skills at all levels a key impediment to progress on LMI. ESJC databases remain in manual form due to lack of requisite ICT infrastructure and equipment.</p> <p>A key focus in 2016 will be initiation of work on strengthening the national</p>

	<p>Preparations underway for 2nd national Labour Force Survey in 2016, with active cooperation between MoLSW/DSDE and the LSB.</p> <p>In parallel to the Project, the EU provided guidelines and training on LMI and the ADB designed a 2-year project to support establishment of national LMI database system in 2016-2017. In support of the latter project, a road map was developed with technical advice from Thailand under a previous ADB TVET finding arrangement.</p>	<p>date-base system with support of 2-year ADB project. The project will also support ESJC outreach to communities (refer Box 2 for further detail).</p> <p>Close ILO/ADB (and EU) collaboration will be required to take this work forward. Whether setting-up a simple structure to facilitate such collaboration is required is a point for discussion between the ILO and ADB.</p>
Better outreach of the database to its users	<p>Outreach via ESC and ESJC visits to employers and job seekers being stepped-up. Savannakhet ESJC conducted survey of nearby Special Economic Zone (5,000 vacancies indicated). Luang Prabang ESJC carried out baseline survey of employment needs at district level and is systematically improving outreach and cooperation district-by-district.</p> <p>Increased efforts to reach district, village and remote areas but remain constrained by lack of dedicated/trained staff, transportation and resources, as well as difficult physical conditions (see opposite).</p> <p>LNCCI Employment Skills Survey (400 returns from 4 provinces) an important outreach to employers. Conducted via EDC local consultancy company.</p> <p>Some ESJC's participating in provincial DLSW team visits to districts (e.g. Mobile Youth Advocacy Team covering all 11 districts in Savannakhet Province in January 2016).</p>	<p>As indicated for Objective 1, outreach still limited by poor location in most cases as well as lack of resources, transportation and dedicated staffing (although now 2 staff assigned to each ESJC, they continue to have other duties in addition). Difficulties are compounded by difficult physical access to rural communities in many cases, especially in the rainy season.</p> <p>Results of the 2015/2016 LNCCI Employment Skills Survey (which provides a benchmark for future such surveys) will be used to support government policy and analytical work as well as delivery of services through the ESC and ESJCs (refer Annex V for elaboration).</p> <p>LFTU involvement remains limited, although the national office offered its provincial and district level facilities and staffing structure, along with national and sub-national radio and newspaper services, for ESJC support (refer Annex V for elaboration).</p>
Labour market programmes designed benefitting specific groups	<p>Progress has been limited in this area. ESJC initiatives have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cooking training for women job seekers (Xayyaboury) - tailoring training for women job seekers: (Luang Prabang) - pre-labour migration departure training by ESC - assessment report produced on Cambodian migrant workers in Lao PDR. 	<p>While youth have clearly been an overall focus of employment service efforts, in line with the age profile of job seekers, the specific attention to labour market programmes targeted at youth – as well as to women, migrant workers and persons with disability - have been limited (particularly the latter). It is accordingly recommended that this area be prioritised across both countries in the next Project phase, but with particular attention to the position of persons with disability, who appear to</p>

	Basic MoLSW/DSDE statistics provided to the evaluation included sex-disaggregated data.	be have been the most neglected of the specific groups targeted to date.
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Box 2: ADB initiative on national LMI system in Lao PDR: Strengthening Capacity to Develop the Employment Service System

An important factor in the next phase of strengthening Lao PDR’s national LMI system will be the initiation in 2016 of a new two year project in this field by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Supported by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, this project will complement both the ILO’s ongoing engagement in this area and the ADB’s own previous and planned work with the Ministry of Education and Sports on national TVET strengthening. The ADB project will:

- 1) develop an employment service plan (ESP) to enhance links and the flow of information between job seekers and employers;
- 2) develop and operationalise an employment service system (ESS) which will (i) expand opportunities for jobseekers to access employment information through their mobile phone or computer; (ii) develop a mobile network application to disseminate employment opportunities; and (iii) support the existing job centres to improve their services, including through improved outreach to rural areas; upgrading the Lao PDR LMI system; and providing manuals to support the ESS, LMI system and job centre career counselling services.

Close collaboration between the ILO, ADB, the EU and other partners in Lao PDR will be imperative in the next Project phase to maximise synergies, efficiencies and impact.

7. RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Relevance

Project relevance is examined through two lenses: (i) alignment with country priorities as demonstrated by national policy, legislation, strategies, plans and programmes and (ii) the degree of country ownership demonstrated around the Project and its outcomes. The latter lens also applies in particular to the assessment of effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

The Project was found to be highly relevant in both countries, with the delivery of high quality public employment services and LMI embedded in core national policies, strategies and plans, many of which have been renewed or launched in the past 12 months. Furthermore, solid evidence was available of country ownership of the Project and its outcomes. This encompassed both the governmental institutions concerned as well as (to a more variable extent) the relevant employer and trade union counterparts.

7.1.1 Alignment with country priorities

In the case of **Cambodia**, the delivery of effective employment services and LMI is critical to the implementation of the Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency (RS – now in Phase III); the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) which serves as Cambodia's principle medium term national development plan and is now extended until 2018; the Industrial Development Policy (IDP) 2015-2025 and the National Employment Policy (NEP) 2015-2025. The latter two policies provide key policy cornerstones for the next decade of Cambodia's development and are key reference points in the next phase of development of employment and labour market information services in Cambodia.

The same applies in the case of **Lao PDR** with respect to the recently concluded 7th National Social and Economic Development Plan (NSED) and the 8th NSED which was introduced in early 2016. The latter includes a performance indicator to facilitate recruitment for 716,000 new workforce entrants. Specific MoLSW/DSDE frameworks in this context include the MoLSW Master Plan 2007-2020, the MoLSW Strategic Plan on Skills Formation and Employment Promotion, the MoLSW 5 Years Goal on Employment Promotion 2016-2020 and various related decrees and regulations on skills development and employment promotion. Under the 5-Year Goal on Employment Promotion, the aim is to build a labour market information system which is both centralised and has nationwide coverage; and to provide effective and quality employment to jobseekers. One key area remaining to be addressed however, is putting a legislative basis in place for Lao PDR's national public employment services. This is prioritised in Recommendation 13 (iii) of this report.

The above commitments are reinforced by previous and newly adopted UNDAFs in each country (or Lao PDR-UN Partnership Framework 2017-2021 in the case of Lao PDR), which are aligned to national development policies and strategies and agreed with the respective governments.

The Project was furthermore well aligned with ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) Outcomes, which in turn reflect member country interests and priorities. The Project Development Objective was in line with the following ILO Programme and Budget Outcomes for 2012-13:

Outcome 1: More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities; and

Outcome 2: Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and the inclusiveness of economic growth

7.1.2 Ownership of the Project and its outcomes

Evaluation consultations with the various stakeholders engaged in Project delivery in both countries indicated a solid basis of local ownership of the Project, its objectives and outcomes.

In both cases, Project implementation plans are in place as part of broader institutional strategies and business plans in the respective governmental institutions, underpinned by local Project management structures and the availability of staff resources, and monitored for reporting to NSPC meetings.

In the case of the NEA, ownership of the Project and its outcomes was underpinned by developments such as:

- the integration since 2011 of the NEA within national government budget, providing a stable basis for long term planning in areas covered by the Project and beyond
- the commitment in practice to strengthening core senior leadership and management capacity, including with a view to improving performance in areas directly supported by the Project to date
- initiatives to build on Project support by developing internal training capacity and addressing gaps in LMI collection, management, analysis and dissemination

Inter alia, the monitoring and evaluation of the Project's contribution is supported by the NEA's own M&E team, which is an important internal component of promoting continuous learning and organisational improvement (this has been directly supported by mentoring provided by the ILO specialists in Bangkok).

In the case of the MoLSW/DSDE, indications of ownership of the Project and its outcomes included:

- commitments contained in MoLSW strategies and plans to continue developing the national PES system, building on the improvements of service delivery capacity, outreach and LMI made under the Project
- the carrying-out of the Follow-up Assessment of ESJC operations, which required a major investment of MoLSW staff time and provided a comprehensive set of well-considered challenges, lessons and recommendations for the way forward (*Inter alia* the assessment report recommended a greater investment of national budget resources)
- structural initiatives taken to strengthen the national employment services and LMI architecture, including establishment of the MoLSW LMI Unit and the ESC, both with project support. The latter, once further developed and adequately resourced as indicated earlier, will potentially be a key component of an expanded national service.

Although not directly supported by the Project, the next Labor Force Survey in late 2016 is an indication of Lao PDR commitment to the Project's LMI objective. The first survey (published in 2012) was funded through the ILO. This second will be led by LSB and funded by the national budget, providing a cornerstone of the Lao PDR LMI system alongside the now completed LNSCO and the national database system to be developed in phase two of the Project with ADB support.

As highlighted elsewhere in this report, the major factor remaining to be addressed in this regard is increasing national budget support to Lao PDR's employment and LMI services and systems. This issue should however be viewed in the light of a wider systemic under-resourcing of key national services. According to the ADB (refer Section 3.3.4), weakened institutional capacities across the whole Lao PDR public sector can be attributed in part to significant inadequacies in financial resources. Despite recent progress in public finance, and increased allocations for education and health services, budget resources are generally grossly inadequate when compared with the needs identified in sector development plans.⁸⁸

At the 21 March 2016 National Stakeholders Workshop to consider the initial findings of the review of the Lao PDR DWCP 2011-2015, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) indicated their willingness to consider cases for national budget allocations for prioritised areas under the DWCP. Given the strategic importance of employment services and LMI in the context of the 8th NSEDP, addressing the chronic underfunding in this regard would be an obvious candidate for attention in this context.

Finally, with respect to social partners directly engaged in the Project, the LNCCI in Lao PDR indicated that Project intentions are incorporated into their recently launched LNCCI Strategic Policy Framework and that priorities include the ongoing survey of employer skill needs and involvement of employers at provincial level.

⁸⁸ Proposed Programmatic Approach, Policy-Based Loan and Grant, and Grant Assistance for Subprogram 1 Lao People's Democratic Republic: Governance and Capacity Development in Public Sector Management Program (September 2012) <http://adb.org/sites/default/files/projdocs/2012/46059-001-lao-rrp.pdf>

CAMFEBA indicated similar commitments and highlighted the need for a more systematic follow-up to the China Study Tour under the Project. The LFTU reiterated that it has resources and facilities at provincial and district levels that could be integrated into ongoing strengthening of employment service delivery. The Cambodian Trade Union Council and other union representatives in Cambodia, including the youth focal points, indicated commitment to ongoing participation in the promotion of NEA services, including in the context of a second Project phase.

7.2 Effectiveness

Despite the unevenness of Project delivery as summarised in Section 6, with the LMI component slower to progress in both countries, the Project can be assessed overall to have been effective, particularly with respect to improving the quality of delivery of employment services to jobseekers and employers. One important aspect of Project effectiveness in both areas covered by the Immediate Objectives has been the strengthening of underlying core capacity in critical areas. Along with the generation of initial lessons and good practices, this provides important foundations for the future development of employment services and LMI provision in both countries.

Particular areas noted as requiring specific in-depth attention in a second Project phase includes the next steps in the development of LMI systems and related skills in both countries; the development of a national employment services strategy and phased increases in national budget support in Lao PDR; addressing the specific needs of women, migrant workers and persons with disability; and the documentation and dissemination of good practices, including in a wider ASEAN context.

7.2.1 Project delivery

As indicated in the detailed summaries of progress by output in Section 6, Tables 1- 4, the evaluation assessment of implementation of Immediate Objective 1 is 'Well Met' in Cambodia and 'Met' in Lao PDR. With respect to Immediate Objective 2, the evaluation assessment of implementation is 'Met' for Cambodia and 'Unmet - but important foundations put in place for future progress,' for Lao PDR. The Follow-up Assessment of ESJCs carried out in Lao PDR in 2015 further noted that there had been an overall improvement during the Project period, with all 9 ESJCs now rated as "fair to good," compared with previous rating showing all were under-performing.^{hh}

As elaborated in Section 6, these overall assessments take account of the number of listed outputs in the Project Document which were not addressed due to factors including lack of resources (e.g. for provision of the necessary equipment for the national computer-based database system in Lao PDR), skills and time for completion of planned work.

As further detailed in Section 6, there was limited progress in both countries on (i) the documentation of good practices and (ii) labour market programmes targeted at women, youth, migrant workers and persons with disability. The latter is discussed further in Section 7.2.9 below on cross-cutting issues and is reflected in evaluation recommendations.

Two further proposed activities under the Project Document that did not proceed during the Project period were:

- The convening of a regional workshop for the purpose of discussing lessons and good practice on a wider ASEAN basis. As noted elsewhere, this will now be held in late 2016/2017, with bridging finance from China.
- A workshop six months before the end of the Project on sustainability lessons and good practices. It is proposed that this be incorporated into the above-mentioned workshop in late 2016/2017.ⁱⁱ

Due to time and resource constraints, the envisaged degree of knowledge sharing and adaption of good practices among ASEAN countries more broadly was also not able to progress to the extent foreseen in the Project

^{hh} MoLSW. (2015). *Follow-up Assessment on Current State of Employment Service Centres: (Analysis of survey data as part of ILO-China Project)*

ⁱⁱ This was included as an intended activity in the Project Document, but was not listed as a specific activity for implementation in the results framework.

Document, particularly the interaction ‘with more developed ES experiences such as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines, with a view to promoting greater regional cooperation and solidarity among member countries.’ There will be an opportunity to include outputs and indicators into the next Project design to realise this worthy intention. Some initial research in this regard was carried out under the Project through the report produced to inform the development of an HR Plan for the MoLSW/DSDE in Lao PDR.^{jj}

7.2.2 Project design

Level of Project ambition

As indicated above, and taking into account the number of activities listed in the Project Document which did not progress for various reasons as detailed in Section 6,^{kk} it can be argued that the level of ambition of the Project was more suitable in certain key areas for a four year Project term, particularly under Immediate Objective 2. As a result, there will be a high degree of continuity and building on work to date in the design of the next phase.

South-South Cooperation modality

The summary of stakeholder feedback (Section 6) on the benefits of the learning opportunities in China, and the follow-up hands on mentoring provided by a Chinese ES expert, affirms both the effectiveness and the untapped potential of the core South-South modality underlying the Project design. The challenges in implementing the planned immersion component of the China Study Tour due to the complexity of language requirements have been commented on elsewhere. While affirming the value of the South-South approach, senior NEA staff noted that careful attention to different cultural perspectives, including the linguistic aspects, is required to ensure maximum benefit, buy-in and ownership, beyond the technical aspects of knowledge sharing.

Structure of the Project design

While the Project Document includes the standard logical framework categories of objectives (Development and Immediate), strategy, outcomes, outputs, activities, indicators, milestones and targets, these are not presented in one place an integrated way so that the cascade from objectives to targets can be holistically seen and understood. To add greater clarity to next the Project design, as well as to strengthen the basis for future implementation, monitoring and evaluation, it is suggested that consideration be given to incorporating an integrated overview on these lines, encompassing the Why, What, How and measurement dimensions of the Project in one place.

Formulating Project indicators

The need for clarity in the Project performance indicators was an early point of discussion amongst key stakeholders. This was due to a shared realisation that the initial indicators in some cases lacked relevance or were duplicative. The issues identified were rectified through the inclusion of revised indicators as annexes to the Project Document.

This experience reinforces the recommendation in this report that the Project design, including indicators, be developed jointly with the respective PES institutions to the degree possible to ensure (i) maximum local buy-in; (ii) shared understandings of the implications of the indicators; and (iii) the formulation (in particular) of indicators which meet SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic (or Relevant) and Timebound (or Timely or Trackable)).^{ll}

^{jj} Salter, Bill (September 2015). *HR Development Plan for ILO-China Project*.

^{kk} As detailed in Section 6, 13 activities were rated as not able to be implemented due to lack of resources or time and/or for deferral until the next Project Phase. A number of other activities were considered to be ‘non-applicable’ due to already being part of routine NEA work.

^{ll} ILO (2011). *Applying Results-Based Management in the International Labour Organization, A Guidebook, Version 2*. Geneva, International Labour Office.

The indicators set out in the current Project document generally fall into two categories: (i) those requiring simple numerical monitoring and reporting (e.g. number of tools, training and outreach activities in a given time period) and (ii) those requiring percentage increases over a baseline figure.

In general, the numerical indicators set out in the Project Document have been able to be tracked and reported to NSPC meetings and to the donor and the ILO. They rely in the main on internal administrative data, which in turn depend for accuracy and credibility on the design of the reporting forms and procedures as well as the training and motivation of staff who document and input the information.

The percentage-based indicators have been more problematical, as they rely more heavily on the accuracy of the baseline data. The difficulties in verifying baseline data for this report in the case of Lao PRD, as well as the subsequent variation in figures made available in reporting to the PTO, indicate that there are still systems and staff capacity issues to be addressed within the data gathering and reporting systems of the MoLSW/DSDE in particular. Attention to ensuring that these are addressed will be important in preparing for the next Project Phase, including in the context of the ADB project to strengthen the national data-base systems and ensure the provision of the requisite IT equipment at all levels.

Examples of the latter type of indicator include the following under Project Immediate Objective 1 (as a percentage in each case):

- (i) increase in the number of jobseekers registrations and vacancies per year*
- (ii) increase in the number of job placements*
- (iii) increase in the number of instances of services provided for job seekers*
- (iv) increase in the number of instances of employee-seeking assistance provided to employers*
- (v) increase in the number of staff who have the technical capacity (i.e. career counselling, employer relations)*
- (vi) increase in the number of services availed of by female jobseekers*
- (vii) increase in the number of job placements for female jobseekers.*

There are still areas in the above list which would benefit from further clarification. For example, with respect to indicator (ii), this relies on employers and jobseekers advising when a job centre referral culminates in a job. How is this verified? Does data collected under the indicator include recruitments 'on the spot' via job fairs and job forums or through joint employer/job centre promotional efforts at district and local levels?

With respect to indicator (v), how is this assessed (e.g. by attendance at a training workshop or via demonstrated application of the required skills as assessed through a transparent performance appraisal process or other means)?

Testing the clarity of indicators and how they will be both interpreted and applied in practice by the relevant staff will be important in the next Project design phase. Getting indicators 'right' is a process of ongoing refinement based on experience, which needs to further take account of the systems and capacities to both measure and record. It is further critical to ensure (on the part of agency and ministry management), that the relevant staff are clear about the purpose of data collection in terms of the benefits it will bring to the service, its future development and their own roles.

While gender dimensions are reflected within the current indicators, there is no Project indicator which would reinforce attention in area of persons with disability, although the standard NEA form includes provision for data on disabled jobseekers. It is proposed in Section 7.2.9 that such an indicator be included in the next Project design to highlight the position of a core target group which has been neglected in delivery to date.

Finally, in line with international development community commitments to country ownership, the development of indicators for the next Project phase should seek alignment to the extent possible with relevant indicators in national development policy frameworks (particularly the Rectangular Strategy III and NSDP in Cambodia and the 8th NSEDP in Lao PDR).

As an illustration of how this can work, the DWCP 2010-2015 review for Lao PDR recommends using the agreed indicators under the 8th NESDP for the next DWCP design, noting that in turn these have also been embedded into the Lao PDR-UN Partnership Framework 2017-2021 and are further aligned to the SDGs at global level.^{mmm}

This would in turn be in line with advice in the set out in the ILO document *Applying Results-Based Management in the International Labour Organization, A Guidebook, Version 2 (2011)*, drawing on the UNDAF Guidelines developed under the auspices of the UN Development Group (UNDG).

7.2.3 Quality of data key to effective M&E and performance improvement

The accurate and timely collecting, recording and reporting of employment service and related data is critical to continuously improving PES quality and ensuring credible labour market information is available to inform national policy development. The ability to analyse such data is also critical for its effective dissemination and use, including in relation to wider contextual developments which need to be understood. These include seasonal patterns; the opening of new factories (information on which can be obtained in advance from the relevant national source); economic policies and trends in neighbouring countries, affecting both outgoing and incoming migrant labour; and unexpected developments such as the flood of migrant workers returning from Thailand to Cambodia in the latter part of 2014, causing a major surge in registrations and placements.

Internal ILO reporting indicates that the NEA's overall data gathering performance at the commencement of the Project was satisfactory, with subsequent improvement as a result of support under the Project. This starting point was reflected in the ability to provide credible baseline data for Project design. The main focus of attention currently within NEA is on moving to the next step the quality of data management and analysis, including with respect to administrative data collected by the agency.

In the case of MoLSW/DSDE, the difficulties noted above in verifying baseline and more recent data for this report indicates the need for ongoing attention in this area at a more basic level, while still taking steps to develop the analytical, messaging and dissemination skills which are required as data gathering capacities are improved.

One area not observed in the national data available to the evaluation was the source of jobseeker and vacancy registrations (i.e. whether through visits to the job centre, job fairs and forums, mobile team visits or job centres, etc). The standard reporting form used by the NEA includes categories for reporting on such events, but it is not clear if the numerical reporting required is just on the number of jobseekers who attend or is on the actual number of registrations received in each case. There doesn't appear to be provision for recording the number of on-the-spot recruitments made in this way.

The adaption of the standard reporting form to fully integrate migrant workers, both departing and returning, would be further necessary in the context of steps towards greater integration of general PES and migrant labour services as proposed by several stakeholders and recommended in this report.

Reliable and credible data is in turn a core foundation of effective M&E, including as a basis for Mid-Term and End-of-Project Evaluations and Reviews. The importance of putting in place systems and resources for quality M&E was reinforced by the 'Follow-up Assessment Survey of ESJCs' in Lao PDR. This called for the establishment of a standardised format and approach in Lao PDR for regular evaluation of the services provided by the ESJCs, including improvement of the tracking of implementation of previous recommendations.

In the case of the NEA, strengthening M&E has been a longstanding priority focus from organisational learning and accountability points of view, with a dedicated unit established for this purpose. But an ongoing need exists to maximise the value of findings by ensuring they are fed back into organisational policy, development and performance improvement.

7.2.4 Identifying and managing risks

^{mmm} Clarke, Don., Venevankham, Kolakot. (July 2016). *Review of Lao PDR DWCP 2011-2015*

Two core underlying assumptions identified in the Project design were that:

- (i) Employment promotion through employment services will remain a priority of NEA and MoLVT in Cambodia, and MoLSW Lao PDR respectively over the coming years and will be supported under their respective National Development Plans (low-risk identified in light of the embedding of employment services in national legislation, decrees and sub-decrees; policy, strategies, plans and programmes).
- (ii) Partners and local stakeholders, particularly at the implementation and coordination level, have the willingness to strengthen employment services in both countries (low-medium risk identified, mainly related to the lower overall capacity of the stakeholders and weaker infrastructure settings in Lao PDR at the time of Project design).

As earlier analysis in this report shows, these assumptions were well validated during the period of Project delivery, with no remedial actions required to mitigate the potential risks identified. The ability of the ILO to provide the necessary expertise, guidance and programme management support at the appropriate times, along with the knowledge sharing and linkages facilitated by the Project with counterparts in China and Thailand (the latter on LMI) contributed to the proactive mitigation of the risks.

Looking ahead to a future Project phase, the following additional risks should be considered in the Project design:

- (i) The risk of losing momentum and ‘falling short’ of fully and sustainably implementing the two Immediate Objectives of the Project, with the result that improvements in the quality of employment services and provision of LMI are not optimised in both countries. Such an outcome would compromise the impact of the Project to date in contributing to the achievement of national development priorities. An extension of the Project as proposed in Recommendation 1 of this report would contribute to the mitigation this risk by helping to maintain momentum and both consolidate and deepen progress to date.
- (ii) In following through on current plans in both countries to achieve complete national coverage by public employment services, the risk of overstretching resources so that the consolidation and improvement of current services are compromised on the one hand, and newly established job centres are inadequately resourced and fall short of expectations, on the other. Recommendation 2 (vii) addresses the need for an appropriate balance between the consolidation and strengthening of current services while expanding over time to other provinces.
- (iii) Ensuring long term sustainability, with the proportion of financing coming from external donor sources diminishing over time and national budget allocations moving towards an eventual 100 percent funding of employment and LMI systems and services in due course. This scenario is currently looking more likely in Cambodia on current trends, but needs to be more explicitly part of longer term planning in Lao PDR, as indicated in Recommendation 13 (vii).

7.2.5 Internal synergies in Project implementation

As noted in Section 4.1.1, there were synergies (both actual and potential) between the ILO/China SSC Project and other relevant ILO projects under the respective DWCPs during the Project period.

Other relevant projects included

- *(in Lao PDR)* the Rural Employment Creation Pilot Project in Sekong Province
- *(in Cambodia)* the implementation of the National Employment Policy, the Skills for Economic and Trade Diversification (STED) Project, the Garment and Footwear Sector Bulletin produced in association with the Better Factories Cambodia Project
- *(in both countries)* the GMS TRIANGLE Project on safe labour migration, initiatives to expand and strengthen social protection, C-BED and KAB entrepreneurship initiatives, as well as longstanding engagements on skills development, gender equality and minimum wages.

Based on feedback from ILO staff in Bangkok and the respective capitals, there appears to be relatively limited interaction between these various initiatives at CO and ground levels, highlighting the scope for exploring ways to enhance collaboration. The need to ensure greater alignment and synergies between the ILO/China SSC and

GMS TRIANGLE Projects particularly stands out in this context, given the strength of feedback in both Cambodia and Lao PDR about the need for integration of general PES and migrant labour services. It would be helpful to strengthen joint planning to the extent possible, along with increased exchanges of information, challenges and lessons for mutual benefit.

It is suggested that roundtable meetings involving other relevant ILO project staff be convened in both Bangkok and the country capitals to identify ways of strengthening cross-project synergies as part of the design of the next Project phase.

In the meantime, the evaluation positively noted the initiatives that have already been taken to strengthen internal ILO synergies, including the provision of funding from separate ILO sources for the Masters Study by a senior NEA officer in an area pertinent to strengthening LMI analysis; recent training for NEA staff on data management and analysis; and the research on 'what works for youth' carried out for the NEA.

7.2.6 Synergies with other international partners

As indicated elsewhere in this report, there are a number of other relevant projects and initiatives on the ground in both countries which involve other international development partners. These include the ADB, EU, GIZ, UNESCO and UN Women in Lao PDR; and SIDA, SDC, USAID, UNESCO, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and others in Cambodia.

One highly relevant new initiative in Cambodia which was moving through internal approval processes during the evaluation period is the Youth Employment Programme. This is being established within the context of the National Employment Policy (NEP) but also relates directly to the National Youth Policy. The MoLVT and NEA will be key players, with funding coming from the SDC. A range of international agencies will participate in implementation, including the ILO.

Scope exists in this context for enhanced synergies, including deliberate joint planning initiatives in the case of the ADB's planned LMI support in Lao PDR and the Youth Employment Programme in Cambodia in particular. It is proposed (Recommendation 3) that this aspect of Project design and implementation be given greater specific attention in the next phase.

7.2.7 Project architecture, management and administration

The core components of the architecture and management and administrative arrangements established under the Project were:

- Project oversight and overall administration by the ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR (CO-Bangkok).
- Technical backstopping by the Decent Work Team for East, South-East Asia and Pacific through its Senior Skills and Employability Specialist as well as the expertise of other DWT Technical specialists in relevant fields, particularly on employment and labour statistics.
- A part-time Project Technical Officer (PTO) CO-Bangkok.
- Part time support by existing administrative staff positions in Bangkok, Phnom Penh and Vientiane.
- The ILO National Coordinators in Cambodia and Lao PDR.
- Project Coordination Task Teams based in a National Project Coordination Office (NPCO) within the respective national institutions to liaise with the Project. The Task Teams were headed by a Project Coordinator (already assigned by national counterparts in Lao PDR and Cambodia prior to Project commencement).
- A National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) established in each country, consisting of senior representatives from national tripartite partners, MoHRSS and the ILO.

Stakeholder feedback on the role of the ILO in the above context highlighted the following points:

- The effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness and attention to detail of the Project management support provided under the auspices of the CO-Bangkok: The primary NEA and MoLSW counterparts referred to almost daily contact for advice and feedback, while the staff in the MoLSW LMI Unit in Vientiane

commented on the responsiveness and quality of feedback on successive drafts of the highly complex LNSCO. It was widely suggested that there would be significant benefits in the continuation of the PTO position on a full-time basis in the next Project phase, further enhancing Project coordination, cross-country linkages, links with relevant ILO specialists and the monitoring and reporting aspects of the Project (refer Section 7.3 for further elaboration).

- The responsiveness and value-added of technical inputs by ILO specialists in Bangkok, including more recent attention to strengthening the Project's LMI components (e.g. training and advice on data management and analysis in Cambodia and the input provided into LNSCO development in Lao PDR).

Pressures on the administrative servicing of the Project through existing ILO positions was highlighted by internal ILO feedback, with interlocutors indicating that these positions were overstretched and would also benefit from being extended into dedicated roles. Feedback noted that this would bring flow-on benefits for Project delivery and accountability through greater attention to internal administrative and financial matters, data collection/collation and communications.

With respect to Project processes, concern was indicated in both countries about the activity-by-activity tendency in Project delivery, along with delays in the allocation of the necessary funds, leading to loss of momentum at times at the activity level (refer Section 7.3 for further elaboration).

Stakeholder feedback on the National Project Steering Committees validated the importance of their role and the need for them to continue under a second Project phase. Their involvement of senior government representatives was seen as vital to ensuring ministerial and senior official support. The participation of the social partners was seen on the other hand as key to reaching out to their wider constituencies and developing a genuinely national approach to the delivery of effective employment services. Key areas identified for the strengthening of the functioning of the NSPCs were:

- more stable and regular participation by members to strengthen continuity and follow-up, including attendance by alternates so that they have better knowledge of the Project and work that is underway
- more regular meetings to maintain the momentum and visibility of the Project (one union participant commented that with only one annual meeting, "it is easy to forget and to lose track")
- provision of more space in the agenda and conduct of meetings for discussion of issues and how to address them, as well as lessons and priorities for next period
- greater involvement of the tripartite stakeholders to support the holding of meetings, including convening and servicing arrangements, to take the load of the government partner and strengthen joint ownership.

The above feedback is reflected in the later recommendations of this report.

7.2.8 Quality of relations with partners

Feedback from partners in both countries strongly affirmed the value and quality of the relationship with the ILO across the various aspects of the Project. Strong recognition was demonstrated by Project counterparts of the ILO's core mandates and comparative advantage, both normative and in terms of specialist expertise and access to the experience of other countries. The longer history of active ILO engagement in the development of employment services in each country was well appreciated and often referred to, including by job centre staff.

As noted above, positive reference was made to the input of the relevant ILO specialists in Bangkok (with particular mention of recent specialist input on data management and analysis in the NEA context and on the development of the LNSCO in Lao PDR). As also noted, the support provided by the overall Project manager based in Bangkok was also commended for its responsiveness, ready availability and attention to local concerns, constraints and requirements.

The commitment demonstrated by the ILO at the higher institutional management level, including through National Steering Committee Meetings and direct relations at senior level with the Chinese Project counterpart, was clearly valued and assisted with the visibility of the Project in all three countries.

7.2.9 Cross-cutting issues

The ILO/China SSC Project Document prioritises attention to women, youth, migrant workers and persons with disability in the provision of employment services, labour market programmes and the collection and analysis of labour market information.

As the Project Document notes, unemployment remains persistently higher among women, youth, and people with disabilities than in the general population. The particular challenges facing disabled women are highlighted, noting that they often experience double discrimination, due to their gender and to their disability. As a result, disabled girls and women less likely to have access to education, vocational training, rehabilitation programmes and employment compared to non-disabled females and their disabled male counterparts.

Measures under the Project to address the particular challenges and vulnerabilities identified included:

- the production and analysis of sex-disaggregated labour market information at national and provincial levels
- targeted training programmes and tailor-made labour market programmes, in close consultation with experts on gender and disability from ILO and/or MoHRSS China.

Gender dimensions

As the earlier detailed summary of Project implementation demonstrates (Section 6), the greatest overall attention given in this area has been to youth as a whole, as would be expected with a national jobseeker profile which is dominated by the numbers of young people coming into the job market in each country.

In this context, data provided by the NEA and MoLSW/DSDE on employment service useage and placements at national and provincial levels was disaggregated by sex. Similarly, data provided by the MoLSW/DSDE on skills development through its TVET and skills development centres was sex disaggregated. The job centre staff in each country usually had reflections to offer on the gender dimensions of their day-to-day work, indicating an awareness of the gender component of their role. For example, the Battambang Centre observed that the high levels of interest amongst female jobseekers in positions with the burgeoning microfinance industry in the province were meeting a “push back” from employers who were preferring male employees in these roles. Research studies produced by the NEA, such as the latest profiling study of young jobseekers, all provided sex-disaggregated data.

With respect to labour market programmes generally, activities under the Project were reportedly limited by lack of time and resources. Activities in Cambodia included pre-employment training aimed at young jobseekers, including soft skills training; and two core skills training and career counselling activities aimed at women job seekers. Labour market programmes in Lao PDR included cooking and tailoring training for women job seekers and pre-labour migration departure training by the ESC. A stepping-up of engagement in this area is recommended for the next phase of the Project.

Migrant labour issues

With respect to migrant labour, dealing with the needs and issues of migrant workers is inevitably part of the work of the employment services in both countries, given the needs of migrant workers – both out-going and returning, legal and undocumented. Labour migration was particularly high on the agendas of the Battambang and Siem Reap job centres in Cambodia, with various stakeholders commenting that the rural villages in both provinces were “virtually empty” of young people due to labour migration to Thailand.

Both countries are also part of the Australian-funded ILO GMS TRIANGLE Project on safe labour migration, including through the establishment and support for Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in each case. While the ESJCs in Lao PDR have been assisting migrant workers departing for Thailand, Japan and to other countries, they are more likely to refer migrant workers seeking assistance onto either the provincial MRC (if one exists), the national Employment Services Centre or an MoLSW-licenced recruitment company.

In the case of Cambodia, migrant labour issues are more likely to be dealt with by the job centre directly or referred to an MRC if one is located in the province. The Battambang Job Centre has successfully integrated PES and MRC services and been used by the NEA as a base for training on this approach.

The need was identified in Cambodia consultations in particular for more training across all job centres on labour migration services and issues. In both countries, a strong preference was indicated by stakeholders, including at senior NEA and MoLSW level, for the integration of PES and migrant labour services and data.

Addressing the needs of person with disability

Estimates of disability amongst the Cambodian population vary widely. According to the 2004 Census, nearly 5 per cent of the country's population is disabled.ⁿⁿ The employment rate for persons with disability is separately estimated at 42 percent, compared with 67 percent for the overall population, with higher rates of unemployment.^{oo} Following the adoption of the 2009 Disability Law in Cambodia, the Council of Ministers subsequently passed a sub-decree aiming to better integrate persons with disabilities into the workforce. The regulation sets out certain hiring and reporting requirements, along with incentives and penalties, for employers of a certain size.^{pp}

With respect to Lao PDR, the rights of persons with disability, including with respect to employment, are enshrined in several overarching constitutional, legislative and policy documents, including a Decree on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the various National Social and Economic Development Plans (NSEDPs). However, the Lao Disabled People's Association (LDPA) notes there is a lack of accurate statistics on disability prevalence and types of disability. The World Report on Disability (2011) by the World Health Organisation (WHO) cites prevalence of eight percent based on World Health Survey data (2002) - around 536,000 people living with disabilities.^{qq}

In both countries, the national employment services publically prioritise attention to persons with disabilities, including with respect to labour market programmes (specifically highlighted in the Project Document). Addressing the needs of person with disabilities is given prominence in NEA public presentations and communications, for example. However, evaluation consultations with provincial job centres indicate limited attention at a practical level to persons with disability in both countries.

Job centre staff indicated that employers show little interest (even in the context of the Cambodia legislative requirements in this regard). They further indicated that the job centres (at least those visited by the evaluation) currently do little in the way of proactive outreach or advocacy to promote the rights of persons with disability. At the same time, Cambodian job centres indicated awareness of the presence of NGOs such as Handicapped International in their respective provinces, but had little direct contact. The limited attention in practice to persons with disability was also a finding of the recent DWCP reviews in each country, which covered a much wider scope of ILO engagement.

Given that persons with disability appear to be the most neglected of the target groups prioritised for attention in the Project Document, it is proposed that the next Project phase put a particular and specific focus in this area. In many ways, the employment status of persons with disability provides a touchstone of the effectiveness of employment service outreach to those most in need of support.

In this context, it is proposed that there should be a particular focus on access to Decent Work opportunities for women with disability in line with Goal 6 under the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, 2013-2022: Ensure gender equality and women's empowerment.

7.3 Efficiency

ⁿⁿhttp://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_115096.pdf

^{oo} Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP): *Disability at a Glance 2015*, Bangkok, ESCAP

^{pp} <https://cambodianlaw.wordpress.com/2010/09/26/legislative-update-employers-to-be-required-to-hire-persons-with-disabilities/> The Cambodian Law stipulates that private-sector employers of more than 100 employees must have at least one percent of their workforce being persons with a disability. The quota is set at two percent for public-sector employers of over 50 employees. The sub-decree establishes a scaling system, whereby a full-time employee with a serious disability counts as two disabled persons and a part-time employee of low to medium disability counts as half. Failure to meet the quota incurs a mandatory contribution to a disability charity fund of 40 percent of the employer's minimum monthly salary.

^{qq} <http://ldpa.org.la/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Factsheet-3-Disability-in-Lao-PDR.pdf>

The achievements of the ILO/China SSC Project, as summarised in this report, have been supported by a relatively small resource base, both financial and human, during a short (and truncated) implementation period. One factor in the ability of the Project to deliver to the extent it did was the supplementation of the core financial contribution from China by technical and administrative contributions in-kind from MoHRSS (especially in support of the China Study Tour), NEA and MoLSW/DSDE. The Project was also able to leverage supplementary funds from other ILO sources to support activities in key areas, as indicated in Section 7.2.

Information available to the evaluation from reports to the NPSC meetings and internal ILO reporting indicated that Project resources (human and financial) have been allocated in accordance with the Project objectives and outputs as set out in the Project Document in a strategic, economical and transparent manner. As of 16 December 2015, the expenditure of the overall Project budget was standing at USD 953,979.85, out of a total budget of USD 999,980.00. Small allocations remained to be made for ILO internal costs; completion of work under Immediate Objective 1 in both countries, direct Project management and administrative costs and this evaluation. Project documentation allows the tracking of Project resources from inputs into outputs and results, as summarised in Section 6 of this report.

Factors reinforcing the efficiency of resource use in Project delivery included the quality of ILO technical expertise, advice and project management; the ability to tap into the ILO's comparative advantages as a normative agency underpinned by international Labour Conventions (including C.88); as well as its tripartite base; technical expertise and internationally tested ILO tools in the areas targeted by the Project. The latter contribution to Project delivery was evident in areas such as the development of the job centre manuals and guidelines (although ongoing adaptation is required), the Job Centre Checklist, and particular tools aimed at reaching and engaging young people.

At the same time, the evaluation found that there remained scope to improve the efficiency of Project delivery from financial and coherence perspectives. Examples provided in stakeholder feedback included:

- the tendency towards activity-by-activity approaches which were prevalent in the delivery of Project support, associated with higher than necessary transaction costs, loss of momentum in implementation and delays around funding allocations
- lack of coordination amongst and within relevant government ministries / agencies, (e.g. between Labour and Education Ministries; leading to overlaps, duplications and gaps which meant that available resources were not being harnessed to their full potential
- lack of coordination between donors in the same field, again leading to both overlaps and duplications on the one hand and gaps in support to local counterparts on the other
- lack of integration of general employment services with those provided to migrant workers, leading to inefficiencies in the use of limited resources across the full spectrum of employment and labour market information needs (including maintaining two separate sets of offices in the case of the MRCs and PES).

Internal ILO reporting on the Project further noted that the reality of servicing the nine current ESJCs located throughout Lao PDR, often in difficult to reach locations, has an impact on logistics and resourcing (for example, to provide access to training opportunities); as a result, the training costs in Lao PDR are considerably higher than that in Cambodia.

With respect to efficiency of Project management and administration, ILO staff feedback noted both the intensity of demands on the current part-time PTO role in CO-Bangkok and the pressures faced at administrative levels in CO-Bangkok and at in-country level, with project administration being added on top of already fully-stretched roles (refer Section 7.2).

It is the assessment of this report that the complexity and demands of the Project require adequate project management and administrative staffing. It is proposed that careful attention be given in the design of a new phase to what requirements are realistically able to be met 'in-kind' from within the resources of the respective principle partners, with a view to considering the 'over-and-above' case for a full-time PTO located with CO-Bangkok and dedicated full or part time administrative support at country level.

The added value of enhanced staffing resources to support a new Project phase would be evident in strengthened coordination and follow-up to partner requests and NPSC decisions; partnership development; linkages with other related ILO project areas; monitoring and reporting; and communications. The overall

budget implications would be insignificant while the benefits would greatly enhance Project delivery efficiency and effectiveness.

7.4 Impact and sustainability

This section examines sustainability and impact together, as they are integrally linked and the Analytical Framework questions provide insights in both areas simultaneously.

7.4.1 Indications of impact

As noted earlier in this report, the Project was not an isolated or stand-alone intervention. It built on previous ILO engagement in both countries and tapped into and complemented other initiatives on employment services and related areas by the ILO and other international partners. The essence of the Project was thus the addition of value and momentum to developments in both countries which were already underway and/or planned, with an underpinning focus on the quality of employment services and LMI, rather than creating new initiatives per se.

In analysing the summary of Project delivery achievements in Section 6.1.1, there is clear evidence that the Project has had a positive impact on the capacity of both the NEA and MoLSW/DSDE to deliver effective employment services ; reach out more widely to jobseekers and employers; and strengthen labour market information provision, albeit from very different starting points.

The simplest indication of this impact is the increase in both countries in the registration of jobseekers and employment vacancies and in the number of jobs placements during the Project period (refer Box 1).

Feedback received from stakeholders in both countries linked this improvement to the improved outreach supported by the Project to jobseekers and employers at provincial, district and community levels. As the output-based analysis in Tables 1-4 in Section 6 indicates, Project financial and technical support enhanced the frequency and effectiveness of outreach modalities such as job fairs, employment forums, mobile teams and job centres, school and tertiary institution visits; dissemination of new and improved promotional materials, media coverage, use of social media, etc.

The NEA observed, for example, that it is increasingly easier to get employer and public participation in job fairs as their profile increases and their value addition is better known. 100 booths at the annual national job fair in Phnom Penh are taken up very quickly now, compared with previous years. Job centres in both countries reported sustained levels of jobseeker and employer interest in district level employment forums and the potential to expand such efforts, subject to available human and financial resources alongside strengthening collaboration with tripartite partners.

Although NEA and MoLSW/DSDE staff indicated that there had been distinct improvements in the quality of counselling and advisory services provided to clients, whether provided directly through a job centre or in the context of outreach activities, this was difficult to verify from a client perspective without a more rigorous assessment using a survey approach, focus groups and larger number of direct client interviews. The evaluation time framework and resources did not allow a more in-depth assessment on these lines.

However, feedback from a small sampling of jobseekers and employers indicated generally high levels of satisfaction with the services received and the relationship developed.¹⁷ Employers interviewed in provincial locations, in particular, indicated that they are regular users of job centre services as a result of their positive experience (refer Annexes IV and V) . The quality of services provided helped to build employer confidence and became a positive word-of-mouth influence. Similarly, jobseekers interviewed in provincial locations in particular indicated that they communicated positive messages about job centre services to their families, friends and associates (for elaboration, refer to Annexes IV and V). The impact of word-of-mouth confidence building was particularly evident in the provinces visited by the evaluation team in Cambodia.

With respect to LMI, the Project made two major contributions to the development of an eventual

¹⁷ See Annexes IV and V for summaries of stakeholder feedback in Cambodia and Lao PDR.

comprehensive national system in Lao PDR, even if the final overall achievements during the Project timeframe fell short of Project Document expectations. These contributions were the establishment of the LMI Unit in MoLSW/DSDE and the success of its first major project, the completion of the LNSCO to six-digit level.

The focus in the NEA has been on strengthening staff skills in data management, analysis and dissemination. This process has benefited directly from technical support provided under the Project as indicated in Section 6, and has been flagged by the NEA as a priority area for attention under a second Project phase.

As noted earlier (Section 7.2), while overall project delivery against the Project Document has been mixed, its major value during the short (two year) timeframe has been in the targeted strengthening of critical capacities in selected strategic areas in both countries, in turn creating foundations for ongoing development, enhanced longer term impact and strengthened sustainability.

In this context, the extension of the Project into a second phase, as recommended, will be critical to ensuring that

7.4.2 Ways forward on sustainability

With respect to sustainability of Project outcomes, the following positive developments stand out:

- the evidence of ownership summarised in Section 7.1 on Project relevance, with increasing national budget commitments a positive sustainability factor in Cambodia, while being still “work in progress,” in Lao PDR
- the demonstrated embedding of the services and their future development into national development policies, strategies and plans, as well as institutional strategies and plans of both countries
- the increasing practical engagement of employers in both countries in the priority areas addressed by the Project (refer Section 6), reinforced by statements of commitment in each case to increased involvement in support of the delivery of PES and improvement of LMI
- the growing involvement of trade unions in the Cambodia case, particularly as a result of the youth focal point systems set-up under the Project; and offers by the LFTU in Lao PDR of greater use of its facilities and resources at provincial and district levels to strengthen employment service outreach.

Looking ahead to a second Project phase and beyond, a further important consideration is the need for dialogue and joint planning with the respective national partners on the long term sustainability of employment services and LMI systems, building on and maximising the value of Project interventions to date. There was little evidence provided to the evaluation team of any such dialogue and planning during Project implementation to date.

As noted elsewhere, the Project Document included provision for a workshop on sustainability strategies and good practice. However, this was not able to be realised in the time available. It is proposed that this activity be incorporated into the regional meeting on employment services which is now scheduled for later in 2016 or early 2017, with separate ‘bridging’ funding from China.

It is further proposed that the focus on long-term sustainability in the next Project phase be strengthened by ensuring that consideration of exit strategies has a more explicit, deliberate and purposeful place within the project design. This can be done by including a commitment to dialogue in this respect at the appropriate times and levels amongst the principle partners. Such dialogue would potentially include specific steps and timeframes to reduce engagement and/or refocus ILO and Project support, roles and relationships in a phased, proactive and strategic manner over time.

Well-crafted and jointly owned exit strategies can provide an important framework for both clarifying mutual expectations and enhancing sustainability over time, laying foundations for changed relations between key partners as local priorities and needs evolve on the one hand, and the availability of external resources diminishes on the other.

By taking a deliberate approach on these lines, a stronger basis would be established for joint consideration of sustainability options; advocacy as required with the appropriate government counterparts (including Finance and Planning Ministries); and a regular review of progress (formally and conversationally) to ensure sustained benefits for jobseekers, employers and the broader economies of both countries.

In this context, and taking account of (i) the relatively short period of Project implementation to date and (ii) the progress made as well as the challenges and lessons identified in Section 8, it is argued that an extension of the Project is critical to:

- maintain momentum and complete unfinished business in strategic areas in each country
- build on and consolidate the achievements to date
- apply the lessons which have been learnt
- provide opportunities to learn in greater depth from the experience of China and other ASEAN countries
- jointly consider and carry forward exit strategies to ensure greater long term impact and sustainability of outcomes.

7.4.3 Knowledge management and sharing

The effective management and sharing of knowledge with Project partners and other key stakeholders is a further important component of impact and sustainability. South-South cooperation was at the core of the knowledge management and knowledge sharing aspects⁵⁵ of the Project. Feedback on the benefits of this modality to Cambodian and Lao PDR PES development in line with Project Objectives is provided in Section 6, particularly with regard to the Chinese Study Tour and mentoring aspects of the Project.

Opportunities for interaction between Cambodia and Lao PDR PES staff (e.g. in the context of training workshops held in both countries) and with PES staff in Thailand have provided further knowledge sharing opportunities, with a focus on LMI in the latter case. The engagement of ILO specialist staff in training and advisory capacities was also an important knowledge sharing modality.

In both countries, job centre staff further highlighted the value of regular interaction amongst themselves from a knowledge-sharing perspective. They indicated that regular contact is maintained with their own national counterparts, especially at job centre director level. The opportunities for direct networking and sharing of knowledge, experience and lessons at national meetings (eg the annual MoLSW meeting in Lao PDR) and trainings are highly valued. These are complemented by regular contact between job centres which is maintained via Facebook and/or other social media platforms. In the case of Lao PDR, the China Study Tour participants maintain regular contact through a Facebook group, for example.

The intention of the Project had been to further progress and regularise such knowledge sharing opportunities, including more broadly within ASEAN, and to underpin them through the knowledge management arrangements available through the ILO. These include the Skills and Employability Community of Practice (Skills-AP CoP: <http://skills-ap.lobkk.or.th>) platform (onto which some Project information has been uploaded). It was further intended that good and promising Project practices and would be shared with PARDEV/EXREL and incorporated into the ILO's good practices database.

As noted in the Project delivery summary (Section 6), the intention to hold a regional meeting during the Project period to share good practices and experiences among China, Cambodia and Lao PDR and selected ASEAN Member states was not able to be realised in the time available, but is scheduled for later in 2016 or early 2017 with separate funding from China. The further intention to document and publish Project outputs, good practices and lessons learned was also not able to be realised during the Project period.

The various knowledge management and sharing intentions summarised above should feature in the design of the next Project phase, including in the Project indicators, and be the focus of explicit attention from the beginning. Such knowledge-related initiatives would be given impetus by the recommendations of this report

in areas such as strengthening of Project management and administrative resourcing; expanding inter-country exchange and learning opportunities; and enhancing M&E in both countries.

Box 3: Knowledge management and sharing

The following commonly used definitions from [ADB Glossary of Knowledge Management](#) are used with respect to references to knowledge management and sharing in this report:

Data: Discrete and objective facts, measurements, or observations that can be analysed to generate information.

Information: Data that have been categorised, analysed, summarised, and placed in context in a form that has structure and meaning.

Knowledge: A combination of data and information, to which is added expert opinion, skills, and experience, resulting in a valuable asset that aids decision making. In organisational terms, knowledge is generally thought of as being know-how, applied information, information with judgment, or the capacity for effective action. Knowledge may be tacit, explicit, individual, and/or collective. It is intrinsically linked to people.

Further to these definitions:

Knowledge management covers all management actions that create a conducive environment for knowledge sharing to take place, such as establishing incentives, policies, guidance, training and learning aids, tools and platforms for knowledge capture, storage, retrieval, exchange and use.

Knowledge sharing takes place when staff members, proactively or on demand, and on a timely basis make their explicit and tacit knowledge available to current and future colleagues.

7.4.4 Institutional effectiveness a key factor in impact and sustainability

A key factor that stood out in analysis of the contribution of the Project to strengthening employment service and LMI delivery in the two countries was the importance of the institutional dimension, particularly the capacity and effectiveness of the core government institutions concerned.

A question which came up regularly in evaluation consultations in both countries concerned the specific factors which had contributed to the rapid development and success of the NEA, and what lessons could be taken from this experience.

The following key factors were observed by the evaluation team as important contributors in this regard:

- The NEA's legislative status as a semi-autonomous 'special agency' under the National Training Board (including its mandated role as the national lead agency on LMI). This status has allowed greater leeway within the NEA has to set its own internal priorities and pace of development in line with Government policy and strategic directions. These include an explicit focus on developing internal strategic leadership and management capacity; the undertaking of research in key areas to inform policy and service development; and steps to grow internal professional development capacities so that "we don't have to keep turning to the ILO for support."
- The quality of the senior management team from the time of establishment of the agency, including its vision for the organisation; its ability to translate this into agency priorities and planning (with strengthening of LMI currently prioritised in this context); its openness, credibility and levels of trust amongst the staff. The latter is reinforced by a 'hands-on' involvement with staff in the core work of the organisation (e.g. the direct involvement by the Director General in presentations to high school students and the Deputy DG in key research projects).
- A clearly communicated internal culture of (i) quality service above all else; (ii) organisational learning from experience, feedback and exposure to the experience of other countries and (iii) openness to innovation (e.g. the establishment of the youth focal points in 12 national union confederations and embracing the use of IT tools and social media).

- A long-term and ‘up-front’ focus on sustainability, including an ability to achieve increasing national budget commitments while actively managing a diverse range of financial flows from the international community.
- An ability to recruit directly to key roles in the agency, including at job centre level, with an explicit focus on trying to get the right person for the job and attention to management skill requirements (the TVET institutions which host the job centres provide a key recruitment source).

When asked “what makes NEA special / different compared with private employment service options,” jobseekers, employers and TVET institutions interviewed by the evaluation team highlighted the following:

- the fact that the service is free, comprehensive and personal (although CAMFEBA and several employers indicated they would be willing to pay for results)^{tt}
- regular follow-up (in the case of the provincial centres in particular)
- the outreach to schools and tertiary institutions
- district and commune outreach
- access to and use of LMI to inform counselling services and outreach
- the provincial presence (currently 9, with plans to cover all provinces)
- links to policy formulation and TVET priority setting.

In the evaluation validation meeting held with tripartite stakeholders at the NEA Headquarters in Phnom Penh on 28 July 2016, it was further suggested that consideration be given by the NEA to further sharpening its institutional vision for the future by publically stating a commitment to being:

1. The “pre-eminent, best known, most visible and most trusted one-stop service in Cambodia for employment promotion and LMI.”
2. The preferred first option for employers, jobseekers and migrant workers nationwide for employment services and LMI.

To further examine the issue of institutional change dynamics and success factors, the evaluation drew on one particular organisational development (OD) framework as a point of reference: the ‘**Four Dimensions of Change**’ (refer Figure 3).^{uu}

Developed by OD practitioners, the framework identifies key characteristics of how effective organisational change is created. It is premised on the understanding that four inter-related dimensions - personal, relational, structural and cultural – together, form a ‘winning combination.’ Each dimension may be emphasised at different times in an organisation’s development due to changing circumstances and needs.

^{tt} See Annex IV: Feedback from Cambodia stakeholders

^{uu} Lederach, J.P, Neufeld, R. and Culbertson, H. (2007). *Reflective Peacebuilding: A planning, Monitoring and Learning Toolkit*. The Joan B Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.

Figure 3: Organisational development framework 1: Four dimensions of change



In the case of the NEA, it can be seen in the above analysis of key success factors that all four quadrants feature strongly, with an emphasis at the current time in the structural quadrant (the concerted focus on data collection/management and LMI systems, skills and usage is an example in this respect).

Strong foundations for organisational development have been laid through the personal role and example of the senior leadership; relationships of trust have been developed amongst staff and between management and staff (very evident in evaluation consultations at all levels); and an open learning culture is evident alongside clear expectations conveyed by the leadership and management of high quality service delivery.

With respect to the Four Quadrants of Change in the case of Lao PDR, the cultural and structural quadrants of the MoLSW/DSDE would appear to be currently dominant. The similar senior management expectations for high quality service delivery and expansion need to navigate well-established internal public sector approaches which tend towards incremental change; reliance on staff rotation rather than competitive recruitment; and more limited space within the wider Ministry framework for initiative to promote new ways of 'doing things.'

Building the personal and relationship quadrants as a way of working for change from within (top-down and bottom-up) can be an important lever for institutional strengthening in this context.

It is proposed that there would be value in both the Cambodia and Lao PDR contexts, as part of the next phase of the Project, in deliberately applying an appropriate organisational development lens to their institutional structures and plans, drawing on relevant international models such as that demonstrated above.

Using such a lens in a deliberate way would help to:

- anticipate future institutional issues that need to be proactively addressed
- ensure that planning is well grounded in understanding of organisational strengths, weaknesses, risks and opportunities
- offer access to good practices, lessons and models from other countries

Relevant approaches supported under the next phase of the Project could include institutional audits conducted by international experts; advisory and mentoring support; and institutional learning visits to similar bodies within ASEAN.

8. CHALLENGES, LESSONS & GOOD PRACTICES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Challenges in Project implementation

8.1.1 General overview of challenges identified

The following challenges across both Immediate Objectives of the ILO-China Project in the respective countries were identified by evaluation stakeholders, National Project Steering Committee deliberations and internal ILO reporting. These feed into the lessons which are listed and the recommendations which are made to inform the design and implementation of follow-up work on employment services and LMI in both countries. Further elaboration of particular factors in the Lao PDR context is provided in Section 8.1.2 below.

Staff capacity

- further consolidating and deepening staff skills to respond to growing demand in areas ranging from front line interaction with clients to capacity in web design, development, and programming (the latter area an immediate priority in Cambodia and emerging one in Lao PDR)
- recruiting / assigning and retaining the right staff across all roles , including in management roles (job centre directors need to be able to “lead, inspire and provide guidance to volunteers:” NEA senior management).
- high levels of staff turnover and rotation, particularly in Lao PDR
- ensuring critical mass of staff in the job centres – in the case of Lao PDR, the multiple duties of ESJC staff further constrains ES capacity
- building core PES leadership and management capacity in the respective institutional contexts
- maximising the impact of training and international visits for all staff, including through training of trainers approaches

PES outreach

- further improving job centre visibility and location, noting the limited role in actual registration and job placement of direct visits to the job centres (with the government department and TVET institution-based locations in central urban settings not always conducive to visits by rural and/or female job seekers).
- building on good experience to date to strengthen outreach to rural communities and identified target groups, particularly through job fairs and forums at provincial and district levels; expanded use of mobile teams at district and community levels; and partnerships with NGOs / CBOs where these exist with relevant capacity
- the need to build public confidence (issue raised by Cambodian stakeholders of perceived poor image of government institutions and services, which also can affect perceptions of the NEA)
- the need to likewise further build employer trust and confidence in PES in both countries (suggested by CAMFEBA that the China experience and linkages could be leveraged to help in this respect)
- maximising impact of ICT tools via:
 - web development and programming skills (Cambodia)
 - improving readiness for online outreach activities, including website establishment and related capacities (Lao PDR)
 - data collection/management/analysis
 - taking advantage of improving ICT infrastructure and access by expanding use of social media to reach jobseekers
- tapping into the potential for much stronger collaboration and mutual reinforcement between state employment services, employers, and trade unions (e.g. via MOUs between the MoLSW/DSDE and tripartite partners as proposed in the case of Lao PDR, as well as joint work plans and projects)

Wider labour market issues

- the need to strengthen school to work transition (including expansion of pre-employment/soft skills training as part of the ‘bridge’)

- the need for systemic steps to address skills mismatch at all levels, underpinned by high quality and regularly updated LMI and close collaboration between employment services, national statistics organisations, relevant ministries, TVET institution, employers and trade unions
- the particular needs and requirements for services which are relating to (and trying to increase engagement with) mainly low-skilled workers, often with very low levels of basic education; low literacy and limited or no experience of working in an industrial context
- the impact of high rates of absenteeism and attendance fluctuations in line with rural agriculture seasonal requirements (employers in Lao PDR particularly highlighted these issues, along with the lack of practical and technical skills amongst jobseekers, which pointed in turn to deficiencies in basic education and TVET provision)
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining labour (the LNCCI and LFTU expressed the view that one key factor in the Lao PDR context was the large gap between the minimum wage and actual living costs, combined with lack of compliance with minimum wage requirements by small and medium-sized businesses in particular)
- the combined impact of the above issues on national productivity levels

Government systems and coordination

- lack of coordination amongst relevant government ministries / agencies (e.g. labour and education) as well as between international partners supporting government programmes and projects
- lack of integration of general employment services with those provided to migrant workers

Institutional planning

- the need to balance plans for expansion with consolidating/ strengthening the capacity of existing services
- the need to strengthen systematic data collection and management, including for performance monitoring and assessment
- the need to prioritise improvement of systems, procedures and staff capacity at provincial level: the Job Centre Assessments were useful in pinpointing areas for attention

Resources and tools

- the need for ongoing revision and updating of the core manuals supported by the Project in light of experience, with a view to keeping them relevant, simple and easy to access
- inadequate or dated office equipment, particularly ICT equipment in both the job centres and MoLSW headquarters in Lao PDR

Project approaches

- the activity-by-activity tendency in project delivery, with associated loss of momentum and delays in designing and confirming activities and in receiving the necessary funds
- the need to establish M&E systems and capacities in the case of MoLSW/DSDE and continue strengthening the effectiveness and impact of M&E arrangements in the case of the NEA

ILO Convention 88

- the need in both countries to prioritise the ratification of relevant ILO conventions and to develop strategies for follow-up, with decisions in the employment context to be taken about the relative prioritisation given to C.88 and C.122, in particular

Ensuring sustainability

- increasing national budget allocations over time as a key indicator of sustainability, particularly in the case of Lao PDR (as noted earlier, the Project Document included provision for a workshop on sustainability lessons and good practices; it is proposed that this be retained as an early priority activity in the next Project phase).

8.1.2 Elaboration of challenges in the Lao PDR context

Further to the above, there are particular considerations to be taken into in expanding and strengthening employment services and LMI provision in Lao PDR. These are elaborated below:

- The need to work in a way and at a pace which realistically takes account of (i) ensuring local ownership and the driving of project implementation through Lao structures and processes and (ii) the development of local capacities and the need to consolidate these over time on a step-by-step basis.
- The pressing need for the development of a national strategy for the development of the ESJCs within the context of the MoLSW Master Plan 2007-2020 and other relevant frameworks^{vv} to bring greater coherence, vertical and horizontal coordination and mutual reinforcement to the efforts of all relevant stakeholders.
- The need to establish a legislative basis for the Public Employment Services and the ESJCs, which in turn will help create the foundations for greater sustainability through national budget allocations.
- The oft-referred to ‘labour shortage’ in Lao PDR, caused by factors such as low agricultural productivity, the ‘pull’ of higher wages in Thailand and impact of low wages at home.
- The above-mentioned lack of requisite ICT skills, up-to-date computer equipment and basic ICT infrastructure at all levels, which is a critical factor in the slower delivery of the LMI component of the Project, affecting the ability at national DSDE and ESJC levels to facilitate data collection, management and analysis. In addition, the LMI Unit within the DSDE is still “getting on its feet” after just being formed in the latter part of 2015 and there is a need for better integration of the various statistics units within the MoLSW.
- Lack of clarity about the role of the ESC, which was established under the ILO-China SSC Project with an envisaged role of providing the central link as well as technical and administrative support to the ESJCs. To date this role has not been fully clarified, resourced or enacted. The ESC has been requested by the DSDE to draft a strategy to establish its envisaged role and devolve the necessary authority and functions to the ESC over the next five years.

8.2 Lessons in Project implementation

The following lessons across both Immediate Objectives of the ILO-China Project in the respective countries were identified by evaluation consultations, National Project Steering Committee deliberations and internal ILO reporting, with a view to informing the design and implementation of follow-up work on employment services and LMI.

The importance and value of:

- South-South Cooperation as an appropriate and effective modality for promoting enhanced employment services and LMI, with demonstrated potential and demand for its expansion and deepening with China and other ASEAN countries (for example, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam).
- Taking account of cultural and language factors in ensuring effective interaction that brings real and sustained benefits to all involved. The challenges in ensuring meaningful communications across four

^{vv} These include the MoLSW Strategic Plan on Skills Formation and Employment Promotion, the MoLSW 5 Years Goal on Employment Promotion 2016-2020 and various related decrees and regulations on skills development and employment promotion.

languages were the principle reason that the planned immersion component of the China Study tour didn't eventuate as planned.

- Ensuring that the important progress made in both countries as a result of Project support to date is not let slip, but is consolidated and deepened through ongoing capacity development initiatives to ensure sustained effectiveness. Key in this context is maintaining the focus on the quality of staff skills and commitment as the backbone of effective employment services.
- Carefully analysing country capacity and wider contextual factors which might impinge on project implementation to ensure realistic future Project design and appropriate pacing and resourcing. Ensuring the fullest possible engagement of partners in the design process, including the formulation of indicators and targets, is critical in this context to ensure ownership as well as grounding in local realities, dynamics and requirements.
- Ensuring that the momentum developed to date in strengthening LMI capacities is maintained, albeit from different starting points in the respective countries, so that the full potential of high quality LMI to influence national policy formulation and TVET priorities can be realised.
- Carefully and deliberately balancing plans to expand job centres (noting that both countries are aiming for 100 percent coverage of all provinces) with the need to consolidate the capacity and effectiveness of existing centres (including the development of model ESJCs as part of the longer term strengthening of services in in Lao PDR).
- Recognising that capacity development (whether institutional or human) is a long-term process which requires organisational ownership, clear strategy, regular assessment of needs, phased approaches, follow-up and effective monitoring and evaluation. Short-term training, while useful, can have limited impact if it is not part of a longer professional development and reinforcement process.
- The finding that the majority of job seeker registrations during the Project period were achieved through outreach activities (especially job fairs and forums etc) rather than job centre visits per se, reinforcing the importance of resources and capacity being targeted in this area.
- Integrated approaches to PES and LMI, both in the development of operational policies and systems in each case and in staff capacity development (NEA staff particularly highlighted the need for a 'joined-up' approach which built knowledge, understanding and skills around both areas simultaneously).
- Recognising the untapped potential for greater practical support by employers and unions, with strong commitment indicated in both countries and a growing basis of shared experience and common understandings to build on.
- Recognising the untapped potential for higher impact outreach via IT tools, especially to youth as ICT infrastructure and access increases
- Opportunities for regular review and learning (including as part of National Steering Committee agendas), which are vital for improving performance and impact: experience shows that structured opportunities are needed, otherwise they tend not to be prioritised in the face of daily work pressures.
- Paying attention to the 'small things:' they "really do matter," in the words of one senior interlocutor, as the absence of a reliable computer in the job centre or access to transport to visit an employer can make or break a service opportunity.
- Developing SMART indicators, which are owned by all stakeholders, and pay careful attention to ability to measure results in the agreed time period.
- Adequate resourcing of project management and administration, which is crucial for success, constituting a small investment for stronger results.

The Mid-Term Review of the Project identified some further lessons, which were taken account of in the current evaluation process. These were:

- The project implementation plan needs to clearly consider the relationships between different components of the Project activities and outputs – activities need to be prioritised.
- Since activities under the two immediate objectives of the Project need to be implemented simultaneously for the effective provision of employment services, this warrants realistic human resource planning.
- Financial commitments from the Project’s partners are crucial for the successful implementation of the Project.

8.3 Good practices identified in Project implementation

There has been limited opportunity to for good practices to emerge which are directly attributable to the Project per se, but the following good practice examples observed by the evaluation team have been reinforced and given greater momentum by Project resources to date.

- The institutional model adopted by the NEA in Cambodia, which allows the degree of flexibility, scope for initiative and internal capacity development that a dynamic and responsive employment services operation requires at a time of rapidly evolving economic, social and technological circumstances, nationally, regionally and globally.

The attention given by the NEA to generating research to underpin policy and service development at agency and wider national levels is one example of the sort of flexible decision-making and initiative enabled by the institutional structure adopted. The deliberate and concerted focus on building core strategic management capacity in NEA through in-depth training and education is another.

- The tripartite National Project Steering Committee model which has been established to oversee the Project at country level, providing a platform for government, employer and worker representatives to come together to jointly review and plan Project implementation, helping to strengthen relationships between these core stakeholders in the development of effective PES and LMI services and systems.
- The general stepping-up in the use of district job fairs and job forums as a dual outreach and direct recruitment mechanism in both Cambodia and Lao PDR, supported by the deployment of mobile teams and the development of relationships with leaders at community level.
- The partnership developed by the NEA job centre in Svay Reang Province, Cambodia with a national youth NGO to extend employment services outreach to community level.
- The integration of employment and labour migration (MRC) services in the NEA job centre in Battambang, including targeted outreach activities at district level. This demonstrates the potential of an integrated approach and could serve as a ‘model’ for the development of similar approaches both elsewhere in Cambodia and in Lao PDR.
- The establishment and support of a network of NEA youth focal points in 12 selected trade unions, including registration services at that level – anchoring the NEA amongst union memberships while simultaneously developing a cadre of trained ‘ambassadors and advocates’ who can both reach out to people not otherwise touched by employment services and provide feedback to the NEA on issues, concerns, needs and suggestions for improvement.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations arising from the Project evaluation process take account of the assessment of Project progress at the most recent meetings in each country of the National Project Steering Committees; the priorities for a next Project phase indicated by the MoLSW /DSDE and NEA at these meetings;* and findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Project Review, the Follow-up Assessment of ESJCs in Lao PDR and other relevant studies carried out during the Project period.

The recommendations are set-out in three categories: (i) General recommendations across all Project areas; (ii) recommendations specific to the Cambodian context and (iii) recommendations specific to the Lao PDR context.

A table setting out evaluation recommendations by category, priority and budget implications is contained in Annex I.

Resource implications

The recommendations, as an overall package, will have resources implications for all partners, which in the main should be addressed through:

- (i) Careful targeting of the funds budgeted for a second phase of the ILO/China SSC Project, as recommended below.
- (ii) Increased national budget allocations in both countries, particularly on a phased-basis over time in Lao PDR
- (iii) Maximising synergies, including joint-planning and co-funding where appropriate, with the efforts and resources of other projects and initiatives of the ILO and other development partners in both countries, as recommended below.
- (iv) Using the 'good offices' of the ILO and the South-South partners to leverage funds into selected components of the Project from other potential donors.
- (v) As successfully demonstrated by the Project to date, in-kind and locally resourced inputs by the participating countries.

**For summaries of the priorities highlighted by the NEA and MoLSW/DSDE, refer to Annex VII.*

9.1 General recommendations across all Project areas

Recommendation 1: Extend the ILO-China South-South Cooperation Project 2014-2015 for three years with a significantly increased budget as a key component of implementing employment creation and labour market information commitments under the DCWPs in both Lao PDR and Cambodia.

Such extension would recognise the support of the two National Project Steering Committees for Project continuation, as well as the ongoing interest indicated by China. It would further provide the opportunity to:

- maximise the value of the human and financial investment by China to date
- maintain momentum and complete unfinished business in strategic areas in each country
- build on and consolidate the achievements to date and apply the lessons which have been learnt
- ensure long term impact and sustainability of outcomes
- expand opportunities to learn in greater depth from the experience of China and other ASEAN countries.

Note: The following recommendations at overall Project and country levels are premised on an understanding that there will be a second Project phase, with the duration and extent of resourcing yet to be determined. As indicated in the Executive Summary, the recommendations take into account the dialogue between the principle participating partners on a broader Project second phase which integrates the building of social protection floors in Asia, as well as the addition of Myanmar as a country partner. But in line with the evaluation Terms of Reference, the recommendations focus on the employment services and LMI aspects of a future expanded Project phase.

Recommendation 2: Continue the dual focus on employment services and labour market information in a next Project phase, but elevate the specific attention given to the strengthening (and in the Lao PDR case, establishment as required) of LMI systems and capacities.

Without such focus on the LMI component of the current Project, the quality and impact of employment service delivery as well as national policy formulation and planning will be compromised. The increased attention to the LMI component should be reflected in Project design as well as the allocation of financial and human resources.

With respect to **LMI**, priorities of a next Project phase should include:

- (i) provision of core IT hardware and skills development in Lao PDR in collaboration with ADB
- (ii) ongoing strengthening of data gathering, management, analysis, messaging and dissemination capacity in Cambodia
- (iii) support for 3rd Labour Force Survey and ISCO to 6 digit level in Cambodia (the NIS has already prepared a project proposal for ILO support in this regard)
- (iv) integration of labour migration dimensions into LMI collection, analysis and dissemination (see Recommendation 4)
- (v) links with other LMI-related projects, including skills surveys in specific areas by the ILO and other international partners
- (vi) enhanced linkages between LMI, national employment and social protection policy formulation and implementation, and TVET curriculum development.

With respect to **employment services**, priorities of a next Project phase should include:

- (vii) ensuring a balanced consolidation of existing service capacity with phased expansion to ensure that gains to date are not lost and there are strong institutional and staff skill foundations for the establishment of new job centres
- (viii) a continued focus on strengthening staff skills, building on progress to date, and ensuring a critical mass of staffing at each job centre
- (ix) ongoing improvement of the location; quality of facilities and space; and visibility of the job centres
- (x) integration of labour migration dimensions into employment service delivery and outreach (see Recommendation 4)
- (xi) strengthened outreach, with a sustained focus on reaching community level in rural areas through expanded organisation of provincial and district job fairs; employment forums; mobile teams; local media outreach; collaboration with employers and trade unions, as well as NGOs and CBOs; backed-up by expanded media profile at all levels and 'high impact' use of IT tools such as national websites and social media

- (xii) setting a 5-year target in both countries, in collaboration with the respective Ministries of Education and Sports, that no student should leave school at any level unaware of the national employment service (this should be doubly the case for students at TVET institutions and universities).

With respect to **capacity development** approaches across all Project components, priorities of a next Project phase should include:

- (xiii) the development of internal training, advisory and other support capacities and approaches (including through ToT) as part of long-term effectiveness and sustainability agendas
- (xiv) a focus on the quality of training, with greater attention to the assessment of training needs, follow-up evaluation of impact, phased approaches (from 'basic to advanced' over time), use of mentoring and in-situ 'hands-on approaches,' personnel exchanges, internships, secondments and the like.

This should include a particular focus on strengthening core strategic leadership and management capacity in each of the respective national institutions.

Recommendation 3: Incorporate the following benchmarks into the design of a next ILO/CHINA SSC Project phase:

- (ii) explicitly draw on the challenges, lessons and good practices identified under the first Project phase, recognising that these arise from extensive stakeholder feedback through the current evaluation process as well as meetings of the NPSC, the Mid-term Project Review and other previous reviews and studies.
- (iii) ensure joint formulation of the design to the extent possible to enhance ownership, commitment and common understandings, including in the areas of specific outputs and indicators
- (iv) in this context, ensure joint attention to the formulation of SMART indicators, with a particular focus on how they will be measured and mechanisms for regular monitoring and review
- (v) ensure integrated approaches to the ongoing development of operational policy, systems, procedures and staff capacity with respect to employment services and LMI, so that both components 'move in sync together,' with staff fully aware of their interdependence
- (vi) incorporate a deepening of the South-South cooperation/knowledge sharing dimensions of the Project, including through increased opportunities for Cambodia –Lao PDR mutual learning and support; inter-agency secondments (between MoLSW and NEA as an initial priority); setting-up immersion learning opportunities in China and other countries as relevant (with the necessary attention to the communication challenges); further hands-on coaching by China expert (s); and job centre twinning for mutual benefit (e.g. Luang Prabang and Siem Reap based on their shared tourism focus)
- (vii) ensure enhanced synergies within and around the Project, including:
- with other components of the respective DWCPs, especially Decent Work employment creation, social protection strengthening and expansion initiatives, labour migration and skills development
 - between the relevant specialist and programme/project management staff in Bangkok (including staff servicing the GMS TRIANGLE Project)
 - with other internationally-supported projects and initiatives, including mapping these; jointly identifying specific areas for collaboration; establishing mechanisms as necessary for regular dialogue and review; and (to the extent possible) incorporating appropriate specific commitments into the Project design for the next phase
- (viii) incorporate specific provision/requirements for strengthening the relationships within each country between relevant ministries, departments and agencies, particularly between the NEA, MoLVT, MoES, social protection agencies, TVET institutions and NIS in Cambodia; and the MoLSW/DSDE, MoES, social protection agencies, TVET institutions and LSB in Lao PDR
- (ix) ensure every aspect of Project design recognises and includes specific provision as appropriate for the strengthening of tripartite cooperation, mindful of the strong commitments stated by employer and union

representatives in both countries to greater practical engagement in support of national public employment services and improvement of the availability, credibility, dissemination and use of LMI

- (x) ensure specific attention (reflected in Project outputs and indicators), to more systematically and visibly mainstreaming gender and addressing the particular needs and priorities persons with disability. The latter area, being that most neglected in implementation to date, should receive special attention in Project design and implementation.

Recommendation 4: Establish a new priority focus within the next phase of Project design on the integration of general employment and migrant labour services. This should encompass (i) steps to develop the necessary policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks and (ii) inclusion of such a priority within the long-term institutional development and resourcing plans of the NEA and MoLSW/DSDE.

Such integration into single national systems will build on already existing approaches and experience in both countries. It could still accommodate different 'on-the-ground' management arrangements for the job centres (for example, the trade union managed centres in each country), at least for a transitional period, but with clear requirements and procedures for close collaboration.

Given the similar challenges and demands facing both Cambodia and Lao PDR with regard to the integration of PES and migrant labour systems, and the shared policy, institutional and operational implications of such a development, there should be opportunities provided under the Project for mutual learning and exchange of approaches and lessons between the two countries, building on already existing training, service provision and good practices such as the integrated operation of the Battambang Job Centre in Cambodia. Specific steps towards integration that could be taken with Project support include the following:

- (i) draw on skills, systems and approaches already developed for the existing MRCs under the GMS TRIANGLE Project to integrate migrant labour requirements into existing employment services, supported by the requisite training, registration and monitoring systems
- (ii) expand existing labour market programmes for returned migrant workers by targeting job fairs, employment forums and other forms of outreach in the provinces with the greatest concentration of returned migrant workers
- (iii) strengthen the coordination and enforcement of agreed standards for the pre-migration preparation services provided to migrant workers, including through the strengthened role envisaged for the Employment Services Centre in Lao PDR and its efforts to establish a national association of recruitment agencies
- (iv) reinforce and enhance cooperation with local authorities as well as relevant NGOs, to register all job seekers, in particular returned migrant workers, and to disseminate job opportunities at local level
- (v) for provinces in each country without the presence of job centres, put in place special measures such as mobile teams or task forces to reach out to returned migrant workers as well as those contemplating labour migration
- (vi) ensure that the skills of the returned migrant workers can be documented and recognised as a basis for finding employment opportunities at home.^{ww}
- (vii) as in other areas covered by these recommendations, ensure proactive consultation and planned collaboration with other initiatives at national and regional level in this area, with a particular focus on

^{ww} The ILO has relevant tools available in this regard, for example the *Guide to Recognize the Skills of the Returned Migrant Workers*.

synergies and collaboration between the GMS TRIANGLE Project and the next phase of the ILO/China SSC Project (other key players include the IOM, UN Women and joint UN initiatives such as UNIAP)

(viii) ensure that the necessary research (e.g. the recent migrant labour profiling study carried out by the NEA) is carried out to support evidence-based policy making and service design.

Recommendation 5: Draw on the internationally-grounded service standards of the respective national public employment services to strengthen the quality of the wider national employment services and LMI environment in both countries (public and private) through the following steps, supported by the Project:

- (i) map employment services available for jobseekers and employers, including website services, with view to facilitating a greater sharing of information, coordination, synergies and cross-referencing between providers, public and private
- (ii) map LMI initiatives, including those supported by international partners, with view to facilitating greater coordination, synergies, cross-referencing and promotion of best practices to ensure consistency in quality.

In both of the above areas, this may include a follow-up convening and facilitation role to provide a platform for the relevant agencies and organisations to come together to share activities and plans, as well as to discuss how to generate greater coherence, coordination of approach and shared standards.

Recommendation 6: As part of the capacity development orientation of a next Project Phase, incorporate a specific focus on strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) policy, systems, processes and skills in the respective PES institutions, drawing *inter alia* on the approaches and lessons already developed in the NEA context to date.

Recognising the different starting points in this regard, such attention by the Project will further strengthen the learning cultures within each institution, contributing to enhanced performance, improved planning ability and the targeting of staff training and systems development in the key areas of need. Specific steps that should be taken with Project support include:

- (i) Identification and documentation of lessons and good practice as a continuous process, the coordination of which is included in the job description of the PTO and reported to and discussed at (i) meetings of the National Project Steering Committees; and (ii) internal strategy, planning and review meetings of the respective government institutions.
- (ii) Publication and dissemination of good practices and lessons via respective websites; meetings of staff of the participating government agencies; tripartite partners; other international partners; relevant workshop presentations and discussions at national, subregional and ASEAN levels; the mid-term review and end-of-project evaluation; the ILO Community of Practice for employment services; and other ILO services.

Consideration should be given in the next Project phase to the timely publication of a consolidated set of lessons and good practices for wider dissemination.

- (iii) Recognition of a commitment to learning and knowledge sharing in performance appraisal approaches.
- (iv) In the case of Lao PDR, the establishment of a standardised format and approach for regular evaluation of the services provided by the ESJCs, including recommendations for improvement and tracking of implementation of previous recommendations.

Recommendation 7: Introduce an explicit focus on organisational development (OD) approaches into the next Project phase, with a view to sharpening awareness of the current state of institutional 'health' and options for ways forward within the respective public sector environments.

Such an approach would bring another well tested lens to bear on assessing and ensuring organisational effectiveness . It would further help to:

- anticipate future issues that need to be proactively addressed
- ensure that planning is well grounded in an understanding of the current state of organisational dynamics, strengths, weaknesses, risks and opportunities
- offer access to good practices, lessons, models and conceptual frameworks from other country experience.

OD approaches supported under the next phase of the Project could include institutional audits conducted by international experts; advisory and mentoring support; and institutional learning visits to similar institutions within ASEAN.

Recommendation 8: Building on progress under the Project to date, consider next steps to (i) apply C.88 in practice and (ii) to prioritise attention to its eventual ratification vs a vs C.122 and other relevant ILO Conventions

C.88 is already recognised in legislative terms in both countries and has been translated and disseminated.

However, despite being included as a specific activity and indicator area in the Project Document, there was little progress made since early 2014 towards ratification per se. Such a step needs to be taken in a deliberate and systematic way, with consideration of other ILO Conventions requiring attention as well as the resourcing and other implications of effective implementation.

Recommendation 9: Ensure that long-term sustainability policy, strategies and measures are in place by the end of the next Project period,

Key elements of the Project design in this context should encompass:

- (i) national and provincial government budget allocations as a key success indicator
- (ii) provision for dialogue at the appropriate times and levels on longer term exit strategies, including specific steps and timeframes to reduce engagement and/or refocus ILO support, roles and relationships over time
- (iii) retention of the intent behind the sustainability strategies and good practices workshop which is included in the current Project Document through its incorporation into the planned ASEAN+3 workshop on employment service good practices and lessons in late 2016/early 2017.

Recommendation 10: Continue the current Project management architecture and arrangements for the next phase, with the following adjustments:

- (i) ensure that NPSC agendas include space for identification and discussion of Project implementation experience, lessons, areas for improvement and prioritisation of Project activities and budget allocation
- (ii) consider more regular NPSC meetings to strengthen momentum, continuity and visibility
- (iii) consider a greater role for tripartite partners in the convening and servicing of NPSC meetings (for example, sharing of secretariat responsibilities)
- (iv) consider at ROAP and CO levels what internal steps can be taken to address the activity-by-activity tendency of project implementation, including the associated transaction costs for all parties and delays in allocation of funding.

- (v) increase the resourcing of the PTO and Project support roles, with the PTO established as a fulltime position in Bangkok and Programme support positions established in each of Cambodia, Lao PDR and (if confirmed) Myanmar.

Such resourcing would recognise (i) the complexities and dynamics of a project covering multiple countries; (ii) the need to strengthen overall project monitoring, evaluation and learning; and (iii) that the costs will be small in overall budgetary terms while the benefits in terms of Project performance will be significant.

9.2 Specific recommendations for Cambodia

In addition to the above recommendations encompassing both Cambodia and Lao PDR, the following additional recommendations particularly apply to ongoing planning and performance improvement of the NEA:

Recommendation 11: Build on, consolidate and strengthen current initiatives within the NEA in the following areas, which include priorities highlighted by the NEA in the NSPC meeting 19 November 2015:

Employment Services

- (i) conduct a follow-up job centre assessment early in the new Project period, drawing on the Employment Services Checklist, as a basis for future planning
- (ii) extend employment service outreach through (i) the increased organisation of provincial career fairs (i.e. Battambang, Svay Rieng and Siem Reap) and employment forums in the various provinces, particularly those provinces with job centre presence; (ii) intensified focus on rural communities, with more awareness raising workshops (at least 20 per year); (iii) targeting the national and provincial Chambers of Commerce as a vehicle for reaching out to employers nationwide; (iv) continue printing, dissemination and development of communications materials and tools (including electronic sign boards from job centres, billboards, posters); (v) intensified mass media communications (e.g. developing 3D clip, radio and TV commercials)
- (iii) increase availability and quality of career/vocational/employment counselling and guidance, especially for young job seekers in training institutions, high schools and universities
- (iv) increase availability and quality of pre-employment training for job seekers, especially fresh graduates and job seekers from rural areas; develop more user-friendly tools for this purpose, especially in the areas such as Soft Skills; CV preparation; cover letter writing; interview preparation; labour rights; and OSH

Labour Market Information

- (i) develop a user-friendly comprehensive work flow system, linked to the national data base, to manage and monitor all aspects of NEA operations
- (ii) re-design and update the LMI page on the NEA website
- (iii) recognising the need to strengthen the impact of training approaches:
 - attach (preferably) two LMI experts with NEA for hands-on mentoring and advice over a sustained period
 - integrate training on LMI and PES to strengthen synergies, interdependence and shared understandings
 - consider setting-up an online IT-based self-learning centre which is accessible by all staff nationwide
 - intensify comprehensive training on (i) data collection, management and analysis (i.e. administrative data, primary/secondary data), forecasting (domestic and overseas) and (ii) NEA administrative database management and reporting system (i.e. jobseeker registrations, vacancies, referrals, job matching and automatic notification systems).

Institutional strengthening

Consider the suggestion from the evaluation validation meeting held with tripartite stakeholders at the NEA Headquarters in Phnom Penh (28 July 2016) that the NEA further sharpen its institutional vision for the future by stating a commitment to being:

1. The pre-eminent, best known, most visible and most trusted one-stop service in Cambodia for employment promotion and LMI.
2. The preferred first option for employers, jobseekers and migrant workers nationwide for employment services and LMI.

Links with annual Survey of Employers' Skill Needs

Closely related to but not funded by the Project is the annual Survey of Employers Skill Needs (an NEA-Sweden project funded by SIDA). It was noted by the Siem Reap and Battambang NEA Job Centres that it would be helpful for their services for the data and analysis to be broken down by province as well as national sector.

Given the role of the job centres in conducting the annual survey through carrying out employer interviews in their provinces, it is further recommended that this be considered by the NEA in association with its partners for this project.

9.3 Specific recommendations for Lao PDR

In addition to the above recommendations encompassing both Cambodia and Lao PDR, the following additional recommendations particularly apply to the design of the new Lao PDR DWCP 2017-2021 and cooperation between the ILO and MoLSW/DSDE in the Lao PDR context.^{xx}

Recommendation 12: In the context of an extension of the ILO/China SSC Project, ensure that the following elements are included in the design for Lao PDR, or at least within a broader Project-related cooperation plan between the ILO and the MoLSW with respect to implementation:

- (i) A commitment encompassing all relevant domestic stakeholders to formulate a **strategy for development of the ESJCs** over an agreed timeframe. This should (i) take account of the above general recommendation on adopting a balanced approach to consolidation on the one hand and expansion on the other and (ii) set out key steps, milestones, resource requirements, and respective roles of the MoLSW/DSDE, the ESC and other key stakeholders such as MoES, LSB, TVET institutions and the National Social Security Scheme.

Development of the strategy should also include revisiting and affirming or adjusting the core functions of the ESJCs as currently formulated, with particular attention to the current function concerning TVET, as well as a focus on increasing the district presence of the ESJCs via satellite offices, mobile teams, tapping into LFTU district resources and other appropriate mechanisms.

- (ii) A commitment to develop a **sustainability strategy** (with Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning and Investment input) which includes (i) a phased increase in national budget commitments for employment services and LMI systems development over five years; (ii) steps to continue training and other forms of capacity support for staff through use of both internal MoLSW resources and other locally-based training services which are available; and (iii) indications of the key elements (steps and conditions) of a long term exit strategy for ILO engagement.

^{xx} The recommendations largely draw on recommendations made with respect to the ILO/China SSC Project in the April 2016 Review of the Lao PDR Decent Work Country Programme of the ILO.

- (iii) The necessary steps and timeframes to establish a **legislative basis** for the ESC and ESJCs, which will also strengthen the basis for sustainability.
- (iv) The development of **provincial employment service policy and strategies** (within framework of national policy and strategies) to strengthen long term planning at provincial level (taking account of public sector reform initiatives aimed at strengthening governance and delivery of services at sub-national levels); provide a stronger basis for tripartite collaboration; and inform provincial decision-making on PES planning and investment in ESJC development and operations.
- (v) Strengthened **tripartite engagement** around the role of the ESJCs by establishing closer linkages with the Provincial Tripartite Committees where these exist (e.g. support for the operation and development of the ESJCs could be a regular agenda item for the Provincial Tripartite Committees, as is the case in Savannakhet Province)
- (vi) Clarification of the **role and resourcing of the ESC** as the institutional point of oversight, coordination and technical/administrative support for the ESJCs (noting that the ESC has been requested by the MoLSW to draft a strategy for the devolution of the necessary authority, functions and resources over five years).
- (vii) The development of the already planned **model ESJCs**, to be adequately resourced, strategically located and used for wider training purposes and testing of new approaches.

Consider in this context the development of ‘model’ components in the work of other centres. Possibilities include engagement with large employers with significant labour gaps (e.g. Vientiane Province); addressing labour requirements in Special Economic Zones (e.g. Savannakhet); and focusing in a single sector (e.g. Luang Prabang and tourism, in this case with already existing ILO programme linkages). It is proposed that the Public Employment Services Checklist produced under the Project provide a basis for such models.

- (viii) Training of a larger **critical mass of staff** in provincial DSDE offices to cover ESJC and MRC roles (where applicable) to ensure that the back-up capacity is in place for the necessary skills and knowledge to be available at all times to clients. The Follow-up Assessment of the ESJCs recommends that a core of at least five staff be adequately trained in PES roles and skills in each job centre.
- (ix) The development of a **national integrated internet-based platform** for employment services, encompassing all the ESJCs and the ESC and linked to the national LMI database, once developed.
- (x) The development and servicing of an integrated national **Employment Services Website** and associated social media tools to reach jobseekers, with a promotional plan encompassing the ESJCs and the ESC.
- (xi) Establishment of and support for a national **Association of Recruitment Agencies** to ensure greater coordination and adherence to agreed service standards (currently a priority of the ESC).
- (xii) The development of specific MOUs with the **LNCCI and LFTU** as a basis for more actively engagement (e.g. through the Provincial Tripartite Committees, the LNCCI Employer Skills Needs Survey and tapping into LFTU structures and staff at district level).
- (xiii) Strengthening of the MoLSW/DCDE monitoring of implementation of ESJC work plans, associated with advice on planning which takes into account available resources and capacities.
- (xiv) Greater focus in training for ESJC staff on IEC and communications skills to supplement national resources by strengthening visibility and outreach to clients at local level.

Recommendation 13: Internally review the recommendations of the 2015 independent reports on the ESJCs’ Human Resources and Communications Plans to assess progress of implementation and identify those still relevant and requiring action in the next period of project implementation.

10. ANNEXES

- I. Evaluation recommendations by category, priority and budget implications
- II. Key components of the Cambodia and Lao PDR Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) 2011-2015
- III. Analytical Framework: core criteria questions to be adapted to particular requirements of stakeholder interviews and discussions
- IV. Summary of feedback from key stakeholder groups: Cambodia
- V. Summary of feedback from key stakeholder groups: Lao PDR
- VI. Priorities for a next Project phase indicated by the MoLSW /DSDE and NEA
- VII. Good practice templates
- VIII. National stakeholders interviewed in Cambodia and Lao
- IX. ILO staff interviewed in Bangkok, Cambodia and Lao PDR
- X. List of documents reviewed
- XI. Draft Terms of Reference: Final Independent Evaluation

Annex I

Recommendations by category, priority & budget implications				
Rec no.	Recommendation	Priority	Budget implications	Comment
Project extension				
1	<p>Extend the ILO-China South-South Cooperation Project 2014-2015 for three years with a significantly increased budget as a key component of implementing employment creation and labour market information commitments under the DCWPs in both Lao PDR and Cambodia.</p> <p>Such extension would recognise the support of the two National Project Steering Committees for Project continuation, as well as the ongoing interest indicated by China.</p>	Immediate for decision to be taken and planning to commence	High	Recommendations are premised on an understanding that there will be a second Project phase which includes a focus on social protection and addition of Myanmar, with the duration and extent of resourcing yet to be determined.
Focus of next Project phase				
2	<p>Continue the dual focus on employment services and labour market information in a next Project phase, but elevate the specific attention given to the strengthening (and in the Lao PDR case, establishment as required) of LMI systems and capacities.</p> <p>With respect to LMI, priorities of a next Project phase should include:</p> <p>(i) provision of core IT hardware and skills development in Lao PDR in collaboration with ADB</p> <p>(ii) ongoing strengthening of data gathering, management, analysis, messaging and dissemination capacity in Cambodia</p> <p>(iii) support for 3rd Labour Force Survey and ISCO to 6 digit level in Cambodia (the NIS has already</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Mid-term</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>ADB funding is already committed.</p> <p>Building on existing commitments and work.</p> <p>Proposal already prepared by Cambodia NIS for</p>

	<p>prepared a project proposal for ILO support in this regard)</p> <p>(iv) integration of labour migration dimensions into LMI collection, analysis and dissemination (see Recommendation 4)</p> <p>(v) links with other LMI-related projects, including skills surveys in specific areas by the ILO and other international partners</p> <p>(vi) enhanced linkages between LMI, national employment and social protection policy formulation and implementation, and TVET curriculum development</p> <p>With respect to employment services, priorities of a next Project phase should include:</p> <p>(i) ensuring a balanced consolidation of existing service capacity with phased expansion to ensure that gains to date are not lost and there are strong institutional and staff skill foundations for the establishment of new job centres</p> <p>(ii) continued focus on strengthening staff skills, building on progress to date, and ensuring a critical mass of staffing at each job centre</p> <p>(iii) ongoing improvement of the location; quality of facilities and space; and visibility of the job centres</p> <p>(iv) integration of labour migration dimensions into employment service delivery and outreach (see Recommendation 4)</p> <p>(v) strengthened outreach, with a sustained focus on reaching community level in rural areas through expanded organisation of provincial and district job fairs; employment forums; mobile teams; local media outreach; collaboration with employers and trade unions, as well as NGOs and CBOs; backed-up by expanded media profile at all levels and 'high</p>	<p>Mid-term</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Mid-term</p> <p>Mid-term (for full integration)</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>ILO support on ISCO.</p> <p>Requires step-by-step approach within existing resources.</p> <p>Requires outreach and seeking synergies within existing resources.</p> <p>Requires outreach and seeking synergies within existing resources.</p> <p>Requires proactive planning and budgeting. It is not envisaged that Project resources would fund the establishment of new job centres.</p> <p>Funded long-term via national and provincial budgets, with targeted support from the Project as necessary.</p> <p>As above. ADB funding already committed for 2016-17 in Lao PDR.</p>
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	<p>impact' use of IT tools such as national websites and social media</p> <p>(vi) setting a 5-year target in both countries, in collaboration with the respective Ministries of Education and Sports, that no student should leave school at any level unaware of the national employment service (this should be doubly the case for students at TVET institutions and universities)</p> <p>With respect to capacity development approaches across all Project components, there should be increased attention to:</p> <p>(i) the development of internal training, advisory and other support capacities and approaches (including through ToT) as part of long-term effectiveness and sustainability agendas</p> <p>(ii) the quality of training, with greater focus on assessment of training needs, follow-up evaluation of impact, phased approaches (from 'basic to advanced' over time), use of mentoring and in-situ 'hands-on approaches,' personnel exchanges, internships, secondments and the like.</p> <p>This should include a particular focus on strengthening core strategic leadership and management capacity in each of the respective national institutions.</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Medium-high</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Should be integrated into MOES budget and national curriculum planning</p> <p>Supported by phase 2 Project budget.</p> <p>Supported by phase 2 Project budget.</p>
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Benchmarks for design on next phase

3	<p>Incorporate the following benchmarks into the design of a next ILO/CHINA SSC Project phase:</p> <p>(i) explicitly draw on the challenges, lessons and good practices identified under the first Project phase, recognising that these arise from extensive stakeholder feedback through the current evaluation process as well as meetings of the NPSC, the Mid-</p>	<p>Immediate (once decision taken to extend Project)</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The budget implications are low, as they primarily concern the design on the next Project Document.</p> <p>The main costs will be those of employing consultancy</p>
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	<p>term Project Review and other previous reviews and studies.</p> <p>(ii) ensure joint formulation of the design to the extent possible to enhance ownership, commitment and common understandings, including in the areas of specific outputs and indicators</p> <p>(iii) in this context, ensure joint attention to the formulation of SMART indicators, with a particular focus on how they will be measured and mechanisms for regular monitoring and review</p> <p>(iv) ensure integrated approaches to the ongoing development of operational policy, systems, procedures and staff capacity with respect to employment services and LMI, so that both components ‘move in sync together,’ with staff fully aware of their interdependence</p> <p>(v) incorporate a deepening of the South-South cooperation/knowledge sharing dimensions of the Project, including through increased opportunities for Cambodia –Lao PDR mutual learning and support; inter-agency secondments (between MoLSW and NEA as an initial priority); setting-up immersion learning opportunities in China and other countries as relevant (with the necessary attention to the communication challenges); further hands-on coaching by China expert (s); and job centre twinning for mutual benefit (e.g. Luang Prabang and Siem Reap based on their shared tourism focus)</p> <p>(vi) ensure enhanced synergies within and around the Project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with other components of the respective DWCPs, especially Decent Work employment creation, social protection strengthening and expansion initiatives, labour migration and skills development 			<p>services as required and travel to the respective countries for consultation purposes.</p> <p>The addition of Myanmar as a partner in the project and the inclusion of a thematic focus on social protection will increase the design/consultation costs.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - between the relevant specialist and programme/project management staff in Bangkok (including staff servicing the GMS TRIANGLE Project) - with other internationally-supported projects and initiatives, including mapping these; jointly identifying specific areas for collaboration; establishing mechanisms as necessary for regular dialogue and review; and (to the extent possible) incorporating appropriate specific commitments into the Project design for the next phase <p>(vii) incorporate specific provision/requirements for strengthening the relationships within each country between relevant ministries, departments and agencies, particularly between the NEA, MoLVT, MoES, social protection agencies, TVET institutions and NIS in Cambodia; and the MoLSW/DSDE, MoES, social protection agencies, TVET institutions and LSB in Lao PDR</p> <p>(viii) ensure every aspect of Project design recognises and includes specific provision as appropriate for the strengthening of tripartite cooperation, mindful of the strong commitments stated by employer and union representatives in both countries to greater practical engagement in support of national public employment services and improvement of the availability, credibility, dissemination and use of LMI</p> <p>(ix) ensure specific attention (reflected in Project outputs and indicators), to more systematically and visibly mainstreaming gender and addressing the particular needs and priorities persons with disability. The latter area, being that most neglected in implementation to date, should receive special</p>			
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	attention in Project design and implementation.			
Integration of employment and labour migration services				
4	<p>Establish a new priority focus within the next phase of Project design on the integration of general employment and migrant labour services.</p> <p>This should encompass:</p> <p>(i) steps to develop the necessary policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks and</p> <p>(ii) inclusion of such a priority within the long-term institutional development and resourcing plans of the NEA and MoLSW/DSDE.</p> <p>Specific steps towards integration that could be taken with Project support include the following:</p> <p>(i) draw on skills, systems and approaches already developed for the existing MRCs under the GMS TRIANGLE Project to integrate migrant labour requirements into existing employment services, supported by the requisite training, registration and monitoring systems</p> <p>(ii) expand existing labour market programmes for returned migrant workers by targeting job fairs, employment forums and other forms of outreach in the provinces with the greatest concentration of returned migrant workers</p> <p>(iii) strengthen the coordination and enforcement of agreed standards for the pre-migration preparation services provided to migrant workers, including through the strengthened role envisaged for the Employment Services Centre in Lao</p>	Mid-term	Low	<p>The development of a strategy and workplan to achieve this recommendation will be required in both countries.</p> <p>While in the long term there will be efficiencies achieved as a result of integrated services, there will be transition costs in areas such as the development of the necessary strategy and plan, as well as support for legislative /regulatory and institutional changes.</p> <p>The ILO should ensure close synergies between the budgetary and project management planning of this Project and the TRIANGLE Project to ensure that (i) the necessary transition resources are made available and (ii) discussions are held with national counterparts on long-term sustainability based</p>
		Mid-term	Medium (for the respective governments)	
		Mid-term	Medium	
		Mid-term	Medium	
		Immediate	Medium	

	<p>PDR and its efforts to establish a national association of recruitment agencies</p> <p>(iv) reinforce and enhance cooperation with local authorities as well as relevant NGOs, to register all job seekers, in particular returned migrant workers, and to disseminate job opportunities at local level</p> <p>(v) for provinces in each country without the presence of job centres, put in place special measures such as mobile teams or task forces to reach out to returned migrant workers as well as those contemplating labour migration</p> <p>(vi) ensure that the skills of the returned migrant workers can be documented and recognised as a basis for finding employment opportunities at home.</p> <p>(vii) as in other areas covered by these recommendations, ensure proactive consultation and planned collaboration with other initiatives at national and regional level in this area, with a particular focus on synergies and collaboration between the GMS TRIANGLE Project and the next phase of the ILO/China SSC Project (other key players include the IOM, UN Women and joint UN initiatives such as UNIAP)</p> <p>(viii) ensure that the necessary research (e.g. the recent migrant labour profiling study carried out by the NEA) is carried out to support evidence-based policy making and service design.</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Mid-term</p> <p>Mid-term</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Mid-term</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>on national budget commitments.</p> <p>ILO tools such as the <i>Guide to Recognize the Skills of the Returned Migrant Workers</i> are available for this purpose.</p> <p>Such approaches should be integrated into existing guidelines and procedures.</p>
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Role of NEA and MoLSW/DSDE in promoting service standards across all employment services nationally

5	Draw on the internationally-grounded service standards of the respective national public employment services to strengthen the quality of the wider			
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	<p>national employment services and LMI environment in both countries (public and private) through the following steps, supported by the Project:</p> <p>(i) map employment services available for jobseekers and employers, including website services, with view to facilitating a greater sharing of information, coordination, synergies and cross-referencing between providers, public and private</p> <p>(ii) map LMI initiatives, including those supported by international partners, with view to facilitating greater coordination, synergies, cross-referencing and promotion of best practices to ensure consistency in quality.</p> <p>(iii) In both of the above areas, this may include a follow-up convening and facilitation role to provide a platform for the relevant agencies and organisations to come together to share activities and plans, as well as to discuss how to generate greater coherence, coordination of approach and shared standards.</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Mid-term</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>The two mapping exercises proposed may require the use of short-term consultancy services. However, the overall budgetary implication of this is considered low.</p>
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Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and learning

<p>6</p>	<p>As part of the capacity development orientation of a next Project Phase, incorporate a specific focus on strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) policy, systems, processes and skills in the respective PES institutions, drawing inter alia on the approaches and lessons already developed in the NEA context to date.</p> <p>Recognising the different starting points in this regard, such attention by the Project will further strengthen the learning cultures within each institution, contributing to enhanced performance, improved planning ability and the targeting of staff training and systems development in the key areas of need. Specific steps that should be taken with</p>			<p>A large part of the necessary support in this area will be technical, e.g. via ILO specialist staff and/or short term consultancies with M&E and learning expertise.</p> <p>This recommendation is closely linked to the following one on strengthening the Organisational Development (OD) focus within the Project.</p>
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	<p>Project technical and financial support include:</p> <p>(i) Identification and documentation of lessons and good practice as a continuous process (the coordination of which is already included in the job description of the PTO) to be reported to and discussed at (i) meetings of the National Project Steering Committees; and (ii) internal strategy, planning and review meetings of the respective government institutions.</p> <p>(ii) Publication and dissemination of good practices and lessons via respective websites; meetings of staff of the participating government agencies; tripartite partners; other international partners; relevant workshop presentations and discussions at national, subregional and ASEAN levels; the mid-term review and end-of-project evaluation; the ILO Community of Practice for employment services; and other ILO services. Consideration should be given in the next Project phase to the timely publication of a consolidated set of lessons and good practices for wider dissemination.</p> <p>(iii) Recognition of a commitment to learning and knowledge sharing in performance appraisal approaches.</p> <p>(iv) In the case of Lao PDR, the establishment of a standardised format and approach for regular evaluation of the services provided by the ESJCs, including recommendations for improvement and tracking of implementation of previous recommendations.</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Mid-term</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>M&E and learning aspects of the respective PES institutions should be included in South-South exchange and mutual learning activities under the Project where-ever possible.</p>
Strengthening the core PES institutions				
7	Introduce an explicit focus on organisational development (OD) approaches into the next Project phase, with a view to sharpening	Mid-term	Medium	Transitional approaches supported under the next phase of

	<p>awareness of the current state of institutional ‘health’ and options for ways forward within the respective public sector environments.</p> <p>Such an approach would bring another well tested lens to bear on assessing and ensuring organisational effectiveness . It would further help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) anticipate future issues that need to be proactively addressed (ii) ensure that planning is well grounded in an understanding of the current state of organisational dynamics, strengths, weaknesses, risks and opportunities (iii) offer access to good practices, lessons, models and conceptual frameworks from other country experience. 			<p>the Project could include institutional audits; advisory and mentoring support; and learning visits to similar institutions.</p> <p>Longer term national budget commitments will be required to sustain the approach.</p>
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Implementing ILO Convention 88

8	<p>Building on progress under the Project to date, consider next steps to (i) apply C.88 in practice and (ii) to prioritise attention to its eventual ratification vs a vs C.122 and other relevant ILO Conventions</p> <p>C.88 is already recognised in legislative terms in both countries and has been translated and disseminated.</p> <p>However, despite being included as a specific activity and indicator area in the Project Document, there was little progress made since early 2014 towards ratification per se. Such a step needs to be taken in a deliberate and systematic way, with consideration of other ILO Conventions requiring attention as well as the resourcing and other implications of effective implementation.</p>	Mid-term	High (on a long term basis for the respective governments)	<p>The evaluation validation meetings held in Phnom Penh and Vientiane both discussed this recommendation at some length. Of particular concern were (i) the degree to which this Convention should (or should not) be prioritised over other Conventions (including C.122 on employment policy) and (ii) the implications in terms of resourcing to ensure effective implementation and reporting.</p>
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Ensuring sustainability of Project outcomes

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<p>9</p>	<p>Ensure that long-term sustainability policy, strategies and measures are in place by the end of the next Project period.</p> <p>Key elements of the Project design in this context should encompass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) national and provincial government budget allocations as a key success indicator (ii) provision for dialogue at the appropriate times and levels on longer term exit strategies, including specific steps and timeframes to reduce engagement and/or refocus ILO support, roles and relationships over time (iii) retention of the sustainability strategies and good practices workshop which is included in the current Project Document, with a rescheduling of this for first year of the new Project phase. 	<p>Mid-longer term</p> <p>Mid-longer term</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>High (for the respective governments)</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p>	
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Project architecture for next phase

<p>10</p>	<p>Continue the current Project management architecture and arrangements for the next phase, with the following adjustments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) ensure that NPSC agendas include space for identification and discussion of Project implementation experience, lessons, areas for improvement and prioritisation of Project activities and budget allocation (ii) consider more regular NPSC meetings to strengthen momentum, continuity and visibility (iii) consider a greater role for tripartite partners in the convening and servicing of NPSC meetings (for example, sharing of secretariat responsibilities) 	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>The major budget implication is related to the increased resourcing of Project management and administration to support an expanded and more complex phase 2 design.</p>
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	<p>(iv) increase the resourcing of the PTO and Project administrator roles (to a fulltime level for the PTO, at least), recognising (i) the complexities and dynamics of a project covering multiple countries; (ii) the need to strengthen overall project monitoring, evaluation and learning; and (iii) that the costs will be small in overall budgetary terms while the benefits in terms of Project performance will be significant</p> <p>(v) consider at ROAP and CO levels what internal steps can be taken to address the activity-by-activity tendency of project implementation, including the associated transaction costs for all parties and delays in allocation of funding.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>Low</p>	
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Annex II

Key components of the Cambodia and Lao PDR Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) 2011-2015

The core architecture of the **Cambodia DWCP for 2011-2015** is provided by a set of three priorities and 13 outcomes agreed between the principle stakeholders as follows:

Priority 1: Improving industrial relations and rights at work	
Outcome 1.1	Professional and technical capacities of social partners strengthened
Outcome 1.2	Improved mechanisms and processes for dispute resolution
Outcome 1.3	Social Dialogue is both more effective and more widely employed, including collective bargaining agreements and their enforcement
Outcome 1.4	National labour standards reviewed, revised or developed in line with relevant international labour standards and reported upon to international supervisory and monitoring bodies
Outcome 1.5	More effective application of equality and rights at work for discriminated and vulnerable groups
Priority 2: Promoting an enabling environment for decent employment growth, with a particular focus on young people	
Outcome 2.1	Development of a National Employment Policy and relevant institutional framework for promoting equitable employment and protection
Outcome 2.2	Enhanced employability of men and women through improved skills development and public employment services.
Outcome 2.3	Improved MSME business and entrepreneurship skills and services
Outcome 2.4	Effective progress made to enhance enterprise productivity/competitiveness
Priority 3: Improving and expanding social protection	
Outcome 3.1	Increased quality and coverage of social protection, particularly among vulnerable groups
Outcome 3.2	Improved occupational safety and health in the workplace
Outcome 3.3	Effective progress made toward the elimination of child labour, especially its worst forms
Outcome 3.4	Enhanced delivery of targeted prevention and care programmes for HIV/AIDS in the world of work

The core architecture of the **Lao PDR DWCP for 2011-2015** is provided by a set of four priorities and 15 outcomes agreed between the principle stakeholders as follows:

Priority 1: Promoting employment and skills development for more equitable growth and poverty reduction	
Outcome 1.1	Increased opportunities created for decent and productive employment, particularly in rural areas.
Outcome 1.2	Increased numbers of men, women and youth demonstrate skills in line with labour market demand.
Outcome 1.3	Enhanced institutional capacity to support entrepreneurship and enterprise productivity and competitiveness, particularly in sectors with high employment potential.

Outcome 1.4	Improved migration management mechanisms and policies
Priority 2: Improving labour market governance	
Outcome 2.1	More effective application of laws against gender discrimination.
Outcome 2.2	More effective ratification and application of fundamental and governance conventions.
Outcome 2.3	Labour law is more effective at facilitating social dialogue, resolving disputes, setting wages and preventing misuse of employment contracts.
Outcome 2.4	The elimination of child labour receives stronger recognition as an integral part of national development policies, plans and programmes.
Priority 3: Improving and expanding social protection	
Outcome 3.1	Social protection mechanisms strengthened and expanded, with a particular focus on the expansion of health insurance.
Outcome 3.2	HIV and AIDS policies and programmes enhanced and coverage widened.
Outcome 3.3	Improved institutional and legal provisions for the promotion of Occupational Safety and Health (OHS) in the workplace.
Priority 4: Improving constituent capacities and strengthening social dialogue	
Outcome 4.1	Enhanced capacity of Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI).
Outcome 4.2	Enhanced capacity of Lao Federation of Trade Union (LFTU).
Outcome 4.3	Improved mechanisms for preventing and resolving disputes.
Outcome 4.4	Enhanced institutional and legal mechanisms to determine Minimum Wage(s).

Annex III

Analytical Framework: core criteria questions to be adapted to particular requirements of stakeholder interviews and discussions

Adapted from the Terms of reference

1. Relevance

- To what extent does the Project directly respond to priorities set out in relevant national policies, strategies, legislation and action plans in Lao PDR and Cambodia?
- To what extent has the Project been relevant and responsive to the issues and needs of beneficiaries of the public employment services systems in Lao PDR and Cambodia, with a particular focus on rural populations?
- To what extent has the Project made strategic use of coordination and collaboration with other projects/agencies and on-going initiatives to increase effectiveness and impacts (e.g. SIDA project in Cambodia and ADB and EU projects in Lao DPR).
- To what extent is the Project perceived by relevant stakeholders as an effort by the ILO to support Lao PDR and Cambodia in addressing the improvement of job matching and dissemination of labour market information.

2. Validity of design

- Does the Project design (i.e. priorities, outcomes, outputs and activities) address the stakeholder needs that were identified and are they realistic to the situation on the ground?
- To what extent were particular differences in the two national local contexts taken into account in project design?
- What changes to project design were made following the mid-term review and to what extent are these seen to have improved project relevance?
- Are the means of verification for the indicators appropriate and realistic?
- What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving its objectives?
- Do outputs link to the intended outcomes that link to broader impact?
- Did the design identify risks and key assumption? Was a mitigation strategy identified. What strategies has the Project undertaken to address challenges?
- How relevant and useful are the indicators and means of verification described in the Project Document and the monitoring and evaluation matrix for assessing the Project's progress, results and impact? Are the means of verification appropriate? Are the indicators gender sensitive?
- To what extent was the gender mainstreamed in project design?
- Was the capacity of Project partners taken into account in the strategy and means of action?
- Did the Project design adequately plan for an effective participation of governments and social partners.
- Does the design need to be modified for a follow-up phase/project proposal. In what particular areas is redesign required? What specific changes are recommended for Immediate Objectives, outcome, outputs, indicators and targets?

3. Effectiveness

Has the Project achieved the immediate objectives as demonstrated by relevant indicators?

- To what extent has the Project contributed to achieving relevant outcomes in Cambodia and Lao PDR's DWCP's.
- Is the Project making sufficient progress towards its planned objectives?
- Have the quantity and quality of the outputs produced satisfactory?
- How have stakeholders been involved in implementation? How have stakeholders including social partners been involved in Project implementation.
- How effective has the Project been in establishing national ownership? Is the Project management and implementation participatory? How has this participation contributed towards achievement of the Project objectives?

- Has the Project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities?
- To what extent did the Project reach out to rural populations and the informal sector? What constraints, challenges and lessons were identified in this context?
- What were the main challenges, constraints, problems and areas in achieving the results?
- Assess how gender considerations have been mainstreamed through the project cycle.
- Assess the ILO's role in coordinating the stakeholders and implementing partners.
- To what extent has the Project facilitated sharing of knowledge and lessons?
- To what extent has the Project and donor branding had wider visibility to relevant audiences?
- How has the Project responded to the changing situation (political, legal, economic, institutional etc) of the country and/or of the constituents and partners' priorities?

4. Efficiency of resource use

- 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? In general, do the results achieved justify the costs? Could the same results be attained with fewer resources?
- Have Project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent has the Project has leveraged resources from other sources / collaborated with other projects?
- What synergies have there been with other components of the respective DWCPs? How have these affected Project effectiveness and efficiency?

5. Effectiveness of management arrangements

- Given the size and complexity of the Project, were the existing management structure, staffing and technical capacity sufficient and adequate?
- Did the Project receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from the ILO and its implementing partners. If not why? How could it be improved?
- How effective were the National Steering Committee, Project Task Force and the donor management mechanisms?

6. Impact and Sustainability

- What evidence is there of longer term Project impact on public employment services and LMI systems in Cambodia and Lao PDR?
- What has been the impact of better employment services delivery in Cambodia and Lao PDR for the primary target groups (i.e. higher employment rates)?
- What has been the impact at 1) national policy and/or strategy; 2) legislative / regulatory; and 3) institutional levels?
- Has the Project developed feasible strategies / options for sustainability of the above outcomes? To what extent have these been implemented? To what extent have they been successful to date?
- In the above context, to what extent have elements of the Project been mainstreamed into national budget allocations?
- Has the Project's knowledge and experience been effectively transferred to national partners? How has this been verified?

Annex IV

Summary of feedback from key stakeholder groups: Cambodia

1. Feedback from employers

1.1 National Office of CAMFEBA

The NEA's partnership with the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) is a core focus of efforts to engage with employers in promoting its services. As detailed in the earlier summary of implementation of Project Outcomes, a cornerstone of this collaboration has been the recent publication of three booklets targeted at job seekers, including one that explains the respective rights of employers and workers. The booklets were launched at the Royal University of Phnom Penh on 28 January 2016. A further important focus has been joint NEA / CAMFEBA visits to employers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, where CAMFEBA has offices.

A parallel project of significant relevance to the NEA /CAMFEBA relationship is the annual report on employers skill needs, which *inter alia* draws on input from structured interviews carried out by the job centres at provincial level. The latest available report : *Skill Shortages and Skill Gaps in Cambodian Labour Markets: Evidence from Employer Skills Needs Survey 2015 (May 2015)*, was funded by Swedish Public Employment Service in cooperation with NEA.

Feedback provide by the CAMFEBA national office on NEA services drew on recent internal survey comment by 12 members, a multi-sector meeting of employers and inputs provided by the federation's representative on the China Study Tour and National Project Steering Committee. Key points highlighted were:

- A commitment to the NEA and to working with the agency to ensure that its services meet employer as well as job seeker requirements.
- Concerns about lack of feedback to employers on progress in following-up on vacancy announcements, along with an observation that the NEA appears to be under-resourced for such follow-up. Such concerns can affect employer trust and confidence in NEA services.
- The NEA website requires upgrading to make it more competitive and stand out alongside other options that are available. Employers would also prefer access to whole job seekers data base, not just a truncated version, so can they follow-up directly.
- Employers are willing to pay a fee for service if they receive reliable services (individual employers echoed this view at provincial level).
- The location of some job centres, particularly in Siem Reap, are a barrier to easy access by job seekers to NEA services.
- The quality of NEA staff is crucial to effective ES delivery and the agency's effective relations with employers.
- If the Project continues to a second phase, it would be helpful for the National Project Steering Committee to have more time and space for discussion of challenges, lessons and ways forward.
- The outreach of the NEA to schools and tertiary education institutions is crucial, with positive reference made to a recent youth forum convened by the NEA in Phnom Penh which attracted 200 young people.
- There remains an untapped potential for more systematic adaption and application of the knowledge, skills and learning experiences from the China Study Tour. This requires expertise in understanding the Chinese PES model, structures and details, both in terms of Chinese language, culture and its complexity. "There are tones of learning experiences and assistance we can gather from China."
- There needs to be a more effective engagement of employers in driving programmes on job matching, recruitment and providing information on job availability, job requirements and candidate selection process and criteria. This requires expertise in effective engaging with the local business enterprises and companies to seek meaningful discussions and soliciting of employment information and commitment.
- A Cambodian-based focal point (either funded by ILO/China SSC, or jointly funded by ILO/China SSC with the Cambodian Government and private sector) should be contracted to effectively promote the above

strategies; to facilitate the implementation of PES programmes within Cambodia; to understand and engage China's PES department effectively; and to help drive the implementation of Cambodia's PES programmes.

- It is important to be creative and innovative in building and adjusting PES programmes to suit local Cambodia's situations (even to the extent of differing strategies for different provinces within Cambodia).

1.2 Individual employers at provincial level

In the case of two 'high-end' hotels in Siem Reap which have regular interaction with the job centre as vacancies or new positions arise, it was noted that while they take low skilled staff from countryside via NEA job fairs and forums and train them on the job, they also get trained technical staff through the job centre from the local TVET institute, particularly in areas such as air conditioning engineers and electricians.

A large hardware store manager in Siem Reap also served as the President of the provincial Chambers of Commerce. He found out about the NEA from one of the regular national TV slots and had recruited four staff via the job centre. He was very satisfied with the service and commented that this is valid role for government to play. He further agreed to invite the job centre to meet with the local Chambers of Commerce and recommended that the NEA establish stronger link with national organisation, which would in turn provide a vehicle for reaching out to all provincial memberships.

A small employer in Battambang (motor cycle parts) likewise indicated that she had a very positive and regular interaction with the job centre, commenting that it "makes recruitment easy - just pick-up the telephone." She has recommended the job centre to other employers and would welcome the introduction of a soft skills training programme by the NEA (due to be introduced in Battambang in 2017).

Another Battambang employer (construction) was attracted to the NEA because he was looking for a transparent, balanced and credible recruitment process. Has found that 80 percent of job centre candidates were well matched to requirements and recruits 3-5 staff every year, both high and low skilled. He would also welcome pre-employment training on soft skills, noting a change in employer training practices towards using an on-the-job mentoring approach. Job centre assistance on CV preparation was also seen as also useful, as 50 percent of CVs that he sees as an employer are not clear. Staff at the job centre were seen as having a strong commitment to helping job seekers and he recommends the service to other employers. Like other employers, he indicated that he would be willing to pay a fee for service or in kind. He further suggested that job seekers should also pay a nominal fee for service to help improve the facilities in the job centre.

An international employer perspective was added by an employer in one of the Svay Reang Province Special Economic Zones. The Taiwanese company uses district-level job forums organised by the job centre as a major recruitment platform, interviewing and employing an average of 50-65 unskilled workers at each event. No skilled employees are recruited in this way, as they tend to be employed directly by the company.

2. Trade unions

2.1 NEA youth focal points in trade unions

A key focus of efforts to engage trade unions in support of the NEA has been through the establishment of a network of youth focal points in selected unions. Supported by a Cambodia-based consultant, this initiative proceeded in two phases, beginning with an initial group of four national confederations of trade unions, then expanding to the following 12:

- Cambodian Confederation of Trade Union (CCTU)
- Cambodian Labour Confederation (CLC)
- National Assembly Cambodian Confederation (NACC)
- Cambodian Confederation of Union (CCU)
- National Independent Federation Textile Union of Cambodia (NIFTUC)
- Independent Democratic of Informal Economic Association (IDEA), Tuk-Tuk and street vendors
- Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC)
- Cambodian Youth Network (CYN) Youth Association that alliance with the trade unions but more specific for youth

- Union Coalition of Labour (UCL)
- Cambodian Independent Civil Servant Association (CICA)
- Cambodian Domestic Worker Network Union (CDWNU)
- Cambodian Food and Service Workers Federation (CFSWF) Beer promoters and services such as beer gardens, karaoke venues, massage etc.

The above confederations were selected primarily due to the fact that each has its own “Youth Unit,” which is under the supervision of the Executive Committee. The Youth Unit is responsible for providing pre-employment guidance to students and new graduates (both men and women) including interns. With support from the Project, training and follow-up activities as part of this outreach activity have included:

- **Orientation training on employment services:** This included study visits to the National Technical Training Institute (NTTI) and the Phnom Penh job centre.
- **Developing career materials for young trade union members:** These included customised union registration forms, leaflets and posters. Focal points were trained to help register young job seekers in their respective organisations:
- **Visits to job centres in Svay Rieng and Siem Reap Provinces** to build connections and share information between union offices and job centres.
- **Development of Union Action Plans:** These covered promotion of the NEA: the role of the focal points in assisting with and submitting jobseeker registrations; and support provided by the NEA to the focal point network. Initial seed funding was provided in the expectation that the activities involved would become mainstreamed within union finances.

Youth focal point feedback

The union focal points joined a focal group discussion with the evaluation team. Following is a summary of key points:

All had received training on how to find jobs, promote NEA services and their role as NEA focal points. As part of the liaison role with job seekers in workplace, focal points described how they received and submitted forms and organised training sessions for union members on NEA services. One focal point described how she reached out to informal sector workers, including tuk tuk drivers, street vendors, motorcycle taxis, etc.

However, all the youth focal points reported that there had been no or very limited follow-up by NEA, either in acknowledgement of receiving the original registrations or in providing regular job feedback to those who had registered (in contrast with provincial level jobseeker feedback where regular follow-up was reported, even after they had found a job, to check on current status and advise on new better paid opportunities). In cases where feedback absent or limited, youth focal points reported that the experience left job seekers disappointed and turning to other avenues to find work.

More than any other category of stakeholders interviewed, the youth focal points were aware of the NEA website, which they in most cases learnt about by word of mouth. However, they commented that it is limited in what it offers compared with other employment websites which are much better known amongst young people, particularly ‘Bongthom’. They commented that the NEA site needs to be more dynamic and visual, using attractive graphics, cartoons and lively DVD clips. One focal point working in the entertainment sector further commented that many young job seekers have low literacy levels and may not be able to afford a cell phone or access to the internet. The image of the NEA as a government service was also detrimental in the view of all the youth focal points.

Concerns were highlighted about migrant labour issues, particularly the risks involved for those who migrate illegally, and the practices of private recruitment companies. This was seen as an important area for high profile attention by the NEA as a core part of its outreach and messaging to job seekers. Strong support was indicated for the provision by the NEA of soft skills training as part of pre-employment preparation services.

2.2 Cambodia Trade Union Council (CTUC)

Member of National Steering Committee and participant in China Study Tour

The union actively disseminates information on NEA services and communication channels such as the website and Facebook site. The regular NEA television slots were seen as helpful. The union also actively promotes NEA to employers, who tend to look to the agency for skilled recruits. Lower skilled workers will tend to go directly to the factory seeking work. Low levels of education and literacy were seen as issues to be addressed as part of a more comprehensive approach to employment promotion. It was suggested that a small budget from NEA to support union efforts to promote the employment services would be helpful.

On the China Study Tour, one point that stood out was the focus and availability of services at commune level, where the job centres were full of people, in contrast to those in Cambodia. On the National Project Steering Committee, it was suggested that more frequent meetings might add momentum and that a focus more on district level outreach and service provision would be helpful, including through partnerships with NGOs and CBOs to strengthen community links and visibility.

2.3 Svay Reang Province union representative

The representative had been part of a union visit to the provincial job centre facilitated by the Project consultant working with trade unions. He reported on three trainings that he had organised on the Labour Law for union members in one of the province's Special Economic Zones, at a personal cost of US \$ 420. He proposed that informational materials on the law should be available at the job centres and NEA website for dissemination to union members, and that small funding be made available to support efforts such as his to promote the Labour Law and the services of the NEA.

3. Jobseekers at provincial level

12 current or recent jobseekers were interviewed by the evaluation team. The majority had received advice from job centres in Svay Reang, Battambang or Siem Reap Provinces, particularly with respect to CV preparation and applying for jobs. They had come to the job centre in a variety of ways, including recommendations from teachers, recommendations from friends and as the result of job centre visits to their class at a TVET institution.

The majority had found employment with job centre support, although in two cases they were looking for new opportunities. In one case, the job seeker had found work via the 'YES Centre' in Siem Reap, set up by group of NGOs. This provides a similar service to the job centre, as well as free training including in English and Chinese. Only one had looked the NEA website, but seen no suitable vacancies and not come back to it. Several were aware of other job websites and looked at these, particularly BongThom and Khmer 29.

Apart from one jobseeker, all found the job centre concerned to be proactive in calling with job possibilities and following-up job placements to ensure that the jobseeker was satisfied. In the case of the one exception, the jobseeker took the initiative to come into the job centre regularly to follow-up, but still indicated satisfaction with the support he received. The feedback generally rated the job centres as responsive, friendly and accessible, although some noted that finding work via personal contacts can be faster. All would recommend the job centre to others.

The main suggestion for improvement of employment services was to improve outreach to schools and employers. One jobseeker commented that he required English and IT skills and that it would be helpful if the job centre could facilitate special classes for people like him.

4. Directorate General of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DGTVET)

The DGTVET, MoLVT, is a critical counterpart of the NEA, with the labor market information dimension of the relationship strengthened by the recent creation of a new LMI Department as part of current restructuring. Key points highlighted in evaluation team consultations with senior DGTVET staff included:

There is potential to strengthen and regularise NEA-DGTVET cooperation, including through “learning together” in areas such as the experience of other countries in engagement with the private sector. Currently cooperation is developed on a case-by-case basis (e.g. recent NEA training on skills anticipation training).

MoLVT STEVT (strengthening TVET) partnerships with other international agencies also have relevance to the focus of the ILO-China SSC Project. These include:

- The next phase of an ADB TVET Sector Development Programme (2015-2019) with a budget of US\$30 million consisting of (i) a US\$23 million programme loan via MoLVT, focusing on Private Public Partnerships for training, private sector collaboration and responding to AEC requirements (tourism an initial sector focus) and (ii) a US\$7 million policy loan under the auspices of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF).
- The ILO Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification Project (STED), which focuses on light manufacturing and food processing (see summary of feedback from NIS below)
- A three province study funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) on strengthening livelihoods, covering labour migration, exports and STVET.

5. National Institute of Statistics (NIS)

The relationship between the NEA and NIS is likewise central to the generation of LMI to underpin the effective development of employment services and skills development in Cambodia. The mandate of the NIS includes coordination of statistics-related training as well as the activity of government agencies, the private sector and others parties on statistics. Key relevant roles of the NIS in this context include:

- Production of annual Economic and Social surveys.
- Periodic national Labour Force Surveys (the first was in 2003 with the third now on the agenda, subject to resource availability, with only 10 percent of the required funding currently indicated as likely to come from national budget).
- Statistical training provision (for example training on data analysis for the NEA under the Project, with statistical coding a key focus).
- Production of data and other support for specific surveys on request, such as (i) that carried out under the ILO Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) Project to identify skill gaps and requirements in the areas of light manufacturing and food processing and (ii) the study on *Labour Market Transition of Young Women and Men, 2014*.
- Application and development of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) for Cambodia. It is recommended by this report that a proposal by the NIS for ILO support of the upgrading of Cambodia’s standard labour classifications to six-digit level should be supported under the next phase of the Project.

A strong commitment to strengthening and regularising the relationship between the NEA and the NIS was indicated by evaluation consultations with NIS staff, with the 3rd national Labour Force Survey and upgrading Cambodia’s standard labour classifications to six-digit level highlighted as priority areas for cooperation under the next Project phase.

6. TVET institutions and secondary school

Preah Kossamak Polytechnic Institute, Phnom Penh

The institute has a well supported NEA focal point and places priority on the relationship. Students are encouraged to take part in NEA job fairs and pre-employment workshops (50 students took part in a recent NEA pre-employment workshop while 100 attended an NEA jobs forum). Information on NEA services is actively disseminated. For short courses run by institute, student profiles are sent to the NEA to match to available jobs. With NEA support, 80 percent of students find work and are tracked by the institute under the supervision of the Quality Assurance Department of DGTVET, MoLVT. 50 percent of students find jobs while studying, moving to evening classes.

Priorities highlighted by institute staff for follow-up were:

- NEA facilitation to bring private skill providers together to strengthen the matching of skills and jobs
- NEA LMI feeding into curriculum development via the institute's six monthly review process.

Regional Polytechnic Institute Techo Sen, Battambang

The Battambang Job Centre is hosted by the institute, with the two bodies having just been formally separated recently, although institutional approval still required for job centre field visits. The job centre assists with job placements, organises sessions for students on employment prospects and requirements; and places students in internships and job-experience opportunities. The institute also has own direct relations with employers.

There are currently no LMI-curriculum linkages between the job centre and the institute. Key issues facing the institute include the loss of young people to Thailand, which is an increasing a constraint on short courses aimed at poorer students. Longer study programmes are not so affected. With respect to the gender dimension of training and employment, efforts are made by the institute to encourage female students to enter non-traditional fields, but with very limited success.

Secondary school, Phnom Penh

A half day presentation by NEA staff to senior students was the focus of a consultation with the Director of a large (6,000 students) secondary school in Phnom Penh. Key feedback points were:

- The presentation (led by the Head of NEA, and accompanied by a presentation from a national youth NGO), was the most effective way of reaching the students: "There is no substitute for a direct approach – many students do not read and cell phone use is more for entertainment."
- The inclusion of small group discussions with individual members of the presentation team provided a good opportunity for questions and informal discussion.
- The competition for student attention is tough: Some students (and parents) were reluctant to see time spent in this way because of exam pressures.
- The experience was positive and useful and should be continued on a regular basis.

Annex V

Summary of feedback from key stakeholder groups: Lao PDR

1. Employers

1.1 Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI)

The objectives of the ILO-China Project are encompassed within the Strategic Policy Framework of the LNCCI, launched in May 2016 with ILO support. The LNCCI indicated that it gained useful insights and lessons from participation in the China Study Tour, access to training at the ILO ITC in Turin and participation in a tripartite training workshop on employment services under the Project. They have been active in the National Project Steering Committee as well as the national tripartite committee supporting the development of the LNCSO, including helping to facilitate involvement in this process by the handicraft industry.

The Employer Skills Needs Survey supported by the Project and conducted under the auspices of the LNCCI in the first quarter of 2016 is highly relevant to the Project's delivery, especially its LMI component. This comprehensive survey of employers' skills needs covered over 400 employers in four provinces and was carried out through the local consultancy company EDC, with extensive capacity support provided to employers at provincial levels and to the LNCCI national office which will stand them in good stead for the next such exercise (for which the LNCSO will also be available as a basis). The EDC assessment was that this was a successful exercise which has created a strong basis for replication and expansion in the future. Experience from other countries, especially Cambodia, was used to improve the design of the survey form.

The LNCCI is involved in 14 Provincial Tripartite Committees and want to get LNCCI membership at provincial level better connected with and more supportive of the ESJCs. Staff suggested that one potential role for the LNCCI could be to convene a meeting at national and provincial levels to discuss how employers could make better use of ESJC services and provide practical support. In this context, staff noted that it would be helpful to have the ESJCs on the agenda of the Provincial Tripartite Committees in all provinces where job centres are active (this is already successfully the case in Savannakhet). Special tripartite meetings could also be convened by the DSDE at provincial level to discuss ways to strengthen collaboration in support of the job centres, ranging from increasing use of its services to using the respective partner capacities to assist with outreach and profile building, particularly at community level.

Job fairs were seen as a key outreach mechanism from an employer perspective, with a need to increase their regularity and profile. It was noted that this is a competitive area, with (for example) five fairs having been organised by the Civil Engineers Institute since 2009.

The LNCCI proposed that greater attention is needed to the prioritisation of TVET, the quality of TVET training and improving coordination between providers, as well as between international donors in the sector. The LNCCI has been active with ILO support in advocacy for the development of an effective framework for national skills standards, covering key occupational areas and sectors of the Lao economy, designed in conjunction with the private sector.

To this end, the LNCCI has developed a set of well-constructed proposals for better private sector involvement in skills development. This process has deepened the level, depth and regularity of dialogue between LNCCI and the relevant ministries. In collaboration with the ILO, the LNCCI has further produced two reports to assist in promotion of employer perspectives on skills development. These were (i) a comprehensive assessment and recommendations on the current state of education and skills development as well as technical vocational education and training (TVET) systems and structures (April/May 2013); and (ii) an assessment of the current situation and the potential for the business sector through representative organisations such as LNCCI to help shape skills policies to ensure better alignment with the needs of private sector.

Key challenges seen by the LNCCI in implementing the Project's objectives are:

- Low skill levels of new employees, particularly practical skills, including those newly graduated from secondary schools and TVET institutions. The 'work culture' adjustments required by workers newly arrived

from rural areas, with high rates of absenteeism and fluctuations in line with rural agriculture seasonal requirements were other factors requiring study, understanding and attention. These issues were seen as having major impact on national productivity levels.

- Difficulties in recruiting and retaining labour. The LCNNI expressed the view that one key factor in this regard was the large gap between the minimum wage and actual living costs, combined with lack of compliance with minimum wage requirements by small and medium-sized businesses in particular.

Also highlighted by the LNCCI was the importance for employers of pre-employment training in areas such as preparation of CVs and ICT and English language skills, whether through sessions at job fairs, special courses or collaboration with schools and tertiary institutions.

Looking ahead to ongoing cooperation with the ILO under the Lao PDR DWCP (including a second phase of the ILO-China Project), the LNCCI indicated that it would value a more strategic basis for capacity development based on the LNCCI's own Strategic Policy Framework, with a phased and prioritised approach, rather than piecemeal activities. In this context, it is proposed that an MOU be developed under the Project for cooperation on employment services and LMI (as part of a broader plan for cooperation across the DWCP as a whole).

1.2 Provincial employers

Employer 1: A Thai-owned company in Savannakhet Province, which received regular support from the job centre since 2012 through the convening of employee recruitment meetings at district level with village leaders, as well as facilitation of linkages with job centres in other provinces.

The company emphasised the value of the support provided, as a result of which their labour supply requirements were largely met. The district outreach is no longer required but contact is maintained with the job centre for ongoing requirements. The company noted that when they first set up recruiting labour was difficult, as Lao PDR was just begging to industrialise and the level of interest levels amongst young people in factory work was low. The company approached the provincial DSDE for support and advice, leading to the productive relationship with the job centre.

Ongoing challenges include high levels of staff turn-over (about 50 percent per annum) and a 10 percent average daily absenteeism rate, in both cases attributed by the company to the challenges of young rural workers adjusting to a factory employment lifestyle. In some cases the lack of ownership of a national ID card posed an impediment. Other issues highlighted by the company were low levels of literacy, low practical skill levels and the inadequate minimum wage which pulled general wage levels down.

As with other companies visited, no Lao nationals were employed in management positions and few were employed in administrative roles (although in each case intentions to address these gaps through staff training were stated). The company sought to be a model employer, running an ADB-funded skills development programme in factory floor management and electronic skills, which trained about 120 young people from amongst the company workforce and beyond annually. It further ran a CSR programme, supporting local schools through grants and services in kind (such as painting the facilities).

Employer 2: A recently established Taiwanese-owned garment factory in Vientiane Province which was still 500 workers short of the full 800 required in its new plant. The company was working closely with the job centre to reach out to district and community levels, including through joint visits. The support of the job centre was highly commended by the company.

Employer 3: A Hong Kong / Lao PDR joint venture garment factory (mainly embroidery on piece-work basis). The company sought assistance from both the job centre and the Lao Women's Union at the time of its establishment in 2013. Due to low skills levels, a long period of staff training was required before the factory could officially open. There was a high turnover in the early period due to low levels of familiarity of the company management with the local context. The job centre advised on how to address this, including in areas such as employment contracts, social security scheme requirements, etc. A regular recruitment and employment advice relationship continues between the company and the job centre. The responsive and proactive support of the job centre was commended by the company.

1.3 Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU)

The Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU) covers approximately 50 percent of the private sector workforce and has full coverage in the public sector. It is active in the National Project Steering Committee as well as the national committee supporting the development of the LSCO; participated in the China Study Tour and a training workshop in Thailand; and has assisted with organising national job fairs in Vientiane and encouraging participation in job fairs at provincial level. Alongside the LNCCI, the LFTU is involved in 14 Provincial Tripartite Committees, including in provinces where ESJCs and Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) are active.

The LFTU highlighted the need to address the skills mismatch in the country, but also signaled concerns about low salary and wage levels which meant that there is a disincentive for young people to obtain TVET and other qualifications, with better opportunities in Thailand providing a stronger attraction. The LFTU emphasised the need for a holistic solution which encompasses the creation of decent work; bringing the minimum wage closer to actual living costs (estimated by the LFTU at 2 million Kip per month, compared with the current minimum wage of 900,000 Kip per month); strengthening collective bargaining capacities and understanding (including, in due course) at sector level; and developing skills amongst young people which are relevant to current and emerging labour market requirements.

With respect to employment services, the LFTU indicated concern that young people are reluctant to visit the ESJCs which are often in difficult locations within government compounds. They offered use of LFTU offices (facilities and staff) at provincial but particularly district level (where they indicated they are better resourced than the provincial DSDE), as well as access to the various radio and newspaper communications that the LFTU operates.

A particular priority of the LFTU in the broader context of employment services and LMI is labour migration. The LFTU has adopted an action plan (2011-2013) on protecting migrant workers in accordance with their mandate to protect Lao workers within and outside the country. The action plan covers the registration of migrant workers, the establishment of MRCs, collaboration with trade unions in destination countries, the promotion of tripartite dialogue on labour migration at national and sub-national levels and raising awareness on labour migration issues.

Through the implementation of the GMS TRIANGLE Project, the LFTU is responsible for the management and operation of an MRC in Savannakhet province to provide safe migration information and counseling to migrant and potential migrant workers. One particular issue being addressed by the MRC is the regular flow (some 250 per week) of undocumented Lao migrant workers returned across the border by Thai authorities and “falling into cracks” in existing social support systems. While direct support has been provided to migrant and potential migrant workers in line with Project objectives, the outreach has been found by a separate project evaluation to be weak. Coordination with the ESJC in the same province is also weak, according to local ESJC feedback. The LFTU highlighted the need for a more integrated approach to employment services and labour migration, including through stronger collaboration between the ILO-China and GMS TRIANGLE Projects.

Key challenges identified by the LFTU in implementing the Project were a low levels of union understanding and capacity in areas such as international labour conventions and tripartite processes, particularly at provincial level; the activity-by-activity approach of the ILO and slow processing of final activity-related payments; finding ways to take better advantage of the resources available through the LFTU to boost delivery of employment services at district and community levels; and extending the country-learning aspect of the Project to include other examples of effective employment services such as those in Singapore and the Philippines.

Looking ahead to ongoing cooperation with the ILO under the next Lao PDR DWCP (including a second phase of the ILO-China Project), the LFTU indicated (similar to the LNCCI) that it would value a more strategic basis for capacity development based on the union’s own strategic priorities and plans, with a phased and prioritised approach, rather than piecemeal activities. In this context, it is proposed that an MOU be developed under the Project for cooperation on employment services and LMI (as part of a broader plan for cooperation across the DWCP as a whole). The LFTU also suggested that the functioning of the National Project Steering Committee could be strengthened through a greater involvement of all the partners in its convening and servicing

Annex VI

Priorities for a next Project phase indicated by the MoLSW /DSDE and NEA

The following priorities for a next Project phase were indicated by the MoLSW /DSDE and NEA at the most recent meetings of the respective National Project Steering Committees.

In the case of **Lao PDR**, the priorities highlighted were:

- pilot model ESJCs (where efforts and resources are focused in selected province or provinces, which in turn provide a training base and example for existing and future ESJCs)
- ensure synergy amongst projects that focus on employment services and labour market information so that impact and efficiencies are maximized
- ensure, over time, that improved the labour market information data and analysis effectively informs the formulation of national policy , strategy and programmes
- continuation of technical support to enhance public employment services in Lao PDR based on the solid foundation derived from the Chinese and the ILO's contribution through the Project
- learn from China's strong database management and connection/network with information in the provinces, quality data collection and analysis, including effective dissemination.
- establish synergy and integrate efforts with existing projects co-managed by MoLSW in the area of employment services and labour market information.
- enhance and promote collaboration with LNCCI and LFTU, not only in Vientiane Capital but also key provinces.
- enhance collaboration with training institutions and private sectors, especially in developing and designing active labour market policies and programmes.

The priorities highlighted in the case of **Cambodia** were:

(i) Employment Services

- establish two more job centres in the following provinces: Sihanouk Ville (with focus on the tourism industry) and Banteay Meanchey (with migrant worker focus)
- extend the organization of provincial career fairs (i.e. Battambang, Svay Rieng and Siem Reap) and employment forums in the various provinces, particularly those provinces with job centre presence
- increase outreach to the rural communities, with more awareness raising workshops, at least 20 per year
- provide more career/vocational/employment counselling and guidance – target groups include young job seekers especially those in training institutions, high schools and universities).
- pre-employment training for job seekers, especially fresh graduates and job seekers from rural areas.
- develop more tools, especially in the area of CV writing; Cover Letter writing; Interview Preparation; Soft Skills, Labour Rights; Healthy and Safety in the Workplace.
- plan to conduct training of trainers on employment services, at least 52 trainings.
- continue with the printing, dissemination and development of communications materials and tools (i.e. electronic sign boards from job centres, billboards, posters).
- continue with mass media communications approach and advertisement (i.e. developing 3D clip, radio and TV commercials.
- work towards the ratification of the ILO Convention on Public Employment Services, No. 88 (1948).

(ii) Labour Market Information

- re-design or update the LMI page
- request for attachment of LMI analyst to NEA.
- more and comprehensive training on data collection, management and analysis (i.e. administrative data, primary/secondary data), forecasting (domestic and overseas).
- training on NEA administrative database management and reporting system (i.e. jobseeker, vacancies, referral, job matching, automatic notification systems) and electronic base (domestic and overseas)

Annex VII

Emerging good practice examples

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<p>The semi-autonomous ‘special agency’ institutional model adopted by the NEA in Cambodia allows the degree of flexibility, scope for initiative and internal capacity development that a dynamic and responsive employment services operation requires at a time of rapidly evolving economic, social and technological circumstances, nationally, regionally and globally.</p> <p>The attention given by the NEA to generating research to underpin policy and service development at agency and wider national levels is one example of the sort of flexible decision-making and initiative enabled by the institutional structure adopted. The deliberate and concerted focus on building core strategic management capacity in NEA through in-depth training and education is another.</p>
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The public sector environment in Cambodia has provided the space for the development of the NEA institutional model, which sits under the National Training Board. The establishment of the NEA has been sustained by national budget commitments, with supplementary funding in defined areas from international sources.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The institutional model adopted by the NEA allows a degree of initiative, flexibility and responsiveness in decision-making that has enabled it to both expand rapidly and improve the quality and impact of its services in a rapidly evolving labour market environment.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The rapid increase in the number of job centres at provincial level; recorded vacancies (up by 322 % over baselines in 2014/15); jobseeker registrations (up by 544 % over baselines in 2014/2015); and job placements (up by 628 % over baselines in 2014/2015) demonstrate NEA impact in linking skills with labour market requirements.
Potential for replication and by whom	Although operating in quite a different public sector environment than Lao PDR, the NEA provides an example (either wholly or in part) for other national employment services considering institutional reform to improve responsiveness and effectiveness.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	<p>The success of the NEA in delivering quality employment services directly links to Cambodia DWCP Outcome 2.1 (Development of a National Employment Policy and relevant institutional framework for promoting equitable employment and protection); and Outcome 2.2 (Enhanced employability of men and women through improved skills development and public employment services).</p> <p>It further links with the following ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) Outcomes for 2012-13: Outcome 1: (More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities); and Outcome 2: (Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and the inclusiveness of economic growth).</p>

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>The general stepping-up in the use of district job fairs and job forums as a dual outreach and direct recruitment mechanism in both Cambodia and Lao PDR, supported by the deployment of mobile teams and the development of relationships with leaders at community level.</p>
<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>The challenge is one of a maximising the visibility and outreach of a job centre with limited resources to link young jobseekers in rural communities with employment opportunities. The jobseekers concerned are not generally in a position to make their way to the job centre in the provincial capital due to costs and transport difficulties.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>In the case of Lao PDR, such initiatives are often in the context of partnerships with large employers seeking to recruit from rural areas or joint provincial government outreach missions involving several departments. In Cambodia, there is a wider associated use of mobile job centre teams which set-up temporary job centres in towns and villages. The effect is to expand the visibility and outreach of the provincial job centres, which in both countries have low rates of contact with jobseekers via direct visits to the centres.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>Young jobseekers who otherwise would have difficulty accessing employment services (including counselling) are able to be linked with employers seeking to recruit staff.</p>
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>The potential is more for expansion and improvement in the quality of such initiatives as lessons are learnt, visibility is increased and the necessary skills and experience are enhanced. There is great potential for sharing of approaches (what has worked, key success factors and lessons) within and between the countries concerned, as well as more widely within ASEAN.</p>
<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>These initiatives directly link to:</p> <p>Cambodia DWCP Outcome 2.1 (Development of a National Employment Policy and relevant institutional framework for promoting equitable employment and protection); and Outcome 2.2 (Enhanced employability of men and women through improved skills development and public employment services)</p> <p>Lao PDR DWCP Outcome 1.1 (Increased opportunities created for decent and productive employment, particularly in rural areas).</p> <p>They further link with the following ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) Outcomes for 2012-13: Outcome 1: (More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities); and</p> <p>Outcome 2: (Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and the inclusiveness of economic growth).</p>

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>The NEA job centre in Svay Reang Province, Cambodia, has developed an effective partnership with a national youth NGO to extend employment services outreach to community level. This has enabled expanded access to young people at community level, including through job forums at district level. While the job centre can facilitate relations with local authorities and the participation of employers, the youth NGO has the proven ability to mobilise young jobseekers to employment-related events.</p>
<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>The challenge is one of a maximising the visibility and outreach of a job centre with limited resources to link young jobseekers in rural communities with employment opportunities. The jobseekers concerned are not generally in a position to make their way to the job centre in the provincial capital.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>The engagement with the NGOs and its community-level membership has increased the number of young jobseekers attending employment-related events at which employers often recruit directly. An employer based in the province verified that they value the access to young jobseekers facilitated by the job centre/NGO partnership and recruit an average of 50-65 employees at each event.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>The primary impact is the number of young jobseekers in rural areas who learn about the NEA and are encouraged to attend job forums and other employment-related activities, with keen employer participation and a steady rate of on-the spot recruitment.</p>
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>There is potential for replication in other job centres in Cambodia as well as in Lao PDR, where the Lao Youth Union and Lao Women’s Union can offer similar access to community level young people.</p>
<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>This initiative directly links to Cambodia DWCP <u>Outcome 2.1</u> (Development of a National Employment Policy and relevant institutional framework for promoting equitable employment and protection); and <u>Outcome 2.2</u> (Enhanced employability of men and women through improved skills development and public employment services).</p> <p>It further links with the following ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) Outcomes for 2012-13: <u>Outcome 1</u>: (More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities); and <u>Outcome 2</u>: (Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and the inclusiveness of economic growth).</p>

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The integration of employment and labour migration (MRC) services in the NEA job centre in Battambang , including targeted outreach activities at district level. This demonstrates the potential of an integrated approach and could serve as a 'model' for the development / strengthening of similar approaches both elsewhere in Cambodia and in Lao PDR.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Battambang Province in Cambodia has high rates of labour migration to neighbouring Thailand, with job centre staff reporting that many rural villages are seriously depopulated as a result. At the same time, stakeholders interviewed by the consultation team in both Cambodia and Lao PDR, including senior ministry officials, indicated that there is a pressing need for a more integrated approach to employment and labour migration services, which in some provinces in each country are currently divided physically between government employment services on the one hand and migrant resource centres (MRCs) on the other.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	In the Battambang case, an integrated service is provided, included via outreach missions to rural areas in the province. As a result, data can be collected in an integrated fashion and economies of scale can be achieved. The Battambang job centre is already recognised within the NEA as a good practice example, with staff from other centres spending time there for briefing and learning purposes. A similar approach is being introduced at the Siem Reap Centre, drawing on the Battambang experience.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Beneficiaries benefit from a 'one-stop-shop' approach which can tap into the wider resources, services and capacities of the NEA, with access to labour migration advice and support on the one hand and linkages to the domestic labour market on the other.
Potential for replication and by whom	Already the potential for wider application of this approach within Cambodia is recognised, with attention needed to the necessary legislative and regulatory changes and stronger collaboration between the ILO/China SSC Project on employment services and the TRIANGLE Project on safe labour migration, which separately supports the Migrant Resource Centres.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	<p>This initiative directly links to Cambodia DWCP <u>Outcome 2.1</u> (Development of a National Employment Policy and relevant institutional framework for promoting equitable employment and protection); and <u>Outcome 2.2</u> (Enhanced employability of men and women through improved skills development and public employment services).</p> <p>It further links with the following ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) Outcomes for 2012-13: <u>Outcome 1</u>: (More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities); and</p> <p><u>Outcome 2</u>: (Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and the inclusiveness of economic growth).</p>

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>The establishment and support of a network of NEA youth focal points in 12 selected trade unions, including registration services at that level – anchoring the NEA amongst union memberships while simultaneously developing a cadre of trained ‘ambassadors and advocates’ who can both reach out to people not otherwise touched by employment services and provide feedback to the NEA on issues, concerns, needs and suggestions for improvement.</p>
<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>Outreach to young people already at work, but who are looking for alternative employment options or new work when existing opportunities come to an end, is not easy in the cities and towns of Cambodia. This initiative helps to raise the profile of the NEA amongst young working people and draws trade unions closer to the NEA and its services.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>The NEA youth focal points help young jobseekers in the workplace to register with the NEA and be informed of NEA activities, such as job fairs and employment forums. The youth networks includes focal points in the informal sector (eg. entertainment industry, tuk tuk drivers, etc), thus enhancing the NEA’s visibility and outreach in these areas.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>As a result of the network, young jobseekers have registered ‘on-the-job’ with NEA employment services and been introduced to TVET opportunities to enhance their skills for future employment.</p>
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>There is potential to expand the approach to the various provinces where NEA job centres are located (initial steps have been taken in this direction) and to consider a similar arrangement with the LFTU in Lao PDR, which has resources and offices at district level nationwide.</p>
<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>This directly links to Cambodia DWCP Outcome 2.1 (Development of a National Employment Policy and relevant institutional framework for promoting equitable employment and protection); and Outcome 2.2 (Enhanced employability of men and women through improved skills development and public employment services).</p> <p>It further links with the following ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) Outcomes for 2012-13: Outcome 1: (More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities); and</p> <p>Outcome 2: (Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and the inclusiveness of economic growth).</p>

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>The tripartite National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) model which has been established to oversee the ILO/China SSC Project at country level, provides a platform for government, employer and worker and representatives to come together to jointly review and plan Project implementation, helping to strengthen relationships between these core stakeholders in the development of effective PES and LMI services and systems. The country stakeholders have themselves identified this as an example of good practice.</p>
<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>The context is one of significant skill-labor market mismatch in both countries and a need to strengthen and expand public employment services and LMI as key elements of the national response. Strengthening the collaboration between government, employers and worker representatives is a key strategy in this context. The national governance structures set-up in Cambodia and Lao PDR in themselves provided a key platform for strengthening tripartite interaction, trust and confidence.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>The focus on multi-stakeholder Project governance has helped to increase the awareness and commitment of employers and trade unions with respect to the role they can play to support quality and comprehensive employment services and LMI. Participation by the donor has further helped to keep them engaged and aware of the potential for expansion of the Project to ensure long term impact and sustainability.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>The ultimate beneficiaries are jobseekers who find decent work and employers who are able to match skills with vacancies. An effective and transparent Project governance arrangement helps to keep all key stakeholders engaged and contributing to this end. In both Cambodia and Lao PDR, employers and unions affirmed their commitment to the respective national employment services and their wish to be more actively involved.</p>
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>Potential for replication in similar multi-stakeholder South-South cooperation initiatives.</p>
<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>These initiatives directly link to:</p> <p>Cambodia <u>DWCP Outcome 2.1</u> (Development of a National Employment Policy and relevant institutional framework for promoting equitable employment and protection); and <u>Outcome 2.2</u> (Enhanced employability of men and women through improved skills development and public employment services)</p> <p>Lao PDR <u>DWCP Outcome 1.1</u> (Increased opportunities created for decent and productive employment, particularly in rural areas).</p> <p>They further link with the following ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) Outcomes for 2012-13: Outcome 1: (More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities); and</p> <p>Outcome 2: (Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and the inclusiveness of economic growth).</p>

Annex VIII

National stakeholders interviewed in Cambodia and Lao PDR

1. Lao PDR

Phouvanh Chanthavong (Mr.)	Director General, DSDE, MoLSW
Vanny Keosavang (Ms.)	Head of Planning Division, DSDE, MoLSW
Phouthavong Phoummasack (Mr.)	Deputy-Head of Information Technology Division, DSDE, MoLSW
Soysavanh Outhaphone (Ms.)	Deputy-Head of Labour Market Information Unit, DSDE, MoLSW
Phetsamone Oundara (Mr.)	Technical Officer of LMI Unit, DSDE, MoLSW
Khamsene Xayyavong (Mr.)	Director of the Employment Service Centre (ESC)
Keo Phouvang Sounvanhdy (Mr.)	Officer of the ESC
Khaikheo Vongphanoulom (Ms.)	Officer of the ESC
Inpheng Meunviseth (Mr.)	Vice-President of Lao Federation of Trade Unions
Meun Lotphoxay (Mr.)	LFTU Technical Officer
Sengdavone Bangonesengdet (Ms.)	General Secretary, LNCCI Secretariat Office
Keomanivone Sayavongsa (Ms.)	Officer of LNCCI
Thavone Keovilaphone (Mr.)	Officer of LNCCI
Khamnene Thongleusone (Mr.)	Deputy-Director of DoLSW of Vientiane Capital
Bounthaseum Vilayphanh (Ms.)	Technical Officer of Vientiane Capital ESJ Centre
Souksakhone Philadeth (Ms.)	Technical Officer of Vientiane Capital ESJ Centre
Khamphou Souphida (Mr.)	Deputy-Director of DoLSW Vientiane province
Phouthone Phoumanivong (Ms.)	Deputy-Head of Employment Division, DoLSW
Samphanh Boulivanh (Mr.)	Technical Officer of Employment Service Job Centre, DoLSW Vientiane Province
Thommy Latsoulin (Ms.)	Deputy- Director of DoLSW Savannakhet Province
Viphaphone Phoummalath (Ms.)	Technical Officer of Employment Service Job Centre of DoLSW of Savannakhet Province
Thaviseuth Lotlivanh (Mr.)	Officer of DoLSW of Savannakhet Province
Khamvanh Vanhvilay (Mr.)	Director of DoLSW of Luang Prabang Province
Sommaï Mongkoutdeth (Ms.)	Deputy-Head of Employment Division, LPB DoLSW
Phaysone Phanthavong (Ms.)	Officer of Employment Service Job Centre, LPB DoLSW
Jaiva Siaporvang (Mr.)	Technical Officer of LPB DoLSW
Khemphone, Phaokhamkeo	ILO National Coordinator, Lao PDR

2. Cambodia

H.E. Dr Hong Choeun	Director General and Head, NEA
Hay Hunleng (Mr.)	Deputy Director General, NEA
Vouch-cheng Ly (Ms.)	Head, Coordination and Planning Unit, NEA
Sovannara Khuon (Mr.)	Deputy Head, Coordination and Planning Unit, NEA

Pho OusaRachana (Mr.)	Head, LMI Unit, NEA
Touch Sophat (Mr.)	Head, LMI and Communications, NEA
Kun Sambath (Mr.)	Deputy Head, LMI and Communications, NEA
Ouch Cheachanmolika (Ms.)	NEA Job Centre, Phnom Penh
Sambath Sokhon (Ms.)	NEA Job Centre, Phnom Penh
Vathany (Ms.)	NEA Job Centre, Phnom Penh
Sim Chinda (Ms.)	NEA Job Centre, Phnom Penh
Aing Pheareak (Mr.)	NEA Job Centre, Phnom Penh
Rom Vutha (Mr.)	NEA Job Centre, Phnom Penh
Ath Sareth (Mr.)	NEA Job Centre, Phnom Penh
Ouk Ratanak (Mr.)	NEA Job Centre, Phnom Penh
H.E. Mr Laov Him	Director General, DGTVET, MoLVT
Sokhon David (Mr.)	Director, Quality Assurance, DGTVET, MoLVT
Yann Sophorn (Ms.)	Assistant to General Manager, CAMFEBA
Kheang Seangnay (Ms.)	Membership Services Executive
Aun Som (Mr.)	NACC; Member of NPSC
Trade Union youth focal points	CCTU, CLC, NACC, NIFTUC, IDEA, BWTUC, CYN, UCL, CICA, CDWNU, CFSWF
Khin Sovorlak (Mr.)	Deputy Director General, National Statistics Bureau
Heang Kanol (Mr.)	Deputy Director General, National Statistics Bureau
Lim Pho Rathmealea (Mr.)	National Statistics Bureau
Tavrin (Mr.)	National Statistics Bureau
Principal	Phnom Penh Secondary School
Vice-Chief, Administration	Preah Kossomak, Polytechnic Institute (PPI)
Chief Accounting Officer	Preah Kossomak, Polytechnic Institute (PPI)
Hem Puthi (Mr.) and staff	Director, NEA Job Centre, Svay Rieng
Los Seng (Mr.)	Representative, TUWFPD, Svay Rieng
Employer representative	Svay Rieng
Young jobseekers (3)	Svay Rieng
Mom Pov (Mr.) and staff	Director, NEA Job Centre, Battambang
Employer representatives (2)	Battambang
Young jobseekers (4)	Battambang
Deputy Principal	Polytechnic Institute of Battambang Province (PIB)
Director and staff	NEA Job Centre, Siem Reap
Huy Pheav (Mr.)	President, Siem Reap-Oddar Meanchey Chamber of Commerce
Thung Sunghon (Mr.)	Human Resource Manager, Angkor Village Hotel
Sithen Loy (Mr.)	Housekeeping Manager, Borei Angkor
Young jobseekers (4)	Siem Reap
Tun Sophorn (Mr.)	ILO National Coordinator
Lody Peng (Ms.)	Project Assistant, ILO
Rithy Nuon (Mr.)	Project Consultant

Annex IX

ILO staff interviewed in Bangkok, Cambodia and Lao PDR

Mr Maurizio Bussi,	Director ILO Country Office for Cambodia, Lao PDR & Thailand
Ms Makiko Matsumoto	Employment Specialist, DWT Bangkok
Ms Carmela Torres	Senior Skills and Employability Specialist
Mr Charles Bodwell	Enterprises Development Specialist
Mr Arun Kuma	Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities
Mr Gary Rynhart	Senior Specialist on Employers Activities
Ms Sandra Yu	Specialist on Local Strategies for Decent Work
Ms. Pamornrat Pringsulaka	Evaluation Officer
Ms Suttida Chaikitsakol	Project Technical Officer, ILO/China SSC Project
Ms. Jittima Srisuknam,	Programme Officer for Lao PDR

Annex X

List of documents reviewed

Relevant national laws, government decrees, policies, strategies and plans of the Governments of Cambodia and Lao PDR, including the Rectangular Strategy III, Industrial Development Policy and National Employment Policy (Cambodia); and the 7th and 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plans (NSEDP), MoLSW Master Plan 2007-2020, MoLSW Strategic Plan on Skills Formation and Employment Promotion, MoLSW 5 Years Goal on Employment Promotion 2016-2020 and TVET Development Plan 2016-2020 (Lao PDR).

Relevant ILO global frameworks and policies: www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/lang--en/

ILO (2010). *Decent Work Country Programme (Project Document): Lao PDR 2011-2015*. Bangkok.

ILO (2010). *Decent Work Country Programme (Project Document): Cambodia 2011-2015*. Bangkok.

DWCP review reports for Cambodia (November 2015) and Lao PDR (July 2016):

- Clarke, Don., Venevankham, Kolakot. (July 2016). *Review of Lao PDR DWCP 2011-2015*
- Clarke, Don., Somith, Sok. (November 2015). *Review of the Cambodia DWCP 2011-2015*.

Annual DWCP progress reports for tripartite review and planning purposes.

ILO/China SSC Project Document and related documentation.

Boontinand, Vachararutai (2015): Mid-term Review of ILO/China SSC Project.

Reports of meetings of the Cambodia and Lao PDR National Project Steering Committees (NPSC).

Documentation (including presentations) and the report of the meeting held between the Vice-Minister for Human Resources and Social Security of the Government of the People's Republic of China, the ILO, NEA and MOLSW, 18 May 2016, Bangkok, Thailand.

Presentations summarising progress, challenges and lessons prepared by national stakeholders for the above NPSC meetings.

Annual reporting, including statistical, produced by the NEA and MOLSW for the ILO.

ILO JPO DWCP Monitoring Framework inputs and other relevant JPO documents.

ROAP / CO SMM/Implementation Plan reporting to Geneva for Cambodia and Lao PDR.

Relevant summary reports by DWCP outcome provided by ILO specialist staff supporting the delivery of the respective DWCPs.

Relevant components of ILO portfolio of interventions in 2011, 2012-13 and in 2014-2015 including total allocation and expenditure of all sources of funds (RB, RBTC, PSI, XBTC and RBSA) during 2011-2015 by outcomes.

Other relevant ILO background information, including project progress reports; evaluation reports; and technical cooperation project and thematic evaluations carried out at global, regional and country level. Relevant ILO evaluation/review reports included:

- Duran, Mitchell. (Sept 2015). *Communications Plan for ILO-China South-South Cooperation Project to Expand Employment Services*
- Salter, Bill. (September 2015). *HR Development Plan for ILO-China Project*.
- MoLSW. (2015). *Follow-up Assessment on Current State of Employment Service Centres: (Analysis of survey data as part of ILO-China Project)*.

UNDAFs 2011-2015 / 2016-2018 (Cambodia) and 2011-2016 (Lao PDR): Lao PDR-UNPF / 2017-2021.

Relevant studies by ILO, UNCT, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, EU and other relevant sources on employment services and LMI in the respective country contexts.

ASEAN AEC frameworks, policies and related studies concerning likely impacts in the Cambodian and Lao PDR contexts, particularly with respect to addressing the skills / labour market mismatch, including:

- ASEAN Economic Community: One Vision/One Community: asean.org/asean-economic-community/
- ILO/ADB (2014) *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity*. Bangkok

Publications, including research studies, of the NEA, Cambodia.

Published reports on the annual Employers' Skills Needs Surveys carried out in Cambodia in partnership between the NEA and Government of Sweden.

Promotional materials produced by the NEA and MOLSW/DSDE.

<http://www.nea.gov.kh>

<http://www.molsw.gov.la>

Annex XI

Terms of Reference: Final Independent Evaluation

1. Project Detail

Title	ILO/China South-South Cooperation Project to Expand Employment Services and Enhance Labour Market Information (“ILO/China SSC”)
TC Code	RAS1217CPR (IRIS: 104046, AWARD: 501323)
Admin. Unit	CO-Bangkok
Technical Unit	DWT-Bangkok
Evaluation Type	Independent
Evaluation Timing	Final

2. Introduction, Rational of Evaluation, and Background Information

On 12 June 2012, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) of the People’s Republic of China and the ILO signed a Partnership Agreement where the aim was to promote a partnership on the South-South Cooperation (SSC) framework. The SSC allow for technical cooperation with partner countries which will benefit from this mutual cooperation to promote the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda. The technical cooperation which are designed and implemented within the framework of this partnership will follow the principles of equality, mutual support, common development, and local ownership, and will provide technical support to realize the ILO’s Decent Work strategic objectives, in particular the strategic objective of employment promotion.

The ILO/China partnership is implemented through a three years technical cooperation project (ILO/China SSC). The ILO/China SSC was developed under the framework of the aforementioned signed Partnership Agreement. The ILO/China SSC highlights the People’s Republic of China’s commitment, along with its partners, to deepening its relationship and working cooperatively with the ILO for the period between 4Q2013 to 1Q2016. The ILO/China SSC aims to respond to the P&B Outcomes 1 and 2 which are ‘more women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities’ and ‘skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises and the inclusiveness of economic growth’, respectively.

The ILO/China SSC originally foresaw that US\$ 1 million would be provided to the ILO to implement activities as per the technical cooperation project document.

In accordance with PARDEV’s Approval Minute dated 28 June 2013, the ILO/China SSC is subject to an independent final evaluation by end February 2016. The evaluation report will be in English and duly submitted to PARDEV and ROAP. The evaluation will comply with evaluation procedures and standards and follow ethical safeguards, all as specified in ILO’s evaluation procedures.

The independent final evaluation will be managed by an independent ILO official who has no prior involvement in the implementation of the ILO/China SSC project. Similarly, the independent final evaluation will be carried out by a

professional external consultant/evaluator who has no prior involvement in the implementation of the ILO/China SSC project.

The ILO/China SSC project is implemented under the ILO South-South Cooperation Framework within which the Republic of China's support combines the provision of financial resources and a wide range of knowledge exchange initiatives based on experiences at both national and provincial levels. Core to this cooperation will be its technical assistance, advisory services and sharing of good practices and experiences by the People's Republic of China with Cambodia and Lao PDR. Together with ILO's expertise and drawing upon a large inventory of practical case studies from Asia and other regions, the ILO/China SSC project will contribute to a more developed labour market and human resources to achieve the economic and social growth and advance with the current work envisaged under the ASEAN Regional Economic Integration Agenda.

The *Development Objective* is to improve labour market efficiency and enhance linkages and information flows between job seekers and employers, which will contribute to the reduction of unemployment and, ultimately, of poverty of Cambodia and Lao PDR.

The *Immediate Objective 1* is to improve the quality and delivery of employment services provided by the responsible government institutions and their network of job centres to their clients; improve capacities of government, job centre officials and social partners.

The *Immediate Objective 2* is to improve data collection, analysis and dissemination to allow for better job matching of the jobseekers with enterprises who need workers to fill their job vacancies.

The ILO has a global mandate to promote employment as enshrined in the Decent Work Agenda. The mission of the ILO is to promote decent and productive work opportunities for women and men. The enhancement of employment services is a core component. In Cambodia and Lao PDR, the ILO is implementing a wide-ranging programme of technical assistance which is based on priorities established within the two Decent Work Country Programmes.

The ILO prepares an overall work plan based on the respective country's work plans to be prepared by the national level project coordination office (Department of Skills Development and Employment (DSDE) for Lao PDR and National Employment Agency (NEA) for Cambodia) in consultation with the ILO/China SSC project staff; ILO Senior Skills and Employability Specialist; the National Project Steering Committee members; and with inputs from the counterpart agencies in the respective countries. MOHRSS will be closely consulted as regards to specific expertise to be made available during the execution of the activities. As part of the Project preparatory activities, baseline information was collected in each country to complement existing policies and programmes; information and country needs.

Public employment services (PES) are government institutions which plan and execute many labour market policies that governments use to help workers enter the labour market to facilitate labour market adjustments and to cushion the impact of economic transitions. This definition is consistent with the ILO Employment Services Convention, 1948 (No. 88) and ensure the maintenance of a free PES. The ILO/China SSC *project strategy* builds on the core role of employment services as defined under the ILO Convention No. 88. Regardless of the economic situation, globalization and technological progress rapidly change the skill needs of enterprises, and thus put pressure on both enterprises to find qualified workers and the workforce to find jobs. Employment services play a key role in facilitating matching between employers and the workforce, through a range of complementary and inter-related core functions.

The ILO/China SSC *project development strategy* will be 2 pronged, focusing on:

- a) Strengthening the capacities of staff to deliver quality services; and
- b) Improving the labour market information collection, analysis and dissemination for better information to jobseekers and enterprises and to design programmes addressing the needs of youth, women, migrant workers and people with disabilities.

In both Cambodia and Lao PDR, the first National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) meetings were convened in April 2014 (24 April 2014 and 28 April 2014, respectively). And in Cambodia, the second NPSC meeting was convened again in 2014 (8 September 2014) to complement the high level visit by H.E. Mr Xin Chang-Xing, Vice Minister, MOHRSS and entourage. In 2015, Lao PDR's second NPSC meeting took place in Vientiane Capital on 17 November 2015; and Cambodia's third NPSC meeting took place in Phnom Penh on 19 November 2015.

ILO/China SSC is administered by CO-Bangkok and is responsible for the effective implementation of activities and financial management. The Project is technically backstopped by DWT-Bangkok through its Senior Skills and Employability Specialist who provides guidance, supervision and facilitates knowledge exchange mechanisms with similar initiatives undertaken in Asia and other regions. The Project also draws on the expertise of other technical specialists in relevant fields, particularly on employment and labour statistics.

Taking into account the envisaged scope of work, the multiplicity of the activities planned in the two countries and the close liaison with partner institutions in China, a part-time Project Officer and part-time Project Assistant were recruited for this Project. The position of the part-time Project Officer was budgeted for the first 18 months of the Project and provisions are made to cover its cost at 50 per cent. Based on the findings from the Mid-term Evaluation, the part-time Project Officer's, MOHRSS endorsed the extension of the part-time Project Officer's position beyond the initially agreed 18 months period. The part-time Project Assistant position was supported for a shorter duration, September 2014 to August 2015.

The ILO National Coordinators in Cambodia and Lao PDR ensure regular and timely liaison with the national level project coordination units, being the National Employment Agency (NEA) for Cambodia and the Department of Skills Development and Employment (DSDE) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) for Lao PDR, and provide in situ support in close consultation with the Project Officer. South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) exchange initiatives will be coordinated with MOHRSS and will involve national counterparts as it considers appropriate. NEA and DSDE will ensure that a Project Coordination Task Team is assigned to liaise with the Project. The Task Team ensure close liaison and provide operational support to the Project's activities. The Task Team and other staff involved in the Project will be the in-kind and counterpart contribution of the national agencies and will absorb some of the Project implementation and monitoring functions in keeping with the SSTC strategy endorsed by the ILO Governing Body in March 2012.

National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) are established in each country which comprises of senior representatives from national counterpart institutions such as ministries of labour, workers and employers' organizations, relevant line ministries and national institutions, MOHRSS and the ILO. The NPSC will be involved as necessary.

3. Purpose, Objectives, Scope of the Evaluation and Cross Cutting Issues

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess efficiency, relevance of project design, progress made against the performance plan, efficient use of resources, effectiveness of management arrangements, and the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are in place so to enable the ability to assess impact in relation to policies, processes, regulations, behaviour and, ultimately, individual lives. The consultant is anticipated to collect information from constituents and Project staff and will provide useful recommendations that would help assess the effectiveness and impact.

The independent final evaluation will focus on the following areas:

- Outcomes of projects and the likelihood that they will achieve impact;
- Progress made towards the achievement of the intervention's objectives and possibly recommend adjustments to strategy;
- Assess the validity of the project design;
- Strategic use and leverage of ILO/China funds in support of the ILO priorities;
- Review the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are in place; and
- Effectiveness of management arrangements.

In assessing the results of the activities funded under the Project Document, the evaluation will:

- Assess the extent to which the objectives specified in the Project Document have been met;
- Take into account the likely results achieved by the end of the Project;
- Identify any factors that materially impacted on the Project implementation and achievement of the objectives; and
- Identify lessons learnt.

Gender equality, along with development, has been identified by the ILO as a cross-cutting issue of the strategic objectives of its global agenda of Decent Work. To the extent possible, data collection and analysis will be disaggregated by genders as described in the ILO Evaluation Policy Guidelines and relevant Guidance Notes.

The primary clients of the evaluation is the CO-Bangkok, DWT-Bangkok, ROAP, and Government of the People's Republic of China. The evaluation process will be participatory. The Office, the tripartite constituents and other parties involved in the execution of the Project will use, as appropriate, the evaluation findings and lessons learnt.

4. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation should address the overall ILO evaluation concerns such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for results based evaluation, 2013 (http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_168289.pdf) The evaluation will be conducted following UN evaluation standards and norms.

In line with the results based approach applied by the ILO, the evaluation will focus on identifying and analysing results through addressing key questions related to the evaluation concerns and the achievement of the immediate objectives of the Project using data from the logical framework indicators.

In general, it is of key importance that this evaluation stimulates discussion on the engagement of partners, communities, and governmental organizations.

The suggested evaluation criteria and questions are included in Annex 1. Other aspects can be added as identified by the evaluation consultant in accordance with the given purpose and in consultation with the ILO.

The evaluation instrument to be prepared by the evaluator will be indicate and or modify, upon completion of the desk review, the selected specific aspects to be addressed in this evaluation.

5. Methodology/Evaluation Techniques/Data Collection

Open and transparent consultation will underpin this evaluation. The consultation will be made with the Government of the People's Republic of China, ILO and relevant tripartite constituents at the stages of the review as set out below.

The evaluator will draft a report on the performance and effectiveness of the activities under the Project Document and determine priority areas for future collaboration. The Government of the People's Republic of China, ILO and social partners will have the opportunity to provide input and feedback during this process.

The Government of the People's Republic of China and other stakeholders will also be given the opportunity to comment on the draft report, which will be circulated.

The final report will be made available to the Government of the People's Republic of China and relevant stakeholders.

The evaluator will seek to apply a variety of simple evaluation techniques – desk review, meetings with stakeholders (list to be provided), focus group discussions, field visits, informed judgement and possible scoring, ranking or rating techniques.

The preliminary findings of the evaluation will be presented during a stakeholder meeting, in this case, Annual Review Meeting scheduled for the early part of April 2016. The evaluation will be based on analysis of empirical evidence to establish findings and conclusions in response to specific questions.

A desk review will analyse Project Documents, implementation report, and other relevant documents to be provided by the Project team. The desk review will suggest a number of initial findings that in turn may point to additional or

fine-tuned evaluation questions. This will guide the evaluation instrument which should be finalized in consultation with the Evaluation Manager. The evaluator will review the documents before conducting any interviews.

The evaluator will undertake a number of individual discussions with key stakeholders. An indicative list of persons to the interview will be prepared by the Project team.

It will be useful for the evaluator to visit the countries so the person can meet and do the reality check and also see the real impact of the Project. It is proposed that the field visits take place in two countries: Cambodia and Lao PDR.

6. Main Deliverables

The main deliverables of this evaluation is the Midterm Internal Evaluation report and in line with the ILO House Style. The content of this report include:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Executive summary
- Acronyms
- Background and project description
- Purpose of evaluation
- Evaluation methodology and evaluation questions
- Project status and findings by outcome
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Lessons learnt and potential good practices and models of interventions
- Annexes

All draft and final outputs, including supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible with MicroSoft WORD for Windows. Ownership of the data from the evaluation rests jointly with the ILO and the consultant. The copyright of the report from the evaluation rests exclusively with the ILO. Use of the data for publication and other presentation can only be made with the agreement of the ILO. Key stakeholders can make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgment.

7. Management Arrangements / Work Plan / Legal and Ethical Matters

Evaluator: an external consultant who has experience in evaluating development projects and programmes will be hired to undertake the evaluation and will be responsible for the task and outputs set out in this TOR. The consultant is responsible for leading the evaluation and for drafting and finalizing all the required outputs. The consultant will conduct a participatory and inclusive evaluation process.

Management arrangements: The Evaluation Manager is responsible for the overall management of this evaluation.

All stakeholders in CO-Bangkok, DWT-Bangkok and Donor will be consulted and will have opportunities to provide inputs to the TOR and the draft report.

The Project team will provide coordination, logistic and administrative support to the evaluation throughout the process, ensuring Project Documentation is up to date and easily accessible, and providing support to the consultant during the mission.

Workplan/Mission Itinerary including list of key stakeholders

Description	City/Focal Point	Estimated Time
Receipt of relevant documents		15-19 February 2016
Desk review		22-26 February 2016

Submission of Inception Report	Evaluator	28 February 2016
Meeting with ILO	ILO Office	28 February & 1 March 2016
Meeting with ILO National Coordinator in Cambodia Meeting with Project's Part-time Assistant	Phnom Penh	2 March 2016
Meeting with National Employment Agency, Phnom Penh Job Centre	Phnom Penh	3 March 2016
Meeting with Kampot Job Centre	Phnom Penh	4 March 2016
Desk review	Phnom Penh	5-6 March 2016
Meeting with Svay Rieng Job Centre	Phnom Penh	7 March 2016
Meeting with Siem Reap Job Centre	Siem Reap	8 March
Meeting with Xayaboury Job Centre	Xayaboury	9-10 March
Meeting with Luang Prabang Job Centre	Luang Prabang	11-12 March
Desk review	Vientiane	13 March
Meeting with ILO National Coordinator in Lao PDR Meeting with DSDE and ESC	Vientiane	14 March
Meeting with LNCCI and LFTU	Vientiane	15 March
Meeting with Bolikhamxay Job Centre	Vientiane	16 March
Briefing with ILO team	Bangkok	17-18 March
Submission of First Draft	Evaluator	Early April 2016
Participate/present initial findings at Annual Review Meeting	Evaluator	Early April 2016
Submission of Final Draft	Evaluator	18-22 April 2016

8. Budget and Payment Term

Description	Unit Cost	Unit	Total
DSA Phnom Penh	\$125	6	\$750
DSA Siem Reap	\$116	1	\$116
DSA Lao PDR Elsewhere (i.e. Champasack, Savannakhet, Xayaboury)	\$72	2	\$144
DSA Luang Prabang	\$105	2	\$210
DSA Vientane Capital	\$169	4	\$676
DSA Bangkok	\$214	7	\$1,498
Fees	\$400	37	\$14,800
Total			\$18,194

This assignment will commence on 28 February 2016 and will be completed no later than 22 April 2016.

The total value of this assignment is **\$18,194** with payment breakdown as follows:

First Payment: \$3,394: upon submission of the inception report and the signed of the contract.

Second Payment: \$7,400: upon submission of the first draft of the independent final evaluation report along with power point presentation for the Annual Review Meeting, to the satisfaction of the ILO.

Final Payment: \$7,400: upon submission of the final version of Independent Final Evaluation report, to the satisfaction of the ILO.

9. Airticket/In-land transportation

ILO will be responsible in issuing the required airtickets under this contract, with routing options as below, and the most direct and economic route.

- Originating country of consultant to Bangkok
- Bangkok-Phnom Penh-Bangkok
- Bangkok-Vientiane Capital-Bangkok
- Siem Reap-Luang Prabang
- Phnom Penh-Luang Prabang
- Phnom Penh–Vientiane Capital
- Siem Reap-Vientiane Capital
- Originating country of consultant to country where Annual Review Meeting will be held – roundtrip ticket

ILO will also be responsible for in-land/country transportation (i.e. by car or by plane) in both Lao PDR and Cambodia in order to facilitate the visit to the required/agreed upon job centres.

10. Qualifications of the Consultant

- A minimum of 3 years' experience in design, management and evaluation of development projects
- Experience in designing evaluation tools that fit the need of the exercise, conducting desk reviews and evaluation missions, drafting of evaluation reports.
- Experience in evaluation of ILO programmes and projects and/or evaluations of UN System would be an asset.
- Experience or knowledge in the region is an advantage.
- Ability/experience in facilitating an evaluation stakeholders meeting will be an advantage.
- Ability to write concisely in English.

