

Final Independent Evaluation



Skills to support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) Project in Sri Lanka

Implemented by:

International Labour Organization
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ILO EVALUATION

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

Contents

List of Acronymsi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....iii

I. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION1

 1.1 EU SUPPORTTO DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 1

 1.2 Project Description2

 1.3 Context..... 3

II. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY.....4

 2.1 Evaluation Objectives4

 2.2 Scope and Intended Users4

 2.3 Methodology.....4

 2.4 Evaluation Limitations5

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS6

 3.1 Relevance6

 3.2 Effectiveness.....9

 3.3 Efficiency.....18

 3.4 Sustainability and Impact Orientation20

IV. MAIN CONCLUSIONS.....22

V. GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED23

 5.1 Good Practice23

 5.2 Lessons Learned.....24

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.....25

Annex 1 – Project Performance Plan.....29

Annex 2 – Evaluation Terms of Reference.....31

Annex 3 – Evaluation Inception Report.....41

Annex 4 – List of Documents Reviewed58

Annex 5 – Schedule of Field Visits and Stakeholder Meetings59

Annex 6 – Good Practice62

Annex 7 – Lesson Learned64

List of Tables

Table 1 Key Informant Interviews.....5

Table 2 SKILLED Vocational Training Courses.....9

Table 3 % of SKILLED budget expended in June 2014-2017.....19

Table 4 Allocation of Expenditures up to June 2017 by line item.....20

List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Description
CIDA	Construction Industry Development Authority
DAP	District Action Plans
DCC	District Coordination Committee
DME	Department of Manpower and Employment
DS	Divisional Secretariat
DTET	Department of Technical Education and Training
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GA	Government Agent
HRDA	Human Resources Development Assistants
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTAD	Institute for Construction Training and Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
MOL	Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations
MSDVT	Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training
NAITA	National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority
NIOSH	National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
NYSC	National Youth Services Council
PES	Public Employment Services
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RVTPs	Registered Vocational Training Providers
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SLITHM	Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TVEC	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIVOTEC	University of Vocational Technology

UNOPS	United nations Office for Project Services
VT	Vocational Training
VTASL	Vocational Training Authority of SriLanka
WUSC	World University Services of Canada

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Background

This report documents the main findings and conclusions of the final evaluation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Skills to Support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) Project in Sri Lanka. The SKILLED project is part of the European Union Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP), a €60 million programme, which began implementation in July 2012 and is scheduled to finish by May 2018.¹ ILO implemented SKILLED with a budget of €2,000,000 (approximately US\$2,680,000).

The EU-SDDP aims to contribute to poverty reduction in North and East of Sri Lanka and to bridge the socio-economic gap post conflict. The ILO and IFC are lead implementing organisations for Component 2 of EU SDDP- Local Economic Development. The component addresses challenges hindering private sector development in four target districts: Ampara, Batticaloa, Mannar and Vavuniya. The objective of SKILLED, the ILO sub-component, was to improve access to quality vocational training through support to at least 60% of the Registered Training Providers. To reach this objective, ILO implemented activities to assist vocational training centres deliver demand driven courses, to build the capacity of centre instructors and managers to conduct quality training, to encourage district vocational training stakeholders to use collective strategies to promote vocational training and employment services and to enable districts to establish and manage Public Employment Services Centres.

2. Evaluation Methodology

The purpose of the final evaluation is to provide project management, the ILO, the donor and other stakeholders with an independent assessment of the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability and to identify key lessons learnt and good practices. The evaluation reviewed all activities carried out by SKILLED from the project start in 2012 until September 2017. The primary sources of data for analysis came from project documentation, key informant interviews (KII), and focus group discussions (FGD) with participants in project activities. During the evaluation period (September 25 to October 13, 2017), the evaluator consulted vocational training and employment authorities, local government authorities, a district Chamber representative, vocational training centre managers and trainers, Public Employment Service centre managers, and participants in vocational training and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programmes in the four districts targeted by the project as well as national level partners in Colombo (see list of persons consulted in annex 5).

Evaluation findings respond to the key evaluation questions identified by the ILO evaluation team in consultation with the project and the evaluator (see inception report annex 3).

3. Key Evaluation Findings

Finding 1 (Relevance): SKILLED was well-aligned with government policies and plans on the development of vocational training. Stakeholders expressed high levels of satisfaction with project services, especially the budgetary support for training programmes. They also identified some gaps; from the perspective of some local authorities, the project could have been more strategic to local economic development by doing more to match training to the skill requirements of more forward-looking, higher value-added local economic development strategies.² Some youth participants in training programmes also expressed the need for

¹ The implementation phase will end by May 2018 followed by a maximum six-month period for the agencies to submit their final reports.

² In the inception phase of the programme, the ILO conducted an assessment of skills requirements of workers in line with current and projected high growth areas. The project aligned its support for training programmes to the findings of this

additional language instruction and follow-up support to find a job or establish themselves in self-employment activities.

Finding 2 (Effectiveness): Near the end of the project, SKILLED was meeting or had surpassed most of its quantitative targets related to vocational training delivery, capacity building and establishing employment services. Achievements of outcomes related to employment are likely more mitigated due to a variety of factors. Current data on employment outcomes is likewise weak.

Finding 3: (Effectiveness) Career orientation and outreach, financial support for training participants, and the selection of certified courses that aligned with in-demand skills in the target districts were effective strategies used by SKILLED to integrate low income participants in skills-building programmes. The actual quality of training was affected by issues such as the relevance of national curriculum, late delivery of equipment, the availability qualified, Tamil-speaking instructors, and deficiencies in post training support to trainees.

Finding 4 (Effectiveness): Various external factors such as the centralization of vocational training authorities, the local economic environment and its effect on the job market, and participant attitudes toward training and employment posed challenges affecting the performance of SKILLED. The project put in place a number of effective strategies to mitigate some of these factors.

Finding 5 (Effectiveness): The project collaborated effectively with national counterparts, who expressed satisfaction with the way they interacted with the project management team. SKILLED yielded only a few examples of effective collaboration with other EU-SDDP implementing agencies. Barriers to greater cooperation identified by the agencies include: time constraints due to the shortened implementation period, the delay in the development of District Development Plans might have guided joint interventions, differences in institutional practices, lack of commitment, and the geographic dispersion of EU SDDP activities, especially following the expansion of project target districts.

Finding 6 (Effectiveness): SKILLED incorporated strategies that offered visibility to the EU as the EU-SDDP donor. Even though the EU-SDDP outsourced the management of communication activities, ILO visibility related actions still required significant time investments from its programme managers.

Finding 7 (Effectiveness) Project strategies to counteract gender stereotyping in vocational training and employment were under-developed. Workplace safety, a key labour standard, was addressed fairly comprehensively by the project but other awareness-raising on labour rights was largely absent from programmes.

Finding 8 (Effectiveness) SKILLED monitoring systems did not initially establish adequate data collection systems to measure progress against its key indicators and enable good reporting on progress. After the mid-term evaluation, the project took steps to improve the data available on SKILLED beneficiaries and made additional efforts to build the beneficiary monitoring capacity of some of its vocational training partners.

Finding 9 (Efficiency) SKILLED was implemented by experienced national ILO staff with relevant skills and knowledge of the target districts. Senior programme officers provided effective support to stakeholders in the field but were less effective managing vocational training authorities in Colombo and collecting data on its activities.

Project spending lagged throughout the project, reflecting delays in implementation; at its current rate, the ILO is unlikely expend its entire budget. The percentage of project budget

assessment. The critique of local authorities was it wanted to project farther into the future and match skills with potential, higher value added economic activities.

spent on programme costs versus administrative costs was reasonable and programme expenditures were focused on stakeholders' high priority areas.

Finding 10: Choices made by the project to work with well-established vocational training centres and offer skills certification through the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) system were good strategies to foster sustainability. Both public and private partners are likely to sustain the training courses that were supported by SKILLED but some of the value-added elements paid for by the project will most likely be dropped, affecting access by low income groups. Improvements related to training equipment upgrades will be more lasting.

4. Main Conclusions

With its focus on improving vocational training quality and relevance, SKILLED was well-aligned with government policies on poverty reduction and the development of vocational training. Although stakeholders identified some key areas for improvement, overall, the project addressed the needs of its key stakeholders effectively as indicated by the high levels of satisfaction expressed by all stakeholder categories.

SKILLED achieved or surpassed many of its main quantitative objectives. Among the types of support offered to vocational training centres, centre equipment upgrades were critical to improve the quality of vocational training by enabling more practical, hands-on forms of instruction. In addition, SKILLED support for outreach and career orientation campaigns in rural sub districts and subsidies for trainee out-of-pocket expenses were particularly successful strategies for increasing access to vocational training by low income groups in its four target districts. By making it possible for new courses to be offered by existing vocational training providers, the project contributed to increasing the supply and diversity of course offerings in the target districts. The RPL activity offered already practicing tradespersons official recognition of their skills and pathways to higher earnings and greater social recognition (please see good practice).

Employment outcomes of project-supported vocational training varied due to differences in the quality of the courses, post classroom training support and other factors. For example, trainees who were placed in on-the-job training by centres likely fared better in the job market than those who were not. External factors, including the types and quality of jobs available in the target districts and youth career aspirations, which were in many cases not in line with available jobs, also affected the employment outcomes of the project.

The project strategy of supporting the PES filled a gap in available services for some young job seekers and employers in the target districts. Although centres are relatively new, all centres have developed relationships with employers and been able to link some young people to jobs in the private sector. PES involvement with vocational training providers through the networks reinvigorated by SKILLED was helpful to enable the PES to link job seekers to the centres for training and for centres to participate in job fairs and other activities related to the job placement of their trainees.

SKILLED's capacity building component delivered mixed results. On the positive side, the content of the training was relevant to the needs of participants and was well-designed to improve the performance of key vocational and PES centre personnel. However, flaws in the implementation modalities and difficulties in scheduling the courses and mobilizing some participants from public institutions reduced the overall effectiveness of the programme. The absence of follow-up on training programmes likewise diminished its effectiveness. The quality management systems training, initiated in the latter months of the project, may yield better results because of it is less dispersed among multiple centres and centre personnel, uses a more holistic approach to centre capacity building and relies less on sending personnel to Colombo for training.

The ILO largely missed an opportunity to promote core values of the organization by not having stronger strategies to mainstream gender and respect for International Labour Standards in vocational training and employment programmes. Project efforts in the latter half of the project to mainstream Occupational Safety and Health in training programmes did seize a relevant opportunity and may be an emerging good practice.

SKILLED capitalized on experienced national programme staff to implement the project and based them close to project activities where they were able to provide support efficiently to the project's main partners. The cost of this project management structure was relatively low and allowed a reasonable proportion of the project budget to be dedicated to programmes rather than administration. The centralization of vocational training administration in Colombo was an impediment to greater project efficiency, more so given the distance of senior programme staff from the capital and relatively weak support from the ILO Colombo office. Centralization of vocational training administration and other factors contributed to slow spending rates, reflecting implementation delays and cancelled activities.

SKILLED put in place many good strategies to promote sustainability. The project was well integrated with the national framework on vocational training and built on existing vocational training structures with a proven track record. Whether through national budget allocations or participant fees, it is likely that many project supported vocational training programmes will continue post project. However, some value added features of SKILLED that boosted quality and enabled access by low income youth will not be continued in the absence of new, external resources.

5. Good Practices and Lessons Learned

Several good practices emerge from the SKILLED programme. Among these were:

- Integrating training on occupational health and safety in vocational training programmes through capacity building for centre administrators and instructors;
- Involving professionals from the private sector in career guidance programmes;
- Partnering with organizations with a strong community presence and other youth services (National Youth Services Centres)
- Raising the awareness of school guidance counsellors and teachers on vocational training options for youth.
- Capitalizing on recognition of prior learning certification to offer practicing trades persons access to certification.

Among the lessons learned of the project are the following:

- To expand access to vocational training, targeted awareness raising and orientation programmes are needed to overcome negative perceptions of some trades by Sri Lankan youth in general and females in particular.
- To implement successful joint programmes that create synergies among implementing organization, coordination meetings are not sufficient. UN agencies need to have intentional strategies and plans on collaboration. They also need to be held accountable for following through on these strategies and plans.

6. Recommendations

For Vocational Training providers and future ILO programmes that seek to enhance vocational training and employment outcomes of participants:

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- Offer additional opportunities for instruction to develop language skills. For Tamil speakers, greater proficiency in Sinhala was identified as a priority so that trainees are more comfortable seeking employment outside Tamil-speaking areas where employment opportunities are greater. (6.1.1)(*High importance, short term priority with resource implications*)
 - Provide more guidance on job-search strategies during the period of vocational training. (6.1.2)(*High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications*)
 - Depending on the size of the centre, at least one human resource should be dedicated to developing linkages with employers in the relevant sectors covered by the vocational training sectors. (6.1.3)(*High importance, medium term priority with resource implications*)
 - Ensure that all trainees access on-the-job training. This should be a function of a dedicated staff person (could be the same staff person as for the point above). (6.1.4)(*High importance, short term priority with resource implications*)
 - Provide more systematic support to link course graduates intending to pursue self-employment to credit and business support services. (6.1.5)(*Medium importance, short term priority with modest resource implications*)
 - Track employment outcomes of trainees more systematically and use data to improve job placement services.(6.1.6)(*High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications*)
 - Involve employers in design and delivery of training programmes. (6.1.7)(*High importance, medium to long term priority with modest resource implications*)
 - Include guidance on job search and employability in career guidance programmes.(6.1.8)(*High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications*)

Recommendations for Vocational Training Authorities to increase the Relevance and Effectiveness of Vocational Training Programmes at the district level

- Create technical and professional pathways before O and A level exams (in line with current Government policy). (6.2.1)(*High importance, medium to long term priority with fairly significant resource implications*)
- Decentralize more authority for strategic planning and administration of vocational training programmes to the provincial or district levels. At these levels, link local economic development planning and skills development strategies.(6.2.2)(*High importance, medium to long term priority with resource implications*)
- Engage employer federations in key economic sectors (national and sub-national levels) in determining priority investments in skills development programmes.(6.2.3)(*High importance, medium to long term priority with modest resource implications*)
- Develop more flexible and demand driven modalities for vocational training. Provide public funding for the development and delivery of short tailored courses that respond to emerging employment opportunities in the private sector. Allow private sector training providers to compete for funding. (6.2.4)(*High importance, medium to long term priority with modest resource implications*)
- Fund local NGOs that are effective in training out-of-school youth for job opportunities. Establish scholarships for disadvantaged youth to access training delivered by either public or private sector institutions in demand-oriented skills areas. (6.2.5)(*High importance, medium to long term priority with resource implications*)
- Expand apprenticeship programmes by providing incentives for industry to train more workers in the workplace. (6.2.6)(*High importance, medium to long term priority with resource implications*)

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- Conduct targeted outreach and awareness raising campaigns on workforce development for girls; (6.2.7)(*High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications*)
 - Include parents as targets/participants in career guidance programmes; (6.2.8)(*High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications*)
 - Post training, encourage registration by self-employed trades people by providing incentives and access to support programmes. (Example, participation in online directories of trades persons, access to government contracts, access to credit)(6.2.9)(*High importance, medium to long term priority with resource implications*)

Recommendations to ILO to improve management of future district level programmes

- In future district level projects with strong interaction with central administration authorities, reinforce programme support in Colombo; (6.3.1)(*Medium importance, resource implications*)
- Ensure a reasonable balance between male and female programme managers in future technical assistance programmes to district level stakeholders; (6.3.2)(*Medium importance, no resource implications*)
- Mainstream awareness on fundamental principles and rights at work in all programmes (6.3.3)(*High importance, modest resource implications*)
- To improve project monitoring, develop a monitoring and evaluation plan early in project implementation with clear indicators and targets; refer back to indicators and targets clearly when reporting results; when project monitoring requires extensive data collection (example, large number of beneficiaries; outcomes of project services to be tracked), allocate dedicated personal for monitoring and evaluation.(6.3.4)(*High importance, modest resource implications*)

Recommendations to UN agencies to promote more effective collaboration

- In future joint programmes, conduct joint planning exercises during design and/or early implementation stages to identify synergies and plan for collaboration. Integrate indicators on collaboration in programme performance monitoring frameworks to be followed-up in regular monitoring activities. (6.4.1)(*High importance, modest resource implications*)

I. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 EU SUPPORT TO DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

This report documents the main findings and conclusions of the final evaluation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Skills to support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) Project in Sri Lanka. The SKILLED project is part of the European Union Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP), a €60 million programme, which began implementation in July 2012 and is scheduled to finish by May 2018.³ ILO implemented SKILLED with a budget of €2,000,000 (approximately US\$2,680,000).

The overall programme objective of EU-SDDP is to contribute to poverty reduction in North and East Sri Lanka and to bridge the socio-economic gap with the rest of the country by supporting sustainable regional and local development and good governance in conflict-affected areas.⁴

More specifically, the overall programme aims to make a substantial contribution to the transition from post-conflict relief and reconstruction to sustainable development by supporting selected districts in North and East Sri Lanka, in alignment with their local development plans, through pursuing three specific but interconnected objectives:

- To support poverty reduction and the provision of basic infrastructure and services for vulnerable populations (Programme Component 1);
- To support local economic development (Programme Component 2); and
- To strengthen local governance (Programme Component 3).

The ILO is one of six lead implementing organisations that include the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The implementing agencies started their respective scoping and activity planning in late 2012. Programme implementation was halted for several months starting in late 2013 by the Government of Sri Lanka for additional consultations on its design. EU-SDDP implementation started again in October 2014 (according to midterm evaluation report) and the implementation phase will end by May 2018 followed by a maximum six-month period for the agencies to submit their final reports.

The ILO and IFC are lead implementing organisations for Component 2 - Local Economic Development. The component addresses challenges hindering private sector development including deficiencies in available services to support public and private business development, work force training and employment in four target districts: Ampara, Batticaloa, Mannar and Vavuniya. Component 2 aims to address this situation through the following main result areas:

Result 2.1: Support to entrepreneurship and expansion of existing businesses (IFC)

Result 2.2: Improved business environment (IFC)

³ The implementation phase of the EU SDDP will end in May 2018 followed by a maximum 6 month period for the agencies to submit their final reports.

⁴ Sri Lanka's 25 year civil ended in May 2009. Districts in the North and East experienced the heaviest fighting.

Result 2.3: Improved access to quality vocational training through support to at least 60% of the Registered Training Providers (ILO)

1.2 Project Description

The SKILLED project includes all activities implemented by the ILO under Result 2.3 of Component 2 of the overall EU-SDDP: Improved access to quality vocational training through support to at least 60% of the Registered Training Providers. ILO designed SKILLED to respond to the following key issues facing the formal vocational training system:

- weak institutional capacity amongst public and private providers;
- poor links with employers and industry;
- limited outreach of training providers to underprivileged youth and marginalized groups;
- limited industry relevant technical skills of instructors/teachers; and
- limited formal recognition of informally acquired skills.

ILO project strategies aimed to strengthen the governance, management and operational capacity of registered training providers and improve employment services in the project districts. The project focused its efforts on producing the following 4 sub results:

2.3.1: Vocational Training Centres deliver demand driven courses;

2.3.2: Vocational Training Centre instructors with capacity to conduct quality training;

2.3.3: District vocational training stakeholders with collective strategies to promote vocational training and employment services;

2.3.4 Districts with operational Public Employment Services Centres.

To achieve its objectives, SKILLED provided technical and financial support to district government and registered public and private skills training operators to:

- Implement new training curriculum for high-growth economic sectors;
- Procure equipment to improve training quality and relevance;
- Strengthen district-based systems for recognition of prior learning leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ);
- Improve training systems for vocational training instructors;
- Improve Vocational Training Centre management systems;
- Improve training centre awareness raising and outreach systems;
- Create district vocational training operator forums;
- Establish district-level employment services;
- Place trainees in jobs in priority occupations and industry sectors;
- Improve access to informal apprenticeships by vulnerable groups, particularly people with disabilities.

The targeted beneficiaries are specifically: (1) conflict-affected and displaced people belonging to very poor households, many of whom have faced school attendance problems that have reduced their opportunity to access vocational training services; (2) unemployed jobseekers; (3) workers that acquired competencies through informal non-institutional means; (4) instructors of Vocational Training Providers; (5) officers from field level organizations and (6) officers from public administrations.

1.3 Context

Matching labour force skills with market demands represents a serious challenge for the registered Vocational Training Providers active in the four districts targeted by the project. Some of the main reasons of unmet demand for skilled labour are: (1) The education sector remains largely supply-driven instead of demand-driven ; (2) a chronic lack of qualified Vocational Training instructors; (3) insufficient provision of training in some geographical areas; (4) a lack of an up-to-date labour market information system that reflects demand of skilled workers for each sector; (5) public training institutes fall under the authority of different Ministries relative to the type and focus of services they provide. Their policies and quality standards vary and are not aligned.

II. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation Objectives

The overall objective of this Final Independent Evaluation is to provide project management, the ILO country, regional and headquarters offices, donors and other stakeholders with an independent assessment the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability for the purposes of transparency and accountability. The evaluation is also intended to identify lessons learnt and good practices that may be used by the ILO or its partners to inform the design and implementation of similar interventions in the future.

2.2 Scope and Intended Users

The scope of the independent evaluation includes a review and assessment of all activities carried out under expected result 2.3 from the start until September 2017. The evaluation findings, good practices, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations are primarily intended for project stakeholders who include:

- SKILLED project management team
- ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives and relevant ILO technical and administrative backstopping units (Decent Work Team in Delhi, Employment and Skills in Geneva, Evaluation Unit in Bangkok)
- Representatives of other international organizations involved in the programme: UNDP, UNOPS, FAO, UNICEF and the IFC
- ILO partners at national, district and local levels
- The donor

2.3 Methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an independent evaluation consultant and managed by ILO evaluation unit located in its regional office in Bangkok. The evaluation was framed by the key evaluation questions contained in the final evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR) (see **Annex 2**), which were consolidated in the evaluators' inception report (**see Annex 3**)

The data collection phase was from 24 September to 10 October, 2017. During this period, the evaluator met with stakeholders in Colombo and visited all four districts targeted by the project. (See **Annex 5** for list of interviews and meetings). The evaluator's main data collection methods included a review of project documents (see **Annex 4**), key informant interviews (KII), and focus group discussions (FGD). As detailed in table 1 below, KIIs included all major stakeholder groups. The evaluator visited 3-4 vocational training centres in each of SKILLED's four target regions and held 10 FGDs with participants in project-supported training programmes. Vocational training instructors likewise gave their opinions on project capacity building in FGD or small group interviews in all four regions. Finally, fieldwork included 3 FGDs with participants in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) activity in three out of four regions (Batticaloa, Mannar and Ampara).

Table 1 Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interview Participants	# Males	# Females	Total People
ILO Personnel	5	3	8
National Vocational Training Authorities (Colombo)	3	5	8
Local Government Representatives	4	0	4
Chamber of Commerce	1		
Public Employment Service Personnel	7	6	13
Regional Vocational Programme Administrators	15	4	19
Other UN Agency Representative	4	1	5
Total	39	19	58

The main purposes of these consultations were to collect qualitative data covering:

- Stakeholders' perceptions of project challenges and opportunities;
- Validity of project strategies used in the field;
- The quality of services delivered or in progress;
- Outcomes of project activities to date;
- Emerging good practices and lessons learned.

The evaluation adhered to evaluation norms, standards and ethical safeguards. The evaluator used semi-structured question guides prepared in advance for individual interviews and FGD (see the question outline in the question matrix in **Annex 3**) which included a protocol for explaining the purpose, use of the evaluation and the confidentiality of responses. Methods of data collection and stakeholder perspectives were triangulated for as many as possible of the evaluation questions to strengthen the credibility and validity of the findings. As far as possible, a consistent approach was followed in each project site, with adjustments made for the different stakeholders involved, activities conducted, and the progress of implementation in each locality. In the vast majority of interviews, members of the project team were not present.⁵

The evaluator facilitated a stakeholder workshop in Colombo on October 13, 2017 mainly attended by Colombo-based vocational training authorities. The evaluator presented the initial findings, good practices, lessons learned and recommendations and invited feedback from the participants which was incorporated into this draft report.

2.4 Evaluation Limitations

Evaluation limitations include the following:

Selection bias: The evaluator provided guidelines for the selection of vocational training centres but the final selection was done by the project managers. Because the centres were not randomly selected by the evaluator, there was a risk of selection bias (that ILO could select

⁵ There were 2-3 exceptions, which were made by the evaluator due to translation challenges.

the most active, responsive, or engaged stakeholders who report positive experiences). To mitigate this risk, the evaluator consulted a fairly large number of stakeholders in all four project districts and triangulated responses.

Translation bias: The evaluator conducted most stakeholder interviews through a translator which introduced the risk that the translation might not have accurately conveyed the evaluator's question and/or the stakeholder's response. Indeed, the quality of translation was poor in some cases. The evaluator mitigated this risk by following up to clarify questions and responses in cases when the message did not appear to be well communicated. In some interviews, the evaluator asked a meeting participant to help with translation.

Project data limitations: The evaluation assessment of the degree to which SKILLED met its key targets for each indicator relies on the project's information management system. In the case of SKILLED, the project monitoring systems may not have been sufficient to collect reliable data on all project indicators. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the findings section.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

Finding 1: SKILLED was well-aligned with government policies and plans on the development of vocational training. Overall, the project addressed the needs of its key stakeholder effectively but there were some gaps (described below).

One stakeholder cited education statistics to highlight the relevance of SKILLED to a key national challenge: more than 300,000 unskilled youth enter the job market annually after failing the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level examination or failing to gain access to university education each year in Sri Lanka. Reinforcing access to quality vocational training is widely recognized as part of the needed solution to this problem. The strategy proposed by the ILO was relevant to national priorities as indicated by:

Consistency with relevant Sri Lanka policies: SKILLED four key areas of interventions and related activities were well-conceived to support government policy and programme priorities by:

- Supporting the post conflict development agenda in the North and East, which set out to address regional development disparities. Following 30 years of civil war, support for developing the human capital needed to build the local economy in post conflict zones has been identified by the government as well as the private sector as a critical need.⁶
- Aligning with priorities identified in the chapter on education in Sri Lanka's Ten-Year Development Framework (2006–2016) that specified the following action areas: improving labour market relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses, strengthening quality control and certification, improving employability of graduates, addressing gender imbalances in enrolment, improving coordination among public, private, and NGO stakeholders, and increasing awareness and changing negative perceptions of vocational training by the general public.⁷

⁶<http://www.dailymirror.lk/114340/Strong-and-sustainable-growth-through-human-capital-development-Has-Sri-Lanka-even-started->

⁷ Innovative Strategies In Technical And Vocational Education And Training For Accelerated Human Resource Development In South Asia In Sri Lanka, Asian Development Bank, 2015, p. 24-25.

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- Addressing key challenges identified in the National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education which outlined three major challenge areas affecting TVET sector development: (i) economic and financial aspects; (ii) image, effectiveness, and employability; and (iii) quality assurance.⁸

Alignment with EU SDDP poverty focus and aim to serve marginalized groups. EU SDDP set out to support poverty reduction and the provision of services for vulnerable groups. SKILLED aligned with this objective by targeting participants with less educational attainment and working individuals without formal training. According to Asian Development Bank studies, the highest levels of poverty (44%) in Sri Lanka occurs in households whose members have studied up to grade 5 only, followed by households whose members have completed grades 5–10 (38%). Although SKILLED does not have comprehensive data on the education attainment levels of its vocational training programme participants, based on KII with project management, vocational training centre managers and focus group participants, most participants in SKILLED training programmes had studied up to 10th grade and taken their Ordinary Level exams. Some programmes supported by SKILLED had no educational prerequisites and were accessible by youth with less education, notably programmes offered by the Nation Youth Service Council centres and the Non-Formal Education Unit in Vavuniya.

SKILLED was also well aligned with needs of its key stakeholders but some gaps were highlighted.

- **District authorities:** District authorities, who were represented in stakeholder interviews with the Government Agent or the Officer in Charge of Planning, indicated high levels of satisfaction with the EU SDDP in general and with the ILO sub-component in particular. One district official said that employment, in particular youth unemployment, was a critical issue in his district. He also cited deficits in skilled workers in sectors targeted by the project vocational training programmes such as construction. Another district official noted however, that he would have liked the EU-SDDP to have contributed to more valued-added economic development in his district and for the ILO to have linked its efforts at skills development to the needs of potentially higher valued-added economic activities. A vocational training authority was more explicit on this point when he proposed, “future donor programmes should link training with local economic investment promotion so that on one hand, a factory is built and on the other, workers are trained to work in the factory.”
- **Vocational Training authorities:** Both vocational training authorities in Colombo and in district offices affirmed the relevance of support provided by SKILLED to their needs. In particular they noted that the project supplemented slim budgets and that project support for equipment procurement was especially appreciated.⁹ Colombo based authorities noted that their procurement policies and the project’s timelines were poorly aligned; one key informant requested that in future projects, procurement should be handled by the ILO.
- **Instructors:** Vocational training instructors were on the whole; satisfied by the training they received through the project. One FGD participant characterized such opportunities for training as rare outside the context of projects like SKILLED.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Many vocational training centers in Sri Lanka do not have sufficient equipment and tools to allow trainees the opportunity to practice the skills they are taught. In the absence of equipment, some instructors interviewed by the evaluator said that they were forced to use less effective teaching techniques such as pictures of tools and video demonstrations rather than learning by doing. Other instructors said that they brought their own equipment to the classroom. Centers are not authorized to certify courses in the absence of minimum training equipment.

Instructors also noted that project equipment purchases improved the conditions of instruction since they could do more hands on practical exercises with their trainees. Although instructors expressed high levels of satisfaction with the quality and relevance of the content of the training (with appreciation that the medium of instruction was Tamil), training course logistics did not meet everyone's needs. The lodging and meals provided in Colombo by the University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC) were described as below basic quality standards, and most participants indicated that they would have preferred that the training be provided in or closer to their districts.¹⁰ Because of the consistent logistic problems experienced with UNIVOTEC training programmes, SKILLED cancelled a portion of the planned training programme.

- **Chamber/Employers:** Although employers were not well-represented in stakeholder consultations, a chamber of commerce representative and other KII with managers of vocational training and PES centres indicated that SKILLED strengthened linkages between employers and vocational training centres. They indicated that SKILLED support for On the Job Training (OJT) and upgrading the Public Employment Service (PES) had facilitated the recruitment of skilled employees by some local and Colombo-based businesses. PES managers and others were quick to point out, however, that these “success stories” were still fairly small scale and that the alignment between demand from employers and the supply of willing and skilled workers in project districts had not significantly improved over the life of the project.
- **Trainees:** SKILLED met the needs of low-income, rural youth for information and awareness raising on vocational training offerings (many focus group participants indicated they did not have access to information about the vocational training programmes that were available to them) and for financial support to cover out-of-pocket training costs including transportation, meals, certification costs and in a few cases, tuition and tools. The majority of trainees said they would not have been able to access training without these subsidies.

Both participants in the vocational training and RPL learning activities were very happy that their participation offered certification of their skills since this facilitated access to some jobs, social recognition and pathways to higher level training and certification programmes.

According to some youth and other key informants, some of the trades for which training was offered; especially skilled labourer trades (plumbing, masonry, electrical) did not meet participant expectations. This is explored more later under finding 4, on obstacles. Trainees also highlighted some important gaps in centre services post training, notably, although all participants were to be supported to do on the job training, not all were. Others indicated they required access to tools for their trade or support to get a loan, advice on job placement, and self-employment/enterprise development support. The need for additional language instruction in Sinhala and English was highlighted by many.¹¹

¹⁰ UNIVOTEC recognized that there had been logistical issues with the training provided. The managers explained that a last minute increase in enrollment in their University resulted in a shortage of appropriate lodging on campus and that they had not budgeted sufficient funds to lodge and feed participants off campus in quality hotels. SKILLED project management explained that the project had explored offering more training at the district level but that it was difficult to find UNIVOTEC instructors who were willing to leave Colombo since many had part time jobs in addition to their instructor positions. Alternatives to UNIVOTEC were not explored because it is the recognized government training institution for TVEC instructors and the project believed that the benefits of certification outweighed logistic concerns.

¹¹ SKILLED provided resources to training center partners for language teaching in either Sinhala or English. Participants and some instructors thought that the quantity of language training was insufficient. Several KI indicated that for Tamil trainees, Sinhala training was a priority so that they would be able to look for work outside Tamil speaking areas where jobs were more plentiful.

3.2 Effectiveness

Finding 2: Based on project reporting, by project end, SKILLED will meet or surpass most of its quantitative targets including on the number of registered vocational training institutions provided with support, number of participants in training courses, numbers of vocational training centre personnel trained, number district vocational networks created, and number of district public employment service supported. Achievements of outcomes, notably job placement, are likely more mitigated and available data is insufficient or unreliable.¹²

Support for demand oriented vocational training courses

Under its action for conducting demand-oriented courses, the ILO reports that 44 centres (33 government and 11 private) received project support which helped them to conduct 60 courses. SKILLED support to each training centre varied but the typical package included a grant to procure equipment for the course, training supplies, financial support for trainer and other resource person fees and direct support for trainees. SKILLED based its course selection decisions on a market assessment that was carried out in the early stages of project implementation; according to KII, the skills areas selected responded to demand for skilled workers, in particular in the construction sector.¹³ In some cases, the courses that were supported by the ILO were an addition to the registered vocational training centre partners' existing offering, so that it is likely that the project contributed to increasing the supply and diversity of course offerings in the target districts, at least during the implementation period.

Courses Supported by SKILLED

1. Computer Application Assistant
2. Heavy Equipment Machinery Operators
3. Welder
4. Construction Site Supervisor
5. Motor Cycle and Scooter Repairing
6. Automobile repair
7. Various Hotel Trades – Cooks, Room Attendant, Stewards
8. Information and Communication Technology Technician
9. Masonry
10. Modern Dress Making
11. Plumber
12. Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Repair Technician
13. Offset Litho Printing
14. Electrician
15. Computer Graphics Designer
16. Computer Network & CCTV Technician
17. Mobile phone repair

Table 2 SKILLED Vocational Training Courses

The project database records that 1,367 persons enrolled in these project supported courses, 261 females and 1106 males (target was 1,200). Stakeholders indicated that dropout rates for ILO supported courses were lower than for courses not supported by the ILO. This was largely attributed to project support for trainee expenses such as transportation.

The project reports that 810 trainees had completed their course by the time of the evaluation and that of these, 243 completed OJT. Information on job placement is quite limited; the project data base lists the places of employment of 47 trainees while narrative progress reports state 472 graduates (375 males and 97 females) had found employment. The data base lists another 196 trainees as having been referred to the PES centre. Interviews with centre managers and instructors indicate that tracking trainees' job placement outcomes is not done systematically but in each case, these stakeholders cited examples of trainees finding work

¹²It is necessary to note that project reporting, based on the M & E database shared with the evaluator, may not be 100% reliable. At the time of the evaluation, there were gaps in project data used to calculate completion rates, rates of employment etc.

¹³For example, it was pointed out multiple times that construction workers are in short supply in Sri Lanka; Based on this information, there should be work opportunities for graduates of plumbing, masonry, electrician, construction site supervisory, and heavy equipment operators courses. Other key informants reported shortages of workers for the hospitality and garment industries, areas that also corresponded to the courses supported by the ILO in some districts.

following their training. According to the same key informants, trainees often do not remain in their initial job long, complicating the tracking of their employment status. According to the project manager, SKILLED plans a tracer study to collect additional information on the employment outcomes of the trainees supported by SKILLED.

In addition to its support for training programmes, SKILLED provided support to the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) for a large scale Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) NVQ certification programme that reached 1,719 trades persons (1,377 males and 342 females) in the four districts. Demand from tradespersons for this activity exceeded original expectations; as a result, project management offered support for a second campaign, greatly surpassing its original targets. SKILLED provided support to NAITA in the form of equipment for certification testing, publicity materials and outreach activities and participant subsidies to cover certification fees. Participants in this programme indicated that they were unaware that they could obtain certificates based on their prior learning until they were exposed to project-supported NAITA awareness raising campaign. Many participants also indicated that financial aid to cover their certification fees was critical support.

Support for capacity building of vocational training instructors, managers, and vocational training authorities

Under its centre personnel capacity building component, SKILLED reports that 178 trainers (138 males and 40 females) received training on teaching methodologies, institutional marketing, and career guidance through UNIVOTEC and on occupational safety and health through the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). ILO training was provided to some vocational and PES centre managers and vocational training instructors on its entrepreneurship development methodology, “Start and Improve Your Own Business” (SIYB). Further training on centre management and trainee database management are also planned in the remaining months of the project. In addition to this, SKILLED is currently providing technical support to 15 centres (12 public and 3 private centres) to establish a quality management system. This activity will include workshops on documentation and how to carry out a quality audit for centre managers and trainers.

As highlighted under finding 1, feedback from capacity building programme participant focus groups highlighted that logistical problems with the Colombo-based UNIVOTEC training negatively affected the participants’ experience in the training courses and likely diminished its overall effectiveness. These problems resulted in the cancelation of part of the training programme. Another factor that challenged the delivery of training was the availability of personnel from public training centres. Centre managers highlighted that they could not release their trainers to attend courses for long periods of time and that it would have been helpful if SKILLED training of trainer courses had been more evenly distributed over the calendar year rather than grouped together in one period. Despite this, most participants in project sponsored courses reported that they found the content and delivery of the training to be relevant and were glad to receive official recognition for the training.¹⁴ Several participants in SKILLED training programmes indicated that they were able to use at least some of the knowledge that they acquired. For example, some of the instructors who were interviewed indicated that they now use lesson plans and have varied their teaching techniques to some extent. Participants in the NIOSH programme indicated that they had made some improvements to their centres’ safety standards based on knowledge acquired in the course. Some participants highlighted that they were unable to apply what they learned because their

¹⁴ UNIVOTEC is the main public teaching institution in the vocational training sector. According to SKILLED project management, a certificate of completion from the center is necessary for the training course to be officially recognized by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC).

centres lacked the appropriate safety equipment, an issue partially address by SKILLED support.¹⁵

The consultant providing technical assistance to the 15 centres seeking quality management systems certification indicated that there were many challenges to implementing the programme but that he was confident that most if not all of the centres would successfully complete the certification. He indicated that the quality management system is a requirement for registered vocational training providers but that language barriers had hindered some centre managers in the North and East from participating in national vocational training authorities regular capacity building programmes. Although he recognized that the effect will not be immediate, his hope was that certification would allow the participating centres to offer higher levels of NVQ certification courses which would create more opportunities for higher levels of skills acquisition in the target districts.¹⁶

Collective strategies among Vocational Training providers and employment services in project districts

With support from the project, Vocational Training Providers Forums in three districts were reconvened and one forum was newly formed in Mannar. In all four districts, with ILO support, the forum members have conducted collective activities including divisional career guidance sessions and district job fairs (organized jointly with respective district PES centres). In addition, members collaborated with Provincial Education Departments to raise awareness of career guidance counsellors and teachers on vocational training courses. In its last progress report, the project reported that 189 teachers in Batticaloa district had been trained and programmes for another 400 teachers in the other districts were planned.

According to a leader of one of the forums, he hoped that the forum would result in less duplication in training course offerings and more resource sharing and collective action to promote vocational training in the respective districts. He indicated that results had been more modest than his aspirations and expressed disappointment that in his district, private vocational training providers had been excluded from the network. One private vocational training provider indicated that he did not think the forum in his district was effective forum for sharing information and resources, despite ILO support for collective action.

Support for improved Public Employment Services

PES Centres in all four project districts were operational at the time of the evaluation. Project support for these centres consisted of equipment, supplies and training for centre managers. The centre managers reported that they were actively receiving applications from job seekers. In addition, all centres, although to varying degrees, were offering free recruitment services to employers. In its last progress report, SKILLED reported that nearly 4,000 vacancies had been referred to the PES centres and 954 youth (412 males and 542 females) had been placed for employment. The project likewise reported that the centres had conducted 14 divisional and district job fairs since they started and were also actively referring youth to vocational training centres.

PES managers interviewed by the evaluators reported varying degrees of success in their efforts to connect job-seekers with employers. Managers in Mannar and Ampara reported that there were few employment opportunities in their districts; they believe to be more successful, there needs to be more investment in their districts and/or job seekers need to be

¹⁵ These participants did not specify what types of equipment were missing from their center. SKILLED has procured safety equipment including personal protection gear and fire estiquishers for many of the centers it supported.

¹⁶ Most of the vocational training courses available in project targeted districts is for basis (NVQ 3 or 4) certification. Individuals who want higher level certification must often travel to larger cities in the South. Cost and language factors hinder many from seeking higher level training. If higher level certifications were available in their district, many participants in project courses indicated they would pursue additional training.

more willing to seek employment out of the district. The offices in Batticaloa and Vavuniya were relatively more optimistic since there were higher levels of economic activity and incoming investments in their districts, although they too indicated that the skills and aspirations of job seekers were often not well aligned with vacancies.¹⁷ In all four centres, the managers reported challenges related to insufficient human resources and training and technology-related issues with the online job bank application.¹⁸ The PES centres depend on the Department of Manpower and Employment, which also allocates resources and personnel for career orientation activities; most PES centres were carrying out both career orientation and job placement services, which they found to be complementary missions.

Finding 3: SKILLED carried out a number of effective strategies to improve access to skills training programmes by out-of-school and unemployed youth, the majority of whom appear to have been from low income households. The quality of the vocational training varied from centre to centre and this affected the employment outcomes of participants.

Effective Strategies to Serve Vulnerable Populations

SKILLED used a number of effective strategies to reach low income people with vocational training and employment services.

Career Orientation Services: SKILLED-supported outreach programmes carried out by vocational training operators, PES and NAITA officials to rural divisional secretariats enabled the programme to serve participants away from district capitals who otherwise would be less likely to access vocational training and NVQ certification. Key informants and the youth themselves explained that large numbers of youth do not pass their Ordinary or Advanced level exams and are therefore excluded from university studies. These youth need orientation in order to find appropriate training opportunities; project-supported outreach activities met this need for many. In the absence of support, many youth would have entered the job market as unskilled labour or work as family helpers in small-scale agricultural activities.

Trainee Direct Support: SKILLED direct support to trainees enabled access to training courses by low income youth by covering their out-of-pocket expenses and lowering the opportunity cost of taking immediate unskilled labourer jobs versus continuing their training. Key informants noted that many rural youth forego training activities because they need to contribute to their family livelihoods. In addition to the subsidies that were provided by the project, some key informants indicated that there were other strategies that might have been considered to alleviate economic pressures on very poor youth including shorter courses or access to paid apprenticeships.

Selection of Courses and Centres: Although not all courses aligned with youth aspirations, they corresponded to sectors of activity for which there was demand for semi-skilled labourers. The decision to only work with registered vocation training providers that were able to offer certification of training also was a positive aspect of SKILLED programmes, since it aligned with national policies creating employment incentives for certificate holders. One centre in Vavuniya was selected because it offered vocational training to persons with disabilities, a particularly under-served and vulnerable group.

Factors affecting quality

¹⁷All centers reported hard-to-fill vacancies for insurance sales person (considered undesirable by many job seekers because it was door-to-door, commission based try work). Some districts reported vacancies in garment factories (considered a too demanding profession by many potential workers.)

¹⁸Several key informants reported that online registration of job seekers was hindered by difficulty accessing and entering data in the application (due to a slow server).

Despite its effective strategies, the quality of training provided by project supported centres was most likely uneven due to a number of factors.

Delays in equipment procurement: Centre managers, instructors and trainees reported that SKILLED equipment purchases contributed significantly to training relevance by enabling more hands on training. However, in a few cases the equipment did not arrive on time to be used in the first round of project-supported courses.

Gaps in training curriculum: Some centre managers and trainees highlighted gaps in the NVQ curriculum, which had to be followed for certification. They said in some cases, the curriculum was not up-to-date with the technology actually used in enterprises. One ILO programme manager indicated that in some cases, the project was able to cover the cost of resource persons to deliver training on areas that supplemented the standard curriculum.

Many participants in trainee focus groups and key informants highlighted that although many courses integrated language training, more training in this area was needed. Many Tamil speaking trainees indicated that part of their hesitation in seeking employment in the South, where jobs were more abundant, was lack of Sinhala language skills. Although with ILO support, resource persons were brought in to deliver a soft skills/cross cutting topic module, with the budget constraints described by vocational training programme administrators, it is not sure that the module will continue when project funding is no longer available.¹⁹

Gaps in post training follow-up services: Weak follow-up on classroom training by some centres also diminished the quality and effectiveness of project supported training. Some trainee FGD participants indicated that they were unsure about how to go about finding a job following their training and only some youth had been informed about the services offered by the PES. Several trainees who were able to do OJT said that these experiences were important to fill gaps in their training and helped them to find jobs. Even though SKILLED prescribed OJT for all NVQ level courses, several FGD participants reported that they did not take part because they were not offered a placement or because they were not offered a placement that met their expectations. SKILLED's beneficiary database reports the OJT placement of less than 1/3 of trainees, although SKILLED project management indicates that some participants are still undergoing OJT and may not be reflected in the database.

Many youth requested support to establish them in self-employment. A few courses provided participants with tools following their training but most did not. A few trainees hoped they would be able to get a loan using their certification to launch them in business. According to SKILLED project personnel, they had hoped for stronger linkages with IFC programmes to facilitate trainee or RPL certificate holders' access to credit but that these did not materialize. Early in the project, ILO and IFC collaborated so that youth from some vocational training centres were able to follow an IFC short course on entrepreneurship but this was not pursued systematically²⁰.

Finding 4 Various external factors posed challenges affecting the performance of SKILLED. The project put in place a number of effective strategies to mitigate some of factors that negatively affected its effectiveness.

A number of important external factors affected project performance.

¹⁹ The cross cutting topics covered included occupational safety and health, gender awareness and in some cases, labor rights.

²⁰ This ILO/IFC collaboration was early in project implementation before most project supported vocational training programmes had started meaning that direct participants in training programmes did not benefit from this course.

Start-up delays & reduced implementation period

The SKILLED project was intended to be a 5 year programme which included an initial period for situational analysis and assessment. The period of implementation was reduced when project implementation was put on hold by the Government for several months and then delayed by extended (re)negotiations on target districts in 2012/2013.²¹ Key informants among other EU SDDP implementers revealed that all implementing agencies, not just the ILO, were negatively affected by these unexpected circumstances. One consequence of the delay (to be discussed in more detail under finding 5) was that agencies had less time for joint planning exercises. Another was that EU SDDP implementation zones were extended. To mitigate the risk of spreading its resources too thinly, the ILO negotiated effectively with government authorities and was able limit its implementation zones to the original four targeted districts.

Centralization of Vocational Training Administration

SKILLED project management reported that while other EU SDDP implementers coordinated their actions with authorities at the provincial and district levels, the ILO component was administered through agreements with centralized vocational training authorities. Centralization of decision-making and procurement processes in public vocational training centres contributed to additional project delays; most training activities were only starting in late 2015.²²

Centralization of administrative authority affected district and centre authorities ability to find timely and effective solutions to the large variety of problems facing their centres which include deficits in the learning environment, teaching process, availability of qualified instructors, equipment, operational mechanisms, and funds management. Project strategies to overcome the constraints of centralization included diversifying its partners to include private vocational training providers and regular follow-up with Colombo-based authorities. The latter posed challenges since all key ILO programme staff were based in the field, close to the centres where help was needed but far from central administrators whose sign-off was needed for action.

Participants in the national level stakeholder workshop at the conclusion of this evaluation acknowledged that the centralization of vocational training administration was a hindering factor and indicated that new policies aim to devolve more authority to the provincial and district levels.

Socio-cultural factors affecting participants' attitudes regarding VT and employment

Almost all key informants highlighted challenges faced by centres to interest youth in vocational training and private sector jobs, especially "blue collar" jobs. Despite the availability of relatively well-paid jobs in the private sector, many youth, backed up by their parents, aspire to find government jobs. Jobs in growing sectors such as construction, tourism and readymade garment production are perceived negatively by many youth and their families.

This factor resulted in a misalignment between the types of training offered by project supported centres, which were selected to meet market demand, and the types of training and career paths desired by many youth in project targeted districts.

Strategies use by the project to overcome these challenges included investing extensively in outreach and career guidance activities. One example of a successful strategy to change negative perceptions was exposing youth and their parents to professionals in the target

²¹ A EU SDDP ROM review of the ILO programme reported "Considerable delays in approvals and agreements of action plans by district administrations, and a non-conducive political environment have had a major impact on the project."

²² The EU ROM report identified "delays in the release of funds by their headquarters" as a cause of implementation delays.

sector. For example, one project activity, supported by the IFC, mobilized a high level manager of the Cinnamon hotel chain to speak to youth and parents about opportunities in the hospitality industry. The project's partnership with the National Youth Services Council (NYSC) was also cited as effective since it capitalized on the NYSC extensive network of youth centres in rural areas where youth were relatively more susceptible to taking up the trades offered in NYSC centres. Project direct financial support to trainees also played an important role in encouraging participation, although sustaining the latter is likely to be a challenge.

Absence of sufficient economic opportunities in some districts

An additional challenge that hindered project supported employment services was the lack of industry in some target districts, most notably Mannar and Ampara, coupled with resistance from youth, females in particular, to seek employment away from their home district. Real cultural and language barriers influences some youths' preferences to remain un or underemployed in their district rather than seek jobs in the South. The project addressed the latter to some degree by providing support for language instruction in some centres, although many trainees felt that additional language instruction would have been beneficial.

Finding 5 The project maintained strong levels of collaboration with national counterparts (district and central levels), who were highly satisfied with the work of the ILO team. Internal to the EU-SDDP, SKILLED yielded only a few examples of effective collaboration with other implementing agencies.

Successful Collaboration with Project Counterparts

Based on key informant interviews, ILO project personnel maintained positive interactions with its counterparts at the national and district levels. The programme managers in the field were viewed as facilitators. Many key informants lauded the project staff for their consistent presence and regular follow-up. The only exception was in the area of training programme logistics in Colombo, a case where some stakeholders indicated that the ILO should have coordinated the programmes more closely with UNIVOTEC.

District authorities consulted during the evaluation expressed satisfaction with the level of coordination engaged by the project with their offices. They said that they felt that they had been adequately informed of project developments through the regular coordination mechanisms set up by the EU SDDP. District authorities participated in many project events and in particular had been involved in decisions regarding the creation of the PES centres.

At the national level, administrators expressed satisfaction with their ILO counterparts but also some frustration regarding the extra efforts that were required of them to move the programme forward. Two different managers expressed that they were responsible for the administration of vocational training centres across the island and that it was difficult for them to provide special treatment to centres in the North and East, although they indicated that they had found ways to work with the ILO to meet the project objectives.

Weak Collaboration among Implementing Agencies

EU SDDP implementing agencies met regularly throughout the programme implementation period. The ILO also shared office space with other UN agencies in both Batticaloa and Vavuniya. The ILO engaged in small scale joint efforts with UNOPS, UNDP, IFC and UNICEF that benefited project beneficiaries.

- The ILO placed trainees and RPL certificate holders in UNOPS construction sites for jobs and OJT;
- The ILO and UNDP worked together to establish a small scale garment factory in Mannar district with the ILO providing training and the UNDP purchasing equipment;

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- The IFC enrolled vocational training graduates in a programme on entrepreneurship and facilitated an awareness raising programme on careers in the hospitality industry;
 - ILO and UNICEF collaborated on awareness raising about vocational training opportunities for teachers and career guidance instructors in schools.

Based on KII with other agencies, there was broad recognition that all implementing agencies could have been more effective in finding ways to work together. Most admitted that the vision of an integrated local development programme that was articulated in the original EU SDDP design did not materialize. KII with agency programme managers identified several factors that limited their cooperation. These included: the shortened Implementation period and pressure to spend resources quickly, the delay in the development of District Development Plans might have guided joint investments, differences in the various agencies' modes of operation, lack of commitment to joint approaches versus independent ones which may have been affected by overlapping methodologies and agency tendencies to favour their own methodologies (for example ILO, IFC and UNDP all have their own approaches to entrepreneurship development), and the wide geographic spread of activities which resulted in less overlap in the project implementation sites than had been initially planned.

Greater collaboration between the IFC and ILO on component 2 of the EU SDDP was affected by challenges sequencing interventions (most ILO trainees finished their training relatively late in project implementation) and differences in approach (the IFC does not provide grants directly to beneficiaries but works with financial institutions as intermediaries. As such, it is not able to force the institutions to provide assistance to youth if it does not align with their credit policies.)

After the EU SDDP mid-term evaluation, which cited deficiencies in inter-agency collaboration, the EU-SDDP Joint Programme Manager organized a workshop that resulted in improved collaboration. During the workshop, the implementing agencies identified specific areas of collaboration and followed up on these in subsequent coordination meetings. This more intentional approach and additional layer of accountability contributed to the examples of programme synergies highlighted above.

Finding 6 SKILLED incorporated strategies that offered visibility to the EU as the EU-SDDP donor.

SKILLED supported awareness raising materials and press releases were appropriately branded in line with EU guidelines to inform the public about the EU as the donor agency and the ILO as the implementing agency. The ILO organized public events with participation from EU officials. As a result, all major stakeholders readily identified the project with the larger EU SDDP.

EU SDDP outsourced the management of visibility activities to another contractor. The project manager reported that this created an additional layer of management and approvals and slowed project efforts to communicate about its actions.

Finding 7: Project strategies to counteract gender stereotyping in vocational training and employment were under-developed. Workplace safety, a key labour standard, was addressed comprehensively by the project but other issues such as raising the awareness on labour rights were largely left unaddressed.

The project's sensitivity to gender issues was uneven. The ILO did not employ a gender balanced project management team; all field-based team members were male. The project database did track the sex of participants in its programmes and included information on this in its reporting. A module on gender was included in the "soft skills" crossing cutting modules that the ILO supported in some training programmes.

Most significantly, the design of the project did not ensure equitable participation of females in project supported activities. The project database shows that males greatly outnumbered females as participants in vocational training activities. Project support for RPL certification was likewise unbalanced in favour of male dominated trades, although many women also participated in the programme. Low participation by females in project activities is in part a reflection of challenges affecting female participation in the workforce.²³

Lower levels of female participation also reflects that the project-selected training courses were to a great degree, male-oriented, based on current stereotypes. Project managers note that even though males and females have equal access to vocational training, female students typically register for traditionally “female” courses such as hairdressing, beauty culture, and stenography. SKILLED did not consider the former to be demand-oriented sectors and apparently was not able to identify many alternative skill areas that were attractive to females in large numbers. The project did offer training in modern dress making, a trade that, based on current norms, was relatively accessible to females. It also offered several Information Communication Technology (ICT) oriented courses which were among the limited number of courses supported by the project that achieved gender balance.

Although there were a few females who joined courses in welding, plumbing, and electrical wiring, these courses were dominated by males. Project reports highlighted that while women typically do not enrol in training in the much-demanded construction sector, they were able to identify women interested in Construction Site Supervision, a course offered in Batticaloa, Mannar and Vavuniya. The former is an interesting illustration of the challenges of breaking gender stereotypes in vocational training and potential unintended consequences of crossing the line of current perspectives. Female participants in the course reported that employers were reluctant to accept female trainees for OJT because they believed that women would not be able to meet the requirements of the job. SKILLED was able to overcome the issue by placing the female trainees in OJT with UNOPS. The long term employment of these women workers is still in question, with some focus group participants indicating that they might be able to use their skills to teach technical topics in schools.

[Mainstreaming International Labour Standards in vocational training and employment programmes](#)

Prior to the mid-term evaluation, the ROM review reported that “decent work promotion is not yet a serious concern for most of Vocational Training providers.” Progress by the project was evident during the final evaluation in the area of OSH. SKILLED offered personnel of training centres extensive training on safety issues with training provided by NIOSH. The cross-cutting module for trainees also addressed safety issues.

Other dimensions of international labour standards such as the labour rights of workers were not systematically mainstreamed in project activities. Trade unions were not involved in any project activities and issues of freedom of association and collective bargaining, addressed by other ILO project during the same period of time, were not integrated into project activities.

Finding 8 SKILLED monitoring systems did not initially establish adequate data collection systems to measure progress against its key indicators and enable good reporting on progress. After the mid-term evaluation, the project took steps to improve the data available on SKILLED beneficiaries and made additional efforts to build the beneficiary monitoring capacity of some of its vocational training partners.

²³Females made up 53 percent of the working-age population in 2012 but only 34 percent of the employed population, a figure that has remained static for decades. According to KII, cultural norms that affect women’s participation in the workforce are strong in the North and East where all of the project target districts were found.

In its conclusions, the EU ROM review of SKILLED reported that “monitoring by ILO and its public Vocational Training Providers is quite loose and reporting processes very poor.” The evaluator’s review of project documentation accords with the former conclusion. Project output indicators and targets were not clearly identified in progress reports. It is difficult to identify the source of data in some progress reports and there are inconsistencies in the information reported. In the latter half of the project, SKILLED attempted to address this weakness in a couple of ways. It hired a consultant to compile available data in a project beneficiary database. At the time of the final evaluation, the project had a comprehensive list of participants in its vocational training programmes. It had also collected information on the course completion, OJT placements, and job placements, although the latter appear to be incomplete. The same consultant is likewise collecting information from vocational training course participants to compile success stories, which may likewise contribute to ILO learning for future projects.

Information systems for tracking vocational training beneficiaries have been provided by national vocational training providers but centre managers reported that these were not consistently implemented. To address the capacity of vocational training providers to systematically collect, use and report on activities, the project is currently providing assistance to 15 centres on quality management systems. Part of the technical assistance and training will be focused on improving beneficiary database management.

3.3 Efficiency

Finding 9 SKILLED was implemented by experienced national ILO staff with relevant skills and knowledge of the target districts. SKILLED’s senior programme officers provided regular support for activities in the field but were less effective managing vocational training authorities in Colombo and conducting effective monitoring and evaluation.

Project spending lagged behind planned expenditures, reflecting delays in implementation; at its current rate, the ILO is unlikely to spend its entire budget by project’s end. The percentage of project budget spent on programme costs versus administrative costs was reasonable.

Qualified Project Management Team Provided High Levels of Support to District partners

SKILLED programme staff all had extensive experience on previous ILO projects in the North and East.²⁴ In previous programmes, programme staff had relevant experience connecting vulnerable populations with vocational training institutions. The two project offices, one the East (Batticaloa) and the other in the North (Vavuniya), which were shared with other UN agencies, were close to project partners and participants and enabled efficient support services to partners. Key informants from the vocational training centres reported that SKILLED programme officers regularly visited their institutions offering support and guidance.

Challenges Managing Partnerships in Colombo and Project Monitoring Systems

Project personnel were less strategically positioned to manage relations with vocational training authorities in Colombo. Although the ILO designated a regular, Colombo-based staff as a focal point for the project, the national programme coordinator, who was also alone managing programme activities in the Batticaloa office, was primarily responsible for following up with vocational training authorities in Colombo. Because vocational training administration

²⁴All programme staff had previously worked for the ILO in the North and East in diverse programmes focused on the social and economic integration of children and vulnerable households. All had previously been involved in child labour programmes with components aimed at helping victims to get access to education and vocational training and to improve the livelihoods of poor households.

is centralized, this responsibility was significant. SKILLED project management attributed implementation delays to challenges related to the bureaucratic systems of centralized vocational training authorities; the authorities likewise recognized that their administrative systems were heavy and delayed procurement of needed equipment and other resources. Having an additional project staff person in Colombo, especially during the period that contracts with public operators were being established and procurement processes launched, may have enabled more frequent follow-up with centralized authorities and reduced some implementation delays.

Project monitoring systems were likewise negatively affected by having insufficient human resources dedicated to the task. The project manager was likewise responsible for establishing a monitoring system and reporting on results; SKILLED did not employ an M&E officer to manage data collection and assist with reporting. Following the EU ROM report, which noted weaknesses in monitoring and reporting, a short term consultant was engaged to provide assistance on data collection. The evaluator observed improvements in the quality of project progress reports and in the availability of quantitative data in the latter stages of the project.

Lagging Project Expenditures

Analysis of project expenditures shows a very slow rate of disbursements in 2014 and 2015 with acceleration in 2016 and 2017.

Table 3 % of SKILLED budget expended in June 2014-2017

2014	2015	2016	2017
3%	12%	28%	64%

Source: ILO EU SDDP project finance reports

According to information provided by the project management team, the slow burn rate likely reflects extended negotiations with government authorities on the EU SDDP work plan in the early stages of implementation and slow procurement of equipment and other resources by public vocational training partners. It also reflects the cancellation of some planned training activities following the logistic problems cited earlier with UNIVOTEC training programmes. One public vocational training partner likewise indicated that it would not be able to spend the budget allocated for its programmes because of difficulties finding a qualified instructor.

The EU ROM report suggested that private vocational training providers were more effective in terms of their ability to absorb project resources and deliver services in a timely manner. It is possible that if the project had reallocated additional resources to private partners, delays in expenditures would have decreased. However, project management reported that the donor had expressed concern about the sustainability of private vocational training institutions' programmes following the end of the project, which may explain why more resources were not allocated to private institutions.

Allocation to programme activities vs. administration and overhead

Analysis of ILO expenditures as of June 2017 shows that a little over one third of expenditures to date were on direct programme management (28%) or indirect programme and administrative costs (7%). Over half of project expenditures (56%) had been allocated to equipment and commodities for vocational training centres and participant cost subsidies, which corresponded to a priority area of need identified by vocational training authorities, centre managers and vocational training participants. The percentage of the budget allocated to training of project counterparts was relatively low, reflecting challenges in the implementation of that component of the project.

Table 4 Allocation of Expenditures up to June 2017 by line item

Line Item	% of total expenditures
Inception Activities	3%
Supplies (Commodities, equipment and transport)	56%
Personnel (Staff, Consultants, travel and training)	28%
Training of counterparts	3%
Contracts	0%
Other direct cost	3%
Indirect	7%

Source ILO EU SDDP Financial Report June 2017

3.4 Sustainability and Impact Orientation

Finding 10: Choices made by the project to work with well-established vocational training centres and offer skills certification through the national NVQ system were good strategies to foster sustainability. Both public and private partners are likely to sustain the training courses that were supported by SKILLED but some of the value-added elements paid for by the project will most likely be dropped, affecting access by low income groups. Improvements related to training equipment upgrades will be more lasting.

SKILLED took steps to foster the sustainability of its interventions using various strategies, that had both strengths and weaknesses.

SKILLED only provided assistance to registered vocational training providers in the target districts. To be registered, the providers had to respect norms and guidelines established by TVEC and deliver courses that met the national certification system standards known as NVQ. By remaining within existing national TVEC frameworks, the project supported training was able to offer an official certificate recognizing skills acquisition to the participants in SKILLED supported programmes. Within the context of Sri Lanka, certification is important for accessing jobs in the public sector, credit and publically funded contracts as well as some jobs abroad, such as in the construction sector.

Based on the sample of partners visited during the evaluation period, SKILLED selected registered vocational training providers with a strong track record of providing services in the target districts over an extended period of time. Overall, this implied working mainly with public vocational training providers but, where they existed, the project also capitalized on privately funded training institutions with either a mandate to work with underprivileged youth or willingness to adjust its targeting to the project's selection criteria. The selection of registered training providers generally implied that project training institution partners were among the more established providers in the district and less likely to disappear overnight after the end of project support.

Some forms of support provided by SKILLED to training institutions are more likely than others to be sustained beyond the life of the project. Public and private institutions alike highlighted that the equipment purchased by the project would be used by their centers in training programmes for a period of years. They characterized these as durable contributions to their centers' training environment. Vocational training authorities and center managers highlighted that other forms of assistance, in particular project subsidies for training participants' out of

pocket expenses, expendible supplies, in some cases, trainer fees and participant toolkits, would not be continued unless additional resources were provided by some other donor.

Similarly, career guidance and outreach activities on vocational training opportunities are unlikely to be continued in exactly the same way as during project implementation. Project capacity building of career guidance counselors in schools and PES center activities may ensure that early school leavers continue to be informed about vocational training options.

The biggest difference between public and private institutions in terms of sustainability is that the public institutions benefit from annual budget allocations, which, although not sufficient to continue the courses in the same manner as under project support, does ensure basic continuity of free-of-charge vocational training services. In contrast, the private vocational providers sampled by the evaluator indicated that in order to continue providing the courses supported by SKILLED, they would need to identify additional donor resources or charge participant fees to continue. Based on the fundraising track record of the limited sample of private institutions visited by the evaluator, it is not unreasonable to expect that some of the private vocational training institutions would continue to be able to raise funds to cover at least some training services for vulnerable youth.

Government Support for PES centers

Sri Lankan employment policy and its effect on the continuity of PES centers was less clear at the time of the final evaluation. At the level of the Department of Manpower and Employment, budget approval to cover the operating expenses of the PES centers established by SKILLED had been sought but was not yet assured. While employment remains a priority of the government, there are many different strategies and initiatives currently being promoted. Past initiatives to provide intermediation between employers and job-seekers focused largely on the Jobsnet platform with mixed results. While the online platform continues to exist, it has experienced technical problems and generally is not seen to be an effective means to match job seekers with job-openings. ILO support to improve face to face job placement services resulted in the fully equipped PES that are integrated with district government services. The services are being used and are delivering results, although to varying degrees. District GA have also provided varying degrees of support for the centers.

One strategy that SKILLED programme managers are promoting to promote sustainability is for PES to offer both job placement and career guidance services. The same Department that oversees the PES also has a mandate to offer career guidance services, which appears to be a strategic priority of the government.

Capacity building for center management

To the extent that they were effective (see findings 2 and 3), project supported training programmes improved the skills of participants and should have a lasting effect on vocational training programmes in the target districts by improving the management of centers and the teaching skills of instructors. In the latter months of the project, SKILLED developed an integrated programme on Quality Management Certification with a more focused strategy to strengthen the capacity of 15 partners. Quality management certification requires that centers put in place systems to document their courses, have a procedures manual, an information system, qualified instructors, appropriate equipment for the courses they deliver, perform internal quality audits and have plans for taking preventive and corrective action of the audit findings. The comprehensiveness of the programme should contribute to lasting improvements in at least the most receptive centers.

IV. MAIN CONCLUSIONS

With its focus on improving vocational training quality and relevance, SKILLED was well-aligned with government policies on poverty reduction and the development of vocational training. Although stakeholders identifies some key areas for improvement, overall, the project addressed the needs of its key stakeholders effectively as indicated by the high levels of satisfaction expressed by all stakeholder categories.

SKILLED achieved or surpassed many of its main quantitative objectives. Among the types of support offered to vocational training centres, centre equipment upgrades were critical to improve the quality of vocational training by enabling more practical, hand-on forms of instruction. In terms reaching its qualitative objectives, the project's most significant achievements were in its support for vocational training centres and the RPL programme. By making it possible for new courses to be offered by existing vocational training providers, the project contributed to increasing the supply and diversity of course offerings in the target districts. The RPL activity offered already practicing tradespersons official recognition of their skills and pathways to higher earnings and greater social recognition (please see good practice).

Employment outcomes of project-supported vocational training varied due to differences in the quality of the courses, post classroom training support and other factors. For example, trainees who were placed in on-the-job training by centres likely fared better in the job market than those who were not. External factors, including the types and quality of jobs available in the target districts and youth career aspirations, which were in many cases not in line with available jobs, also affected the employment outcomes of the project.

The project strategy of supporting the PES filled a gap in available services for some young job seekers and employers in the target districts. Although centres are relatively new, all centres have developed relationships with employers and been able to link some young people to jobs in the private sector. PES involvement with vocational training providers through the networks reinvigorated by SKILLED was helpful to enable the PES to link job seekers to the centres for training and for centres to participate in job fairs and other activities related to the job placement of their trainees.

SKILLED's capacity building component delivered mixed results. On the positive side, the content of the training was relevant to the needs of participants and was well-designed to improve the performance of key vocational and PES centre personnel. However, flaws in the implementation modalities and difficulties in scheduling the courses and mobilizing some participants from public institutions reduced the overall effectiveness of the programme. The absence of follow-up on training programmes likewise diminished its effectiveness. The quality management systems training, initiated in the latter months of the project, may yield better results because of it is less dispersed among multiple centres and centre personnel, uses a more holistic approach to centre capacity building and relies less on sending personnel to Colombo for training.

The ILO largely missed an opportunity to promote core values of the organization by not having stronger strategies to mainstream gender and respect for International Labour Standards in vocational training and employment programmes. Project efforts in the latter half of the project to mainstream OSH in training programmes did seize a relevant opportunity and may be an emerging good practice.

SKILLED capitalized on experienced national programme staff to implement the project and based them close to project activities where they were able to provide support efficiently to the project's main partners. The cost of this project management structure was relatively low

and allowed a reasonable proportion of the project budget to be dedicated to programmes rather than administration. The centralization of vocational training administration in Colombo was an impediment to greater project efficiency, more so given the distance of senior programme staff from the capital and relatively weak support from the ILO Colombo office. Centralization of vocational training administration and other factors contributed to slow spending rates, reflecting implementation delays and cancelled activities.

SKILLED put in place many good strategies to promote sustainability. The project was well integrated with the national framework on vocational training and built on existing vocational training structures with a proven track record. Whether through national budget allocations or participant fees, it is likely that many project supported vocational training programmes will continue post project. However, some value added features of SKILLED that boosted quality and enabled access by low income youth will not be continued in the absence of new, external resources.

V. GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Several good practices emerge from the SKILLED programme. Among these were:

- Integrating training on occupational health and safety in vocational training programmes through capacity building for centre administrators and instructors;
- Involving professionals from the private sector in career guidance programmes;
- Partnering with organizations with a strong community presence and other youth services
- Raising the awareness of school guidance counsellors and teachers on vocational training options for youth.
- Capitalizing on recognition of prior learning certification to offer practicing trades persons access to certification.

The latter emerging good practice is developed in greater detail below.

5.1 Good Practice

Scaling up of NAITA Recognition of Prior Learning Programme

SKILLED supported NAITA to scale up an existing programme that offers trade persons the opportunity to gain NVQ certification of their skills through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) testing and certification. Project support consisted of funding an awareness raising campaign at the sub-district level targeting mainly the self-employed in areas such as construction (plumbers, electricians, and masons), tailoring, and food processing and pre-school teaching. The project covered NAITA fees for certification and in some cases, procured equipment to be used by candidates in NAITA centres for the certification exam.

Necessary Conditions for RPL

The RPL facilitated the implemented an existing but underutilized policy on skills certification in Sri Lanka. To replicate this activity in another project in another country, it would be necessary for there to be a similar framework for skill certification. The framework should include national or sector specific skills standards that clearly identify required competencies for a given level of certification, a system to test whether or not a candidate has skills that comply with standards, and a legal/regulatory framework that recognizes and provides incentives for certification.

Potential Outcomes

Based on FGD with participants in the RPL programme, there seems to have been many positive outcomes for participants in the programme:

Provided both social and economic benefits for participants: RPL certification participants highlighted how the receiving a certificate from the government documenting their skills provided them with greater social recognition. They felt it put them on the same social level as “better educated” peers. From an economic standpoint, participants in RPL participant focus groups cited numerous ways that having NVQ certification was or may in the future be beneficial by: enabling access to work on publically funded projects, helping them to market their skills better to potential clients, move up in rank and salary in existing workplaces, and to access employment abroad.

Other key informants also confirmed that the government of Sri Lanka provides incentives for certification including requiring it for access to some government jobs and contracts. Foreign employers also require certification before hiring some categories of skill labourers. One participant indicated that having a certificate had not, however, enabled him to charge more to clients due to competition, including from uncertified trades persons, and asked for the project to raise awareness of the importance of certification in the general population.

Created demand for higher levels of certification: Another positive of the RPL activity, was that it appears to have stimulated demand for higher levels of certification and associated vocational training programmes among practicing trades people. Tradespeople who had achieved level 3 and 4 NVQ certification wanted to know how they could be certified in higher levels and indicated that if appropriate training programmes were available nearby, they would enrol. Several RPL certificate holders in Ampara had indeed enrolled in a local training college. Others indicated that they were unaware of how they might access additional training, citing deficits in locally available training programmes.

5.2 Lessons Learned

SKILLED yielded a number of lessons that may guide future programmes on skills development in Sri Lanka and in other countries.

5.2.1 To expand access to vocational training, targeted awareness raising and orientation programmes are needed to overcome negative perceptions of some trades by Sri Lankan youth in general and females in particular

Many stakeholders highlighted that negative perceptions of vocational training were a constraint limiting the effectiveness of SKILLED’s efforts increase the supply of skilled workers in some sectors. In some trades, vocational training is associated with failure in school and low-status jobs. Key informants underlined that this negative perception is not necessarily because of low pay, since many high status government jobs pay less than other, less-favoured occupations. Project outreach activities that highlighted pathways to successful careers in the private sector allowed youth to familiarize themselves with work in a given sector and changed negative perceptions. Including parents in awareness raising also helped, given the role that parents play in the majority of youth’s career decisions. Key informants likewise highlighted that the National Youth Services Council (NYSC), which works closely with youth in community-based youth centres, was effective in reaching and raising the awareness of under-privileged youth. Working with non governmental organizations with strong roots in disadvantaged communities was likewise effective in mobilizing youth in favour of vocational training. Raising the awareness of school-based career orientation counsellors and teachers was another good strategy to reach and orient youth to vocational training practiced by SKILLED. Based on project experiences, more significant efforts are need to change gender-

based stereotypes of vocational training and career paths including more targeted awareness raising and outreach campaigns as well as more fundamental changes in hiring practices that discriminate against women.

- 5.2.2 To implement successful joint programmes that create synergies among implementing organization, coordination meetings are not sufficient. UN agencies need to have intentional strategies and plans on collaboration. They also need to be held accountable for following through on these strategies and plans.

Finding 5 highlights some successes but overall weak coordination among the 6 agencies implementing the EU SDDP. Despite regular coordination meetings and sharing office space in some cases, the agencies did not initially coordinate their work in such a way to build significant synergies and offer integrated services to communities and individuals. Various challenges contributed to this result, including some external factors. Because integrated strategies appear to be more effective than stand alone services in helping disadvantaged groups to overcome the multiple factors that contribute to their poverty, it is important for agencies to find ways to overcome differences in their management systems and preferred implementation modalities. Within the EU SDDP, improvement occurred when the midterm evaluation highlighted failings. Subsequently, the UN joint programme manager facilitated an intentional exercise to identify concrete areas for collaboration which were followed up in coordination meetings. The latter appeared to have yielded improved collaboration.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Recommendations for Vocational Training providers and future ILO programmes that seek to enhance vocational training:

Vocational training centre managers should take the following actions to improve the employment outcomes of their trainees. Future ILO programmes that seek to enhance vocational training programmes should direct resources to the following areas:

- 6.1.1 Offer additional opportunities for instruction to develop language skills. For Tamil speakers, greater proficiency in Sinhala was identified as a priority so that trainees are more comfortable seeking employment outside Tamil-speaking areas where employment opportunities are greater. *(high importance, short term priority with resource implications)*
- 6.1.2 Provide more instruction and support on job-search strategies while trainees are undergoing their training. *(High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications)*
- 6.1.3 Depending on the size of the centre, at least one human resource should be dedicated to developing linkages with employers in the relevant sectors covered by the vocational training sectors. *(High importance, medium term priority with resource implications)*
- 6.1.4 Ensure that all trainees access on-the-job training. This should be a function of a dedicated staff person (could be the same staff person as for the point above). *(High importance, short term priority with resource implications)*

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- 6.1.5 Provide more systematic support to link course graduates intending to pursue self-employment with credit and business support services. *(Medium importance, short term priority with modest resource implications)*
 - 6.1.6 Track employment outcomes of trainees more systematically and use data to improve job placement services. *(High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications)*
 - 6.1.7 Involve employers in design and delivery of training programmes. *(High importance, medium to long term priority with modest resource implications)*
 - 6.1.8 Include guidance on job search and « employability » in vocational training centre-managed career guidance programmes. *(High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications)*

6.2 Recommendations for National Vocational Training and Employment Authorities to increase the Relevance and Effectiveness of Vocational Training Programmes at the district level

- 6.2.1 Create technical and professional pathways before O and A level exams (in line with current Government policy). This would entail creating a unified qualification framework that would allow easy movement between formal education and TVET. Among other positive outcomes, if vocational is delinked with national exam failure, the social stigma associated with technical training may be reduced. *(High importance, medium to long term priority with fairly significant resource implications)*
- 6.2.2 Decentralize more authority for strategic planning and administration of vocational training programmes to the provincial or district levels. At these levels, link local economic development planning and skills development strategies. *(High importance, medium to long term priority with resource implications)*
- 6.2.3 Engage employer federations in key economic sectors (national and sub-national levels) in determining priority investments in skills development programmes. *(High importance, medium to long term priority with modest resource implications)*
- 6.2.4 Develop more flexible and demand driven modalities for vocational training. Provide public funding for the development and delivery of short tailored courses that respond to emerging employment opportunities in the private sector. Allow private sector training providers to compete for funding to deliver such courses. *(High importance, medium to long term priority with modest resource implications)*
- 6.2.5 Fund local NGOs that are effective in training out-of-school youth for job opportunities. Establish scholarships for disadvantaged youth to access training delivered by either public or private sector institutions in demand-

oriented skills areas. *(High importance, medium to long term priority with resource implications)*

- 6.2.6 Expand apprenticeship programmes by providing incentives for industry to train more workers in the workplace. *(High importance, medium to long term priority with resource implications)*
- 6.2.7 Conduct targeted outreach and awareness raising campaigns on career orientation for females; *(High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications)*
- 6.2.8 Include parents as targets/participants in career guidance programmes; *(High importance, short term priority with modest resource implications)*
- 6.2.9 Post training, encourage registration by self-employed tradespersons by providing incentives and access to support programmes. (Example, participation in online directories of trades persons, access to government contracts, access to credit, access to additional training) *(High importance, medium to long term priority with resource implications)*

6.3 Recommendations to ILO to improve management of future district level programmes

- 6.3.1 In future district level projects with strong interaction with central administration authorities, reinforce programme support in Colombo; *(Medium importance, resource implications)*
- 6.3.2 Ensure a reasonable balance between male and female programme managers in future technical assistance programmes to district level stakeholders; *(Medium importance, no resource implications)*
- 6.3.3 Mainstream awareness raising on fundamental principles and rights at work in all programmes. *(High importance, modest resource implications)*
- 6.3.4 To improve project monitoring, develop a monitoring and evaluation plan early in project implementation with clear indicators and targets; refer back to indicators and targets clearly in quarterly and annual reports; when project monitoring requires extensive data collection (example, large number of beneficiaries; outcomes of project services to be tracked), allocate dedicated personal for monitoring and evaluation. *(High importance, modest resource implications)*

6.4 Recommendations to UN agencies to promote more effective collaboration

- 6.4.1 In future joint programmes, conduct joint planning exercises during design and/or early implementation stages to identify synergies and plan for collaboration. Integrate indicators on collaboration in programme performance

monitoring followed-up in regular monitoring activities. (*High importance, modest resource implications*)

Annex 1 – Project Performance Plan

Result 2.3: Improved access to quality vocational training through support to at least 60% of the Registered Training Providers (RTPs)			
Number of new and or improved market oriented demand driven courses started			
During recruitment for courses the following target groups will be promoted to participate v Members of female headed households v Persons with disabilities v Females from conflict affected families			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	0 (doesn't exist)	40	63
Improved course completion rates			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	79%	86%	2015 : 75% 2016: 55% 2017: not reported
Percentage of graduates from RTPs placed in employment or referred for further education or training			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	48%	80%	Cancelled
Number of registered institutions provided development support. (out of the 78 institute 60% of the institutes selected)			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	78	47 / 78	44
Number of institutional staff that participate in capacity building activities			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	0 (No reliable information)	200	189
Number of institutions implementing the changes to training and management systems and procedures.			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	47	41	0

Number of initiatives implemented by industry and provider networks in each district			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	0 (doesn't exist)	20	Not reported in database
Number of employment service centres operating in all districts			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	1	4 (3 new 1 upgrade)	4 in operation
Number of staff that participate in capacity building activities			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	0 (No reliable information)	50	31
Percentage of new registrations with PES Centres that are supported to find employment or referred for further education or training			
<p>Priority will be given for job placement for the following target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v Members of female headed households v Persons with disabilities v Females from conflict affected families 			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	25%	70%	Problems with data Reported as 2015: 43% 2016: 119% 2017: 81%
Number of employers registered with PES Centres			
	Baseline 2012	Target 30 Nov 2017	Achieved
Total	20	200 (New employers)	2015: 18 2016: 182 2017: 89

Annex 2 – Evaluation Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference – Independent Final Evaluation Title of Project

Project Title: Skills to support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) Project under the European Union (EU) Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP).

TC CODE : SRL/12/01/EEC

Administrative Unit: ILO Colombo Technical Backstopping Unit, ILO DWT/New Delhi

Type of Evaluation: Independent Final Evaluation

Timing of Evaluation: a/o August - November 2017 (Field work during 11 – 27 September 2017)

Project duration: 68 months (July 2012 – February 2018)

Background and Justification

1. This terms of reference covers the final independent evaluation of the project on “Skills to support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) project”. The SKILLED project, with the total budget of €2,000,000 (approximately US\$2,680,000), is implemented by the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives and is 100% funded by the European Union (EU). The project started in July 2012 and will be completed in February 2018. As per the ILO Policy for project evaluation requirements of the ILO Policy Guidelines for Results Based Evaluations¹, the SKILLED project is subjected to independent final evaluation to notably assess the project’s efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and contributions to broader development impacts². The project evaluation also aims to assess how the project collaborate and create synergies with UNDP, UNOPS, FAO, UNICEF and the IFC who have implemented other projects under the EU Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP).

2. With reference to the project multi annual workplan update on June 2016, most of the project activities have been completed for 90% and the EU has planned to conduct its final evaluation mission in September 2017, the ILO Country Office-Colombo would thus like this independent final evaluation to be conducted around September 2017 with a view to contributing the ILO’s evaluation findings to the planned EU’s mission.

3. The SKILLED project is part of the EU Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP) which has been implemented by five UN organizations (UNDP, UNOPS, FAO, UNICEF and ILO) and the IFC. The total duration of the programme has been extended from 60 months to 68 months. While the implementation phase of the EU-SDDP will end in May 2018, the SKILLED project end date is 28 February 2018. The objectives of the programme are to make a substantial contribution to the transition from post-conflict relief and reconstruction to sustainable development by supporting selected districts in North and East Sri Lanka as focus district (Vavuniya, Mannar, Batticaloa and Ampara) and selected areas in border villages situated in the three adjacent districts of Puttalam, Anuradhapura and Monaragala (targeting former conflict affected populations), in alignment with their local development plans. The programme has three specific but interconnected objectives: (1) to support poverty reduction and the provision of basic infrastructure and services for vulnerable populations; (2) to support local economic development; and (3) to strengthen local governance.

4. The EU-SDDP’s six implementing partners started their respective scoping and activity planning for an inception phase in late 2012 and then started actual implementation around mid of 2013. In November 2013, the EU-SDDP was suspended by the Central Government’s decision. The programme has started implementation again in October 2014 after receiving approvals for all seven District Action Plans (DAPs) by the respective District Coordinating Committees (DCCs).

5. The EU-SDDP composes of three result areas. The ILO and the IFC have addressed the result 2 of the EU-SDDP logical framework: local economic development is increased through employment growth, and structural change for small private operators. The SKILLED project, solely implemented by the ILO, specifically addresses the expected result 2.3 in the EU-SDDP logical framework: improved

access to quality vocational training through support to at least 60% of the Registered Training Providers.

6. Through the SKILLED project, the ILO has undertaken a comprehensive and integrated approach to enable young women and men to make a smooth transition to work through improved access to relevant and quality skills training, labour market information, career guidance and employment services, recognition of prior learning and effective skills. As per the EU-SDDP logical framework, the project aims to implement the following activities:

- 1) Provide technical assistance for curricular development and implementation, particularly for high-growth economic sectors;
- 2) Provide equipment for registered vocational training centres;
- 3) Strengthen district-based systems for recognition of prior learning (RPL) leading to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ);
- 4) Review institutional capacity and systems and conduct training of trainers (TOTs) for entry level training as well as for technical skills updating and centre management;
- 5) Promote trainee participation rates in supported Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres through awareness raising and outreach systems;
- 6) Establish district-level employment services; and
- 7) Facilitate job placements in priority occupations and industry sectors and improve and support informal apprenticeships for vulnerable communities. ILO will prioritize on facilitating training and job placements for persons with disabilities.

7. In 2016, the EU delegations conducted the EU-SDDP programme mid-term evaluation which aimed to contribute towards better attainment of EU development cooperation objectives by empowering key stakeholders involved in EU-SDDP in Sri Lanka with recommendations to undertake well-informed decisions, corrective measures, complementary activities or policy decisions identified through the programme's evaluation. The programme mid-term evaluation report dated July 2016 states the following specific conclusions and recommendations to the ILO3:

Conclusions

Relevance

ILO activities focus on support to economic growth through improved access to quality vocational training, which will support the unemployed youth for income generation through quality vocational training, and support registered training providers of public and private sectors and other core activities, a thematically highly relevant area of intervention, since interventions mainly concentrate on the most crucial unemployment issues in the districts. ILO activities focus on strengthening human and institutional capacity building for unemployed youths and reinforcing existing district VT institutions to address the human resource needs of the development work of the districts.

Efficiency

ILO interventions are carried out in partnership with relevant public and private institutions in the TVET sector. ILO selected specialized partners like National Apprentice & Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) and Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka (VTASL) for identifying the gaps and make proposals for the financial and human resources needed to fill the gaps. Overlapping institutional mandates from public sector institutions regarding Vocational Training (VT) present some minor efficiency constraints (through potential duplication of ILO work). Although the ILO interventions have positive outcomes financial execution was still below 40% by end of 2015.

Effectiveness

ILO activities show a good targeting of vulnerable people but teaching quality standards were affected due to the human capacity constraints. Therefore ILO support is precisely meant to help to improve as well the quality of teaching in supported VT institutions.

ILO has established Public Employment Service (PES) centres in three districts (Mannar, Vavuniya and Batticaloa) and provided infrastructure facilities, and capacity building of the staff. These centres are established to help in the reduction of unemployment but it is premature to comment on the effectiveness and the sustainability of the centres as the Department of Man Power and Employment has not allocated sufficient funds to implement programmes by PES. Moreover, staff members have to attend to other duties allocated by the District Secretariat neglecting the duties of PES. This cannot be considered a good investment by the ILO and further investment should be handled carefully.

Facilitating Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certificate by the ILO through the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority is a very effective and sustainable activity considering the unemployment status and lack of trained manpower in the districts.

On the job training can be considered a very effective and sustainable activity considering the unemployment status and the lack of trained manpower in the districts.

The Hotel Management Programme is an effective programme for youths from vulnerable groups with the opening up of leisure activities in the region but the qualified youths cannot find jobs due to inadequate language skills (English and Tamil)⁴.

Sustainability

ILO's model of "local economic development through skills" linked to market oriented training for employability is unique. ILO is permanently monitoring the capacity of district VT providers (private and public) and continues to strengthen them. Project interventions such as equipment support to deliver quality courses, capacity development of trainers on their knowledge and skills, strengthening networks among district VT providers and establishing mechanisms to link VT graduates to emerging opportunities in high growth economic sectors such as IT, hospitality and tourism, construction and light engineering, which has a demand for capacity building, will be sustainable in the district and facilitate development.

Recommendations

ILO

- Mere technical training does not automatically help the participants to find jobs. It is necessary for them to have other live skills associated with language, IT, teamwork and other soft-skills, so a comprehensive capacity building programme should be implemented.
- Training of the trainers (TOT) should follow the full training cycle like presentation skills, how to use the multi-media, how to prepare slides, how to prepare curriculum, lesson planning etc. Most of the participants requested the additional skills. Hence a full programme should be implemented where participants can use them effectively.

8. The project also contributes to: (1) Sri Lanka Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2013 – 2017), (2) ILO Country Programme Outcome LKA 102, and (3) United Nations Development Assistant Framework (UNDAF) 2013-2017.

Project Management Arrangements

9. **Project Management Arrangements:** At the national, district and local level the ILO's project is managed and implemented by a National Project Coordinator (NPC) and a team of three subordinate staff officers based in the ILO's Field Offices in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The national staff collectively constitute ILO's Project Field Management Team.

10. The Project Field Management Team is responsible for all day to day project activities; dialogue and coordination with all sub project partners at the local, district and national level; for process and performance monitoring and reporting and for all matters pertaining to sub project administration and finance. The ILO's Project Field Management Team participates in district, divisional and provincial monthly coordination meetings and submits short quarterly progress reports to the relevant

11. **Project Location:** The project is being implemented in four districts in the North and East of Sri Lanka, namely Vavuniya, Mannar, Batticaloa and Ampara.

12. **Overall Responsibility:** At the national level the project is managed and administered by the ILO's Country Director based in the ILO's Country Office (CO) in Colombo. The ILO's Country Director is supported by the ILO's Senior Programme Officer and a Programme Assistant and receives financial and administrative assistance from the ILO CO's Finance / Administration Officer. The ILO's Country Director is responsible for the overall organisation, administration and financial management of the project; for all communications between the ILO and EU; for the all communications between the ILO and the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training --the ILO's government partner for the project.

13. **Oversight and Accountability:** The project receives technical assistance, management and administrative support, guidance, insight, opinion and recommendations from ILO's Decent Work Team based in the ILO CO in New Delhi and from ILO's technical units in Geneva.

14. **Partners:** The project gives high priority to working with ILO's tripartite constituency: government institutions namely the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training, Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, employers including the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC), District Secretaries of Batticaloa, Ampara, Mannar & Vavuniya, Registered public and private vocational training providers, Chamber of Commerce, and Employers' Organizations.

Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

15. The ILO evaluation policy guidelines for result-based evaluation states that all projects over US\$ 1 million and/or lasting more than 30 months must undergo at least one independent evaluation. The total budget of the SKILLED project is US\$ 2.68 million and will be last for 68 months, it is therefore a rationale for the project to undergo a final independent evaluation.

16. The main purpose of this independent final evaluation is to assess the project's effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and contributions to broader development impacts, particularly on improving the status quo of the direct and indirect beneficiaries. The evaluation will also identify lessons learnt and good practices for both accountability and learning for possible similar interventions in the future.

17. The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- 1) Assess the effectiveness of the project, the effectiveness of its management arrangement and the effectiveness of the project in collaboration with the IFC and the other UN agencies;
- 2) Assess the project implementation efficiency;
- 3) Assess the emerging impact of the interventions (either positive or negative) and identify factors that enable the sustainability of the interventions undertaken during the project;
- 4) Assess the extent to which the project have responded to the recommendations of the midterm evaluation completed by the EU Delegation; and
- 5) Provide recommendations and describe lessons learnt and good practices that can and should be replicated.

18. The evaluation will cover all interventions the ILO has implemented under expected result 2.3 from the start until August 2017. The evaluation will cover all geographic coverage of the project. Gender equality and non-discrimination, promotion of international labour standards, tripartite processes and constituent capacity development should also be considered in this evaluation.

19. The findings of the evaluation will be used for promoting accountability and organizational learning among the stakeholders including the ILO. The final evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations will be primarily addressed to the implementing partners, Project Field Management Team, the ILO CO-Colombo and DWT-New Delhi.

20. Primary clients are the beneficiaries, the ILO constituents and the ILO units directly involved in the project:

- The Constituents (Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training, Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, Sri Lankan Government, Employers' and Workers' Organisations);
- The implementing partners (National and Private sector Vocational Training Providers);
- ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives;
- Project Management Team;
- DWT-New Delhi; and
- Relevant ILO technical unit at HQ.

Secondary clients are the ILO RO-Bangkok, the donor (the EU) and other key stakeholders.

Evaluation Criteria and Key Questions

21. The evaluation should address the overall ILO evaluation criteria: intervention progress and effectiveness; efficiency of resource use; effectiveness of management arrangements; and impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation, 2012 (Annex 5).

22. The core ILO cross-cutting priorities, such as gender equality and non-discrimination, promotion of international labour standards, tripartite processes and constituent capacity development should be considered in this evaluation. In particular, gender dimension will be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. To the extent possible, data collection and analysis should be disaggregated by sex as described in the ILO Evaluation Policy Guidelines and relevant Guidance Notes (Annex 5).

23. The TORs include below the specific suggested criteria and questions for the evaluation to address. It is expected that the evaluation address all of the questions detailed below to the extent possible. The evaluator may adapt the evaluation criteria and questions, but any fundamental changes should be agreed upon between the ILO team and the evaluator. The evaluation instruments (summarised in the inception report) should identify the general areas of focus listed here as well as other priority aspects to be addressed in the evaluation.

24. Suggested evaluation criteria and evaluation questions are summarized below: No. Criteria Specific

Evaluation Questions

Effectiveness

- What is the project progress in general comparing planned versus actual results (quantitative and qualitative)?
- Has project expected result been achieved and outputs produced according to plan? If not, what have been the obstacles to achievement?
- How effectively has the project engaged stakeholders in project implementation?
- How effective has the project been in establishing national ownership?
- What is the level of commitment of the government, the workers' and employers' organizations to, and support for, the project?
- Are there external factors influencing the delivery of project activities?
- What are the challenges to workers' participation, and how might they be overcome as the project transitions into its sustainability and exit strategy phase?
- What was the nature of training received and what evidence is there that it has been effectively applied?
- Were the training services provided relevant? What are the areas for improvement?
- Does the project have an effective internal and external monitoring plan/mechanism to track the progress of the project?
- What are the direct and indirect contributions or unintended effects?
- How effectively has the project collaborated with the IFC?

- How effectively has the project coordinated with other UN agencies who have worked on other projects under EU-SDDP?

Efficiency

- Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically and efficiently to achieve the expected result?
- How might they have been allocated more effectively?
- Has the financial execution been on track?

Effectiveness of management arrangements

- Did the project receive adequate and timely technical support from DWT and administrative/management support from the Country Office? If not, how that could be improved?
- How well did the projects manage their finances? This should include budget forecasts, delivery monitoring, actions taken for improving the delivery, budget revision and financial reporting.
- To what extent has the “Visibility Strategies” been executed to inform the public about the EU as the donor agency and the ILO as the implementing agency?

Impact orientation and sustainability, including effectiveness of stakeholder engagement

- To what extent has the project been successfully transforming the perceptions of youth to undertake trainings/job in traditional and non-traditional sectors?
- What was the nature of the commitment from national and private Vocational Training providers and other stakeholders? What are opportunities for greater engagement?
- Has the project communicated effectively with sub-national stakeholders? Do the stakeholders feel that their concerns have been sufficiently addressed?
- How the project ownership drives to the sustainability of project? and at what level stakeholders shows the ownership of the project
- To what extent has the “Exit Strategies” been implemented effectively to ensure continuation of actions initiated after the project support ends?
- To what extent have the project results contributed in reducing the unemployment rate in the long run? 5. Gender
- Has the project integrated gender equality as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology and all deliverables, including periodic reports?
- To what extent has gender mainstreaming been addressed by the project? 6. International Labour Standards
- To what extent has the project promoted the ratification and implementation of ILO standards in Sri Lanka?

Evaluation Methodology

25. The evaluation will comply with evaluation norms, standards and follow ethical safeguards, as specified in ILO’s evaluation procedures. The ILO adheres to the United Nations system of evaluation norms and standards as well as to the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.

26. Both qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches should be considered for this evaluation. It is anticipated that samples of targeted sites and population groups will be required for each evaluation question. In addition to multiple levels and types of respondents/informants, a combination of sound quantitative and qualitative research methods (e.g., surveys, case studies, interview and focused group discussion with appropriate statistical and quantitative data analysis methods for each type of data collected) should also be developed for each evaluation question as deemed appropriate. However,

different evaluation questions may be combined in one tool/method for specific targeted groups as appropriate. Attempts should be made to collect data from different sources by different methods for each evaluation question and findings be triangulated to draw valid and reliable conclusions. Data shall be disaggregated by sex where possible and appropriate.

27. A detailed methodology will be elaborated by the independent evaluator on the basis of this TOR. The detailed methodology should include key and sub-question(s), detailed methods, data collection instruments, and data analysis plans.

28. The methodology for collection of evidences should be implemented in three phases: (1) an inception phase based on a review of existing documents; (2) a fieldwork phase to collect and analyse primary data; and (3) a data analysis and reporting phase to produce the final evaluation report.

29. The gender dimension should be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis, and if possible within the evaluation. Moreover the evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and gender and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve lives of women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.

Main Deliverables

30. The evaluator will provide the following deliverables and tasks:

Deliverable 1: Inception report The inception report will include among other elements the evaluation questions and data collection methodologies and techniques, and the evaluation tools (interview, guides, questionnaires, etc.). The instrument needs to make provision for the triangulation of data where possible. The evaluator will prepare an inception report as per the ILO Checklist 3: Writing the inception report.

Deliverable 2: Stakeholder workshop. The evaluator will conduct two stakeholder workshops in the North and in the East to validate information and data collected through various methods organized by the Project with assistance from the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives. And another one final debriefing workshop in Colombo to share the preliminary findings with the ILO and local stakeholders at the end of evaluation mission. Evaluation findings are based on facts, evidence and data. This precludes relying exclusively upon anecdotes, hearsay and unverified opinions. Findings should be specific, concise and supported by triangulation of quantitative and qualitative information derived from various sources to ensure reliability, validity and generalizability.

Deliverable 3: First draft evaluation report Evaluation report should include action-oriented, practical and specific recommendations assigning or designating audiences/implementers/users. The draft evaluation report should be prepared as per the ILO Checklist 5: Preparing the Evaluation Report which will be provided to the evaluator. The first draft evaluation report will be improved by incorporating Evaluation manager's comments and inputs.

Deliverable 4: Final evaluation report with evaluation summary. The evaluator will incorporate comments received from ILO and other key stakeholders into the final report. The report should be finalised as per the ILO Checklist 5: Preparing the Evaluation Report which will be provided to the evaluator. The quality of the report and evaluation summary will be assessed against the ILO Checklists 5, 6, 7 and 8 which will be provided to the Evaluator.

31. The report and all other outputs of the evaluation must be produced in English. All draft and final report including other supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible with WORD for windows. Ownership of the data from the evaluation rests jointly between ILO and ILO consultant. The copy rights of the evaluation report rests exclusively with the ILO. Key stakeholders can make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

Management arrangement and work plan

32. The evaluation will be funded from the SKILLED project budget. The evaluation is being managed by Ms. Raviprapa Srisartsanarat, M&E Officer, Regional Office Bangkok. She will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Draft and finalize the evaluation TOR upon receiving inputs from key stakeholders;
- Reviewing CV of the proposed evaluators;
- Providing project background documents to the evaluator;
- Coordinate with the project team on the field visit agenda of the evaluator;
- Briefing the evaluation consultant on ILO evaluation procedures;
- Circulating the report to all concerned for their comments;
- Reviewing and providing comments of the draft evaluation report; and
- Consolidate comments and send them back to the evaluator.

33. ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives and the project will handle all contractual arrangements with the evaluator and provide any logistical and other assistance as required. The project management team will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Provide project background materials to the evaluator;
- Prepare a list of recommended interviewees;
- Schedule meetings for field visit and coordinating in-country logistical arrangements;
- Be interviewed and provided inputs as requested by the evaluator during the evaluation process;
- Review and provide comments on the draft evaluation reports;
- Organize and participate in the stakeholder workshop; and
- Provide logistical and administrative support to the evaluator, including travel arrangements (e.g. plane and hotel reservations, purchasing plane tickets, providing per diem) and all materials needed to provide all deliverables.

34. The evaluation consultant reports to the evaluation manager. The evaluator will be an international consultant selected through a competitive process from qualified consultants. The consultant will lead the evaluation and will be responsible for delivering the above evaluation deliverables using a combination of methods as mentioned above.

Evaluator Qualifications:

35. One independent international evaluation specialist with the relevant experience and qualifications. He/she should have a proven track record in the evaluation of complex projects, experience with country situations similar to that of Sri Lanka. Depending on the evaluator's local language competency, translators may be recruited to assist in interviewing community members. Desired skills and competencies:

- University Degree with minimum 10 years of experience in project /programme evaluation;
- An evaluation expert in development field with demonstrated technical expertise in evaluation methodologies and previous proven skills and experience in undertaking evaluations of similar projects;
- Strong background in local economic and technical and vocational education and training as well as Human Rights Based Approach programming and Results Based Management;
- Experience in skills developments, employment programmes or project in a post-crisis condition will be an advantage;
- Extensive knowledge of, and experience in applying, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies;

- Working experience in Sri Lanka;
- Excellent analytical skills and communication skills;
- Experience in direct and participatory community-based observation, and experience in participatory evaluation techniques would be an asset;
- Knowledge of ILO's roles and mandate and its tripartite structure as well as UN evaluation norms and its programming is desirable;
- Demonstrated excellent report writing skills in English; and
- Fluency in Tamil or Sinhala language is desirable.

Legal and ethical matters

36. The evaluation will comply with UN Norms and Standards. The TOR is accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out the evaluations. UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed. It is important that the evaluator has no links to project management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of evaluation⁵.

Proposed Evaluation Plan

37. Indicative time frame and responsibilities

Task	Responsible person	Time frame (by end)
Evaluation Mission	Evaluator	Last two weeks of September 2017
Stakeholder Workshop	Project Manager and Evaluator	Last day of the evaluation mission
Draft report submitted to Evaluation Manager	Evaluator	Second week of October 2017
Sharing the draft report with all concerned stakeholders for comments	Evaluation Manager	Third and fourth weeks of September 2017
Consolidated comments on the draft report, send to the evaluator	Evaluation Manager	First Week of November 2017
Finalisation of the report and submission to Evaluation Manager	Evaluator	Second week of November 2017
Review of the final report	Evaluation Manager	Third week of November 2017
Submission of the final report to EVAL	Evaluation Manager	Last week of November 2017
Approval of the final evaluation report	Evaluation Office	First week of December 2017

38. Annexes

- Annex1: Project performance plan/log frame (to be provided by the project)
- Annex2: Tentative mission schedule (to be provided by the project)
- Annex3: List of documents to be reviewed (to be provided by the project)
- Annex4: List of ILO staff and key stakeholders to be interviewed (to be provided by the project)
- Annex5: All relevant ILO evaluation guidelines and standard templates

ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation, 2012
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_176814/lang--en/index.htm

Code of conduct form (To be signed by the evaluators)

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206205/lang--en/index.htm

Checklist No. 3 Writing the inception report

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165972/lang--en/index.htm

Checklist 5 preparing the evaluation report

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165967/lang--en/index.htm

[Checklist 6 rating the quality of evaluation report](#)

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165968/lang--en/index.htm

[Template for lessons learnt and Emerging Good Practices](#)

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206158/lang--en/index.htm

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206159/lang--en/index.htm

[Guidance note 7 Stakeholders participation in the ILO evaluation](#)

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

[Guidance note 4 Integrating gender equality in M&E of projects](#)

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

[Template for evaluation title page](#)

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_166357/lang--en/index.htm

[Template for evaluation summary:](#)

<http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/edmas/eval/template-summary-en.doc>

Annex 3 – Evaluation Inception Report

1. Evaluation Background and Purpose

The overall purpose of the Final Independent Evaluation of the Skills to Support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) Project in Sri Lanka is to provide project management, the ILO country, regional and headquarters offices, donors and other stakeholders with an independent assessment the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. The evaluation will also identify lessons learnt and good practices for both accountability and learning for possible similar interventions in the future.

The SKILLED project is part of the EU Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP) which has been implemented by five UN organizations (UNDP, UNOPS, FAO, UNICEF and ILO) and the IFC.

The project evaluation also aims to assess how well ILO project was able to coordinate with these other international organizations and create synergies with their programme activities in the project's target regions.

2. Evaluation Planning

Selection of Evaluator: The selection of the evaluator was confirmed on 8 August 2017. The evaluator received a signed contract on September 11 but requested clarification of evaluation schedule (relates to DSA calculations) before signing and returning the contract. The project manager indicated that he will propose an initial calendar for evaluation data collection on September 12th.

Desk review: The evaluation team received the main review documents on 11 September and conducted a preliminary desk review. She also requested additional documents including:

- Project annual progress reports (she only received the final report)
- Project annual work plans
- Project M&E Framework (listing result, intermediate results (if relevant), outcome and output indicators by intermediate result and output
- Mid-term evaluation report of EU-SDDP
- Full Project document

Methodology and question matrix: The ILO evaluation manager and the evaluator agreed to reduce the number of key evaluation questions by integrating some of the questions proposed in the evaluation Terms of reference as sub-questions.

On September 10th, the evaluator proposed a list of consolidated key evaluation questions and used these to develop her methodology and question matrix.

Field work planning: The evaluator exchanged with the evaluation manager based in Bangkok regarding the schedule for fieldwork. To avoid overlap with activities related to the development of the Sri Lanka Decent Work Country Programme, the evaluation manager, the evaluator and the project team agreed to push back the start of field work to 25 September. Data collection will occur from 25 September – 11 October. The evaluator will present her preliminary finding during a stakeholder workshop to be organized on 13 October. The evaluator and the project team will determine a detailed schedule for field work during the week of 11 September.

3. Approach

Evaluation criteria: The methodology of this evaluation will adhere to the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standard, the UN Evaluation Group Code of Conduct as well as the ILO evaluation policy guidelines (including use of required templates). In line with the guidelines for results based evaluation,

it will utilise the standard criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact orientation.

Gender sensitivity: In accordance with ILO Guidance note 4, data collected will be sex-disaggregated and the different needs of girls and boys and men and women targeted by the project will be considered in the analysis of project strategies and results. Gender balance will be sought in the selection of interview and discussion participants in the evaluation process.

Culture and language concerns:The evaluation process will take culture and language of the project participants into account to ensure cultural sensitivity and participation of people from different language and cultural backgrounds. Interpreters will be recruited by the project team to assist in interpretation with interviewees in Tamil and Sinhalese.

4. Methodology

4.1 Evaluator

The evaluation is conducted by an independent evaluator who is responsible for the development of the evaluation methodology, carrying out data collection and analysis and presenting her findings and recommendations in the evaluation report.

4.2 Types and sources of data

Evidence gathered for the evaluation will include both quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluation team will not conduct quantitative surveys but will analyse quantitative data on project results drawn from project reports and the monitoring and evaluation system. Data collected in the field will be primarily qualitative, drawing on feedback from of a range of stakeholders (see list below). The evaluation will also draw on further quantitative data to the extent that this is available from relevant and reliable sources.

Sources of data:Data will be drawn from project documents and reports and related literature and from observations and interviews with project stakeholders.

The document review will include the project proposal, work plan, M&E framework, progress reports, activity reports as well as any relevant project products including studies, guidelines and communication material.

Project stakeholders to be consulted include:

Stakeholder	Data Collection Tools
SKILLED project staff: National Project Coordinator (NPC), Programme Officer, Programme Assistant	Key informant interviews (KII)
ILO backstopping staff: ILO Country Director; if relevant, representatives of Decent Work team in Delhi and technical units in Geneva who provided technical support to the project	KII
Representatives of other international organizations involved in the programme: UNDP, UNOPS, FAO, UNICEF and the IFC	KII or small focus group discussion (FGD) depending on logistics
A.1 The donor (relevant representative in the EU delegation)	KII
Government: Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training, Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, Department of Man Power and Employment, National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority, District Secretaries of Batticaloa, Ampara, Mannar & Vavuniya, District vocational training and employment authorities (including Public vocational training centre and Employment Service Centre administrators), other local authorities (LA)	FGD

Stakeholder	Data Collection Tools
Trade Unions: to be identified based on trade union involvement in project	
Employers Organizations: Relevant representatives of Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC), Local Chambers of Commerce	KII (EFC) If relevant FGD of employers receiving trainees and/or apprentices
Representatives of public and private training providers that received project assistance: centre managers, vocational trainers participating in TOTs, instructors receiving training	FGD
Participants in training providers and employment centres' programmes and project supported on-the-job training: youth, vulnerable women, persons with disabilities	FGD
Recipients of NVQ certification through the Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) system	FGD

Comparison of different stakeholder perspectives and other data sources will enable triangulation of evidence to strengthen the validity of conclusions.

4.3 Methodology for data collection

In line with the key evaluation questions, the evaluator has developed a methodology matrix to guide the collection of data. This matrix identifies key evaluation questions, provides the interpretation of the question and types of evidence to be gathered per evaluation question, the key documents to be consulted, and the stakeholders to be met during the field missions. The Methodology Matrix is included at Annex 1.

Stakeholder interviews will take the form of individual interviews or focus group discussions. These will be guided by semi-structured interview and focus group discussion guides.

4.4 Geographic Zone and Stakeholder selection criteria

Selection of project geographic zones

The project is being implemented in four districts in the North and East of Sri Lanka, namely Vavuniya, Mannar, Batticaloa and Ampara. Per the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), the evaluator will consult with stakeholders in all four districts as well as with national stakeholders in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo.

Stakeholder interviewees

The selection of interviewees per stakeholder group will be purposeful and will follow these guidelines:

- Include representatives of all key stakeholder groups per list above.
- Ensure gender balance and diversity (while some participant focus groups may be all male or all female if this reflects who actually took part in programme activities but by the end of the field data collection phase, the evaluator should have heard both women and men's voices, and various target groups ie youth, different categories of vulnerable groups ie unemployed youth, persons with disabilities, etc.)

Training Institution selection criteria

The project provided assistance to approximately 44 vocational training centres in 4 districts. The evaluator will conduct centre visits and focus group discussions with personnel of the centres and centre clients to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the assistance. The selection criteria for centres are as follows:

- At least two training providers in each of the 4 target districts, at least one public sector and one private sector managed centre.
- Training providers considered as examples of successful participants in ILO programmes

- Training providers considered as examples of average or below average participants in ILO programmes
- Examples of training providers that serve diverse groups of trainees (youth, women, persons with disabilities)

4.5 Stakeholder workshops

The evaluation ToR planned regional stakeholder workshops in each of the North and East. However, following discussion, the evaluation manager, the evaluator and the project manager agreed that due to time and logistic limitations, the evaluation would include only one stakeholder workshop at the national level. The evaluation schedule does allow for time to collect the views and perspectives of a wide variety of regional stakeholders in each of the 4 districts; information provided by these stakeholders will enable the evaluator to triangulate information from various sources.

The evaluator will conduct a final debriefing workshop in Colombo to share her preliminary findings with the ILO and national stakeholders at the end of evaluation mission. The workshop will present preliminary findings of the evaluator and garner feedback on specific questions, lessons and future strategies.

4.5 Evaluation Limitations

The following are potential limitations of the evaluation:

Because random sampling will not be used, there is the possibility of selection bias on the part of the evaluator, and desirability bias on behalf of respondents.

Because of project data collection limitations, the evaluator may not have sufficient quantitative data to assess project outcomes according to the project monitoring and evaluation framework. This is an issue to be clarified with project management during the data collection phase.

5. Workplan and Field Data Collection Schedule

Draft mission itinerary for the evaluator and the list of key stakeholders to be interviewed	Project Manager	31 August 2017
Inception report submitted to Evaluation Manager	Evaluators	12 September 2017
Approval of Inception Report	Evaluation Manager	20 September 2017
Evaluation Mission	Evaluator	25 September – 12 October 2017
Stakeholder Workshop	Project Manager and Evaluator	13 October 2017
Draft report submitted to Evaluation Manager	Evaluator	27 October 2017
Sharing the draft report with all concerned stakeholders for comments for two weeks	Evaluation Manager	6-10 November 2017
Consolidated comments on the draft report, send to the evaluator	Evaluation Manager	20 November 2017
Finalization of the report and submission to Evaluation Manager	Evaluator	30 November 2017
Review of the final report	Evaluation Manager	11 December 2017
Submission of the final report to EVAL	Evaluation Manager	20 December 2017

Methodology Matrix

TOR Question	Methodology	Data Source(s)/ Means of Verification		
		Data Collection Tools to be used	Stakeholders to Interview	Documents to Consult
		Relevance		
<p>To what extent does the programme address needs identified by its main stakeholders? How well does the programme align with ILO tripartite partners (government, employers and workers) priorities?</p>	<p>The evaluation will analyse relevance to stakeholder needs (capacity building and other support) with attention to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alignment with national policies regarding human capital development and employment (mainly national) • pertinence of ILO project services for improving availability of relevant skills training in their jurisdiction as articulated by district and local public officials • relevance of services to employer needs and priorities as articulated by employers' organizations (national, local and sectoral if relevant) and individual employers (those that recruited trainees by training providers that participated in project interventions) • perceptions of workers' organizations (extent to which opportunities were adequately seized to address their concerns through programme activities) • feedback from training institution administrators and trainers on how well project support aligned with their needs • perceptions of youth, women and other vulnerable populations that indirectly participated in project as beneficiaries regarding the extent the project was well designed to help them overcome barriers to economic integration (employment) 	<p>Desk study, KIIs (purposive), SGDs (purposive).</p>	<p>All key stakeholders listed in Inception report section 4.2</p>	<p>Mid-term evaluation report EU-SDDP Sri Lanka'. July 2016</p> <p>Sri Lanka DWCP document</p> <p>Policy documents: National Human Resources and Employment Policy http://www.nhrep.gov.lk/</p>
	A.2			

B.	Effectiveness			
<p>To what extent has SKILLED produced its planned results (outputs) in a timely fashion? Has it produced any unplanned outputs and if so, what are these? Are key stakeholders satisfied with project deliverables?</p>	<p>The evaluator will assess whether the project has achieved its planned outputs and associated targets. Outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vocational training curriculum for high-growth economic sectors developed and implemented; • equipment for registered vocational training centres procured; • district-based systems for recognition of prior learning leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVO) developed and implemented; • vocational and skills training instructors with training; <p>1.B.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TVET centres with strategies for attracting enrolment by trainees; • District-level employment services established; • Trainees placed in job in priority occupations and industry sectors • Vulnerable populations, particularly people with disabilities, with access to informal apprenticeships. <p>1. Compare reported progress with M&E plan and work plan targets. List planned outputs with description of their status in a table to be included in evaluation report.</p> <p>2. Triangulate project progress reports with information obtained in stakeholder interviews and review of project documents</p> <p>3. Visit a cross section of project intervention sites</p> <p>4. Ask for national stakeholder feedback regarding quality of project technical assistance and training.</p> <p>1.B.2</p>	<p>Desk study, KIIs (purposive), SGDs (purposive).</p>	<p>National Programme Coordinator Relevant project consultants National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority Vocational Training Centre Administrators and instructors Public Employment Centre administrators and users Employer/Industry Partners involved in job placement activities Stakeholders (NGO administrator, programme managers and enterprises) involved in apprenticeship programmes</p> <p>B.3 B.4</p>	<p>M & E Framework Annual Work plans Progress reports Evidence of key deliverables: training curriculum, equipment procurement documents, training reports, certification of prior learning procedures</p> <p>B.5</p>
<p>To what extent has SKILLED met its broader objective of improving</p>	<p>Assess project performance relative to its outcome indicators including:</p>	<p>Desk study, KIIs (purposive), SGDs (purposive).</p>	<p>Donor representative National Programme Coordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M&E framework • Project progress reports

<p>access to quality vocational training by vulnerable groups in project target zones?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of graduates getting jobs in the first 3 months after graduation • % reduction in trainee drop outs in VT centres • # of new and or improved market oriented demand driven courses started • Improved course completion rates • # of institutions implementing the changes to training and management systems and procedures. • % of trainees receiving NVQ certification during project period • # of initiatives implemented by industry and provider networks in each district • % increase of new registrations of Vocational Trainee graduates with PES Centre • % of new registrations that are supported by PES to find employment or referred for further education or training • # of employers registered with PES <p>B.6</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare reported and planned outcomes in M&E plan 2. Triangulate project progress reports with information obtained in stakeholder interviews and review of project counterparts information systems (where these exist) 3. Ask project stakeholders to assess the projects' achievements and short comings 		<p>Vocational Training Centre Administrators and instructors Public Employment Centre administrators and users Employer/Industry Partners involved in job placement activities</p> <p>1.B.7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from vocational training centres monitoring system on trainee job placement, dropout rates, completion rates, certification • Project partner activity reports • PES databases
<p>What have been the main external factors that influenced the project's performance? How effective was the project in adjusting its strategies to capitalize on emerging opportunities or overcome unexpected obstacles in order to meet its objectives?</p>	<p>e evaluator will assess the effects of the following on project implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and economic factors (political stability, foreign and domestic investment in project zones, global and national economic growth with its effects on jobs, the wider policy environment and its effects on stakeholder decision making); • Effects of natural disasters on project implementation (for example, floods); • Other operational constraints beyond the control of the project (such as turn-over in counterpart 	<p>Desk study, KIs (purposive),</p>	<p>-Donor Representative -ILO Country director and relevant ILO technical experts (those with some involvement in project) -National Programme Coordinator -National, district and local government authorities -Vocational Training Centre Administrators and instructors</p>	<p>Project progress reports Press reports highlighting key events in target zones during project implementation period</p> <p>Mid-term evaluation report EU-SDDP Sri Lanka'. July 2016</p> <p>1.B.9 B.10</p>

	organizations, budget allocations by counterpart organizations)		-Public Employment Centre administrators and users -Employer/Industry Partners involved in project activities B.8	
Has the project collaborated effectively with its national counterparts, other UN agencies involved in the implementation of EU-SDDP and/or with other ongoing ILO programmes?	The evaluator will assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which national tripartite counterparts were consulted during planning phases and kept informed regarding project progress during implementation (through which mechanisms, how often) • Extent to which project counterpart organizations in target zones (training providers, district authorities, sub national representatives and/or members of workers and employers organizations) were consulted in planning phase and kept informed regarding project progress during implementation (through which mechanisms, how often) • If/how the ILO project team coordinated with other UN agencies for the implementation of specific project activities(through which mechanisms, how often); • If/how the ILO project team developed and implemented strategies to capitalize on potential synergies with other EU-SDDP component actions (examples of joint activities?) • If/how the ILO project team developed and implemented strategies to capitalize on potential synergies with other ILO projects (examples of synergies created?) 	s (purposive),	-National Programme Coordinator -Representatives of ILO Tripartite partners - Project counterpart organizations in target zones (training providers, district authorities, sub national representatives and/or members of workers and employers organizations) -Representatives of other UN agencies involved in EU-SDDP (focus on those with the most direct interaction with ILO project – ie field staff if possible) -Other ILO project manager who may be able to highlight collaboration with SKILLED	Project progress reports UN partner progress reports Country office annual report (if applicable) Other ILO project activity reports (if relevant) Coordination meeting minutes (if applicable)
Was SKILLED's "visibility strategy" effective to inform the public about the EU as the donor agency and the ILO as the implementing agency?	The evaluator will assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the project's visibility strategy (what it did to communicate its activities, highlight the donor's support) • The extent to which project communication activities resulted in information about the EU as a donor and the ILO as an implementing agency being circulated in the press, on social media, or in highly visible events at the national level or in project target zones. 	KIIs (purposive)	-National Programme Coordinator -Donor representative	Project Communication materials Press clippings Other reports on communication activities/events

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which SKILLED ensured its partners followed EU/ILO protocols regarding communication/marketing and branding 			
<p>To what extent did SKILLED effectively mainstream Gender and Respect for International Labour Standards in project strategies and interventions?</p>	<p>To appraise the effectiveness of project efforts to mainstream gender and International Labour Standards into project interventions and strategies, the evaluator will assess what actions were taken by the project:</p> <p>B.11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender: assessing the particular needs of men and women and devising strategies to meet their needs, gender disaggregation of participants when reporting results, enacting strategies to promote gender balance among programme beneficiaries, etc. <p>B.12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Labour Standards: Assessing project interventions contributions to promoting fundamental principles and rights at work (example integrating information and awareness raising materials to promote knowledge and respect of labour rights in training programmes). 	<p>Desk study, KIIs (purposive), SGDs (purposive).</p>	<p>All key stakeholders listed in Inception report section 4.2</p>	<p>Project progress reports Project activity reports</p>
<p>Did the project have effective procedures and processes to monitor its progress (financial and programme)?</p>	<p>The evaluator will look for evidence that the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed an annual work plan with clear information on planned activities; Regularly assessed and reported on progress against these plans; Developed an M & E plan with clear indicators, indicator definitions and targets; Regularly assessed and reported on progress against this plan; Annual budget of planned activities; Regularly assessed and reported expenditures against budget Used the information above for project management decision making <p>B.13</p>	<p>Desk study, KIIs (purposive).</p>	<p>SKILLED project personnel Donor representative</p>	<p>M&E framework Management Information System data base (if applicable) Annual Work plans and Budget Programme and financial progress reports</p>
Efficiency				

<p>Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically and efficiently to achieve expected results? Could they have been allocated more effectively and if so, how?</p>	<p>The evaluator will look for evidence and assess: The extent to which the ILO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocated adequate human resources for project implementation (adequate = right number, right skills, in the right place) Provided sufficient technical and administrative backstopping to accomplish project objectives <p>The extent to which the project delivered value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost and quality of inputs appropriate (appropriate = costs within norms, acquired inputs fit for purpose) Inputs converted effectively to project outputs Did resource allocations decisions (funds, resources, time, and expertise) weigh potential impact (extent that investment was likely to contribute to sustainable impact) <p>The extent to which project realizations were timely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were work plans respected? If not, were delays justified? <p>1.B.14</p> <p>Findings will consider data collected under questions 2 and 3.</p>	<p>Desk study, KIIs (purposive)</p>	<p>SKILLED project personnel Back stopping personnel and technical experts B.15</p>	<p>Report on budget expenditures by output area Annual financial report Project progress report Selected activity reports and budgets</p>
Impact orientation and sustainability				
<p>B.16</p> <p>10. What strategies has SKILLED put in place to ensure continuation of actions initiated after the project support ends? To what extent are these likely to be effective?</p>	<p>The evaluator will look for evidence that the project has adequately assessed what is required to continue the main strategies it initiated and has taken appropriate steps to ensure these needs are addressed. Examples of the types of evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counterpart institutions understand resource requirements to maintain project services (equipment replacement and maintenance, human resource requirements, operational costs); Personnel within counterpart institutions have been helped to acquire appropriate skills and tools to carry on project supported services; 	<p>Desk study, KIIs (purposive)</p>	<p>-National Programme Coordinator and staff - Project counterpart organizations in target zones (training providers, district authorities, sub national representatives and/or members of workers and employers organizations)</p>	<p>Project progress reports</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counterpart institutions have been helped to identify and mobilize other sources of funding to replace project resources or to identify cost-saving strategies. • ILO has a strategy to continue its assistance in some form. 			
11. To what extent has SKILLED been effective in fostering national stakeholder ownership for and commitment to its strategies and interventions?	<p>B.17</p> <p>The evaluator will look for evidence that national stakeholders are committed to following through with key project strategies and interventions by:</p> <p>B.18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining buy-in from decisions makers; • Issuing needed administrative decrees; • Allocating required resources (human, financial); • Integrating project strategies and interventions in their programmes and related work plans; • Making provisions to maintain and/or update (as needed) project inputs. 	Desk study, KIIs (purposive)	Project counterpart organizations in target zones (training providers, district authorities, sub national representatives and/or members of workers and employers organizations)	Project progress reports Counterpart strategic plans, programme documents Relevant government circulars

ILO SKILLED PROJECT FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

Interview Guide

General Introduction to the interview

Thank you for participating in this interview/focus group discussion. My name is Sandy Wark. I am an independent evaluator hired by ILO to evaluate the International Labour Organization (ILO) Skills to support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) Project in Sri Lanka. The SKILLED project is part of the European Union Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP), a project designed to contribute to poverty reduction in North and East of Sri Lanka by supporting sustainable regional and local development and good governance in conflict-affected areas. The project was implemented by 5 UN organizations (ILO, UNDP, UNOPS, FAO, and UNICEF) and the International Finance Corporation.

The SKILLED project was implemented by ILO and was focused on Result 2.3 of the overall EC Programme. It was designed to improve access to quality vocational training through support to Registered Training Providers and by improving public employment services in 4 districts: Vavuniya, Mannar, Batticaloa and Ampara. Implementation began in July 2012 and is scheduled to finish in February 2018.

Context:

The purpose of this interview/focus group discussion is to help me assess:

- The degree to which the project was relevant to stakeholders needs and priorities;
- The quality and effectiveness of ILO support;
- What has changed because in the areas of vocational training and employment services in target districts since the project started and how the project might have contributed;
- Whether or not the project used its resources efficiently;
- How likely it is that project approaches will be sustained after the project closes;
- If there are any emerging good practices and lessons learned that might help future projects with similar objectives.

Your answers will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Project Management

- What position did you occupy in the project?
- What was your role? What were your main responsibilities?
- At what point in project implementation did you start?

The following questions are for the overall project manager. Questions will be selected and adapted for other project staff depending on their area of expertise and/or geographic area of focus.

Relevance

- 1.) What strategies did the project employ to ensure stakeholder needs and priorities were considered in the design and implementation of SKILLED? To what extent do you think these strategies were successful in engaging key stakeholders in planning and implementation? How do you assess project services relative to stakeholder needs and priorities? Is there anything that the project could have done that would have improved its relevance to the former?
- 2.) Please provide an overview of project achievements and challenges experienced meeting targets (timeliness, quality, quantity) by output area (see below) and geographic area (by district):

- Development of vocational training curriculum for high-growth economic sectors
 - Equipping training centres
 - Training of trainers of vocational training centres
 - Training and other support for centre administrators to improve centre management
 - Strengthening TVET outreach to encourage enrolment in vocational training centres
 - Strengthening district-based systems for recognition of prior learning leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)
 - Establishing and strengthening Employment Service Centres in each district
 - Developing initiatives with private sector for job placement of trainees
 - Developing apprenticeship programmes for vulnerable groups
- 3.) What are the main changes that have occurred in the project districts relative to the availability and quality of vocation training and employment services since the project started? In your view, in which ways has the project contributed to these changes? What data is available to support your assertions? In which areas do you consider project outcomes to be the strongest? In which areas do you consider the weakest? Why?
 - 4.) Did political, economic, climatic or other “force majeure” events/factors have either positive or negative consequences on project implementation? Please describe these factors. What strategies did the project employ to overcome or capitalize on unforeseen events and or circumstances?
 - 5.) What strategies did the project employ to foster collaboration with national counterparts (government, employers, and workers)? (Examples may include creation of coordination committees, organizing regular meetings, organizing stakeholder workshops, sharing progress reports, etc.) With the other UN agencies involved in the EU SDDP? Please provide examples of project achievements/synergies created that were a product of collaboration. Are there any examples of the project capitalizing on other ongoing ILO projects to enhance SKILLED implementation?
 - 6.) What strategies did the project use to enhance the visibility of its interventions and highlight the donor’s contribution? What were the results?
 - 7.) Did the project have strategies to ensure that its interventions met the particular needs of women in the target districts? To favour women’s participation? To analyse project outputs and outcomes from a gender perspective?
 - 8.) Did the project have strategies to mainstream respect for international labour standards in project interventions? Please elaborate on strategies and results.
 - 9.) Please explain the project procedures and processes related to: work planning, assessment of progress, setting and monitoring indicators of progress and outcomes of interventions, financial reporting.
 - 10.) Do you think the budget allocated to the project was sufficient to meet its objectives? Why or Why not? What strategies did the project have for ensuring that project money was well spent? Which type of spending had the highest returns/lowest returns relative to project results (Equipment? Training? Technical assistance?) Why?

Efficiency

11.) Do you think the human resources allocated by the ILO were adequate? Do you think project staff had the right skills to be effective? Do you think project staff was adequately back stopped by ILO personnel in the country office, the regional Decent Work Team, in Geneva?

Impact Orientation and Sustainability

12.) What are the main challenges faced by project stakeholders to sustain project gains? What strategies has the project carried out to support sustainability? (for example, what has it done to highlight requirements for sustainability, support stakeholders to find resources or alternative solutions to replace project resources, ensure stakeholders acquire skills needed for sustainability)

13.) To what extent do you think key stakeholders are committed to project strategies and interventions? What evidence is there to back this up?

ILO personnel engaged in project backstopping

- How long/to what extent did you provide backstopping support to the project?
- What was your role?
- What kinds of support did you provide to the project?
- What do you think are the project's main achievements?
- What were its main challenges?
- Do you think the project team was sufficiently supported by ILO backstopping units?
- Are there good practices and lessons learned from this project that may enrich other ILO projects working on similar issues?

Depending on role and knowledge of key informant, project backstopping personnel may be asked some of the other questions on the list of questions for project management.

Government counterparts – national and district level

- How have you been involved in the SKILLED project? How long have you been in this role?
- To what extent do project objectives correspond to the current priorities of your administration? Please explain and reference any relevant policies, programmes and plans.
- Are you satisfied with the way the ILO has collaborated with your administration during the planning stages of the project? During the implementation stages? If relevant, what are some examples of effective collaboration? What could have been improved?
- For district authorities: What has been your experience working with the ILO in the context of the broader EU SDDP? Do you think the project implementers have coordinated their interventions effectively? What, if anything, might have been done better?
- Have you been kept informed regarding the project's progress? If so, how?
- If yes to the above, what do you think are the projects main achievements? What are its shortcomings?
- Are you aware of any external factors that negatively or positively affected project implementation?

- How confident are you that the project achievements will be sustained after the project ends? If relevant, what steps has your organization taken to ensure the continuation of project approaches and contributions beyond the life of the project?

Employers Organizations national and district level

- How have you been involved with the SKILLED project? How long have you been in this role?
- To what extent do project objectives correspond to the current priorities of employers? Please explain and reference any relevant policies, programmes and plans.
- Are you satisfied with the way the ILO has collaborated with employers' organizations during the planning stages of the project? During the implementation stages? If relevant, what are some examples of effective collaboration? What could have been improved?
- Have you been kept informed regarding the project's progress? If so, how?
- If yes to the above, what do you think are the projects main achievements? What are its shortcomings? To what extent was the project successful in improving communication, coordination or collaboration between employers, employers' organizations and vocational training providers? With public employment service centres?
- Are you aware of any external factors that negatively or positively affected project implementation?
- How confident are you that the project achievements will be sustained after the project ends? If relevant, what steps has your organization taken to ensure the continuation of project approaches and contributions beyond the life of the project?

Vocational Training Centre Administrators

-
- Please describe your centre. Are you public or private? What courses do you offer? Who are you main beneficiaries/clients?
- Thinking back to before you had contact with the SKILLED project, what would you say were your main challenges to providing quality vocational training?
- What were the principle activities of SKILLED in your centre? Did the project provide assistance to:
 - a.) Needs Assessment
 - b.) Introduce new training programmes/curricula in your centre? Which ones?
 - c.) Provide grants for equipment and other infrastructure upgrades? What was procured?

- d.) Train trainers for instructor training or otherwise support improving the skills of trainers in your centre?
- e.) Provide training or other assistance to you or your colleagues to improve centre administration and outreach?
- f.) Supported your participation in the district vocational training forum?
 - Are you satisfied with the assistance that the ILO provided to your centre? Did it correspond with your needs? Are there aspects of project assistance that you think could have been improved?
 - Have there been significant changes in your vocational training centre since you received assistance in any of the following areas?
 - a.) Enrolment numbers?
 - b.) Certification of courses?
 - c.) Dropout and completion rates?
 - d.) Management procedures and systems?
 - e.) Trainee follow-up and success finding a job?
 - f.) Collaboration with employers? With government TVET authorities?
 - g.) Other?

Annex 4 – List of Documents Reviewed

1. Asian Development Bank. *Innovative Strategies In Technical and Vocational Education and Training for Accelerated Human Resource Development In South Asia In Sri Lanka*. 2015.
2. Barne, Catherine. EU SDDP ROM report C-25534. EUD Sri Lanka.
3. EPRD EU SDDP Mid term Evaluation Final Report.
4. EU-SDDP Joint Action Matrix
5. EU-SDDP Project Overview & Implementation Plan April 2012.
6. EU-SDDP Programme Progress Report July 2016 to June 2017.
7. EU-SDDP website: www.eu-sddp.lk.
8. Fernando, C.B. *Rapid Assessment of Registered Public and Private Vocational Education & Training Institutions in Eastern and Northern Provinces of Sri Lanka, Final Report*, 12 November 2012. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
9. Government of Sri Lanka, National Education Commission. 2009. *National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical & Vocational Education*. Colombo.
10. SKILLED EU SDDP Annual Action Work Plan - Year 2. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
11. SKILLED EU SDDP Annual Action Work Plan – Year 3. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
12. SKILLED EU SDDP Annual Action Work Plan – Year 4. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
13. SKILLED EU SDDP Annual Report – Year 3, July 2015 to June 2016, Narrative Final. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
14. SKILLED EU SDDP Annual Report – Year 3, July 2016 to June 2017, Narrative. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
15. SKILLED EU SDDP June 2014 Financial Report. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
16. SKILLED EU SDDP June 2015 Financial Report. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
17. SKILLED EU SDDP June 2016 Financial Report. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
18. SKILLED EU SDDP June 2017 Financial Report. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
19. SKILLED EU SDDP M & E Plan. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
20. SKILLED EU SDDP Master Data Base. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
21. SKILLED EU SDDP Multiannual Work Plan – Year 2. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
22. SKILLED EU SDDP Multiannual Work Plan – Year 3. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
23. SKILLED EU SDDP Multiannual Work Plan – Year 4. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
24. SKILLED EU SDDP Progress Report – July 2012 to May 2015. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
25. SKILLED EU SDDP Revised Budget 08.12.2016. International Labour Organization. Colombo.
26. “*Strong and sustainable growth through human capital development: Has Sri Lanka even started?*” Daily Mirror, 19 August, 2016.

Annex 5 – Schedule of Field Visits and Stakeholder Meetings

Field Mission: 25th September to 13th October 2017

Monday day 25 September 2017	
Briefing with Director and attending mission procedures	ILO Country Office
Discussion with Joint Programme Manager – EU SDDP	UNRC Office, Colombo
Discussion with Director-Training of NYSC head office	Maharagama, Colombo
Tuesday 26 October 2017	
Discussion with Director General of VTASL	Nipunatha Nivasa, Colombo-05
Discussion with DG/Director-Planning of DTET	Head Office of DTET, Colombo 10
Discussion with Director General of NIOSH	NIOSH Office, Colombo 05
Meeting Director and Asst. Director of Dept. of Manpower & Employment	Department office at Sethsiripaya Phase 2, Battaramulla
Wednesday 27 2017 – Travelling from Colombo to Batticaloa (Stay in East Lagoon Hotel)	
Meeting with SKILLED Programme manager, Interview with National Programme Coordinator	ILO Office, Batticaloa
Thursday 28 September 2017	
Meeting with Director of Vivekananda College of Technology	Vivekananda College of Technology - Puthukudiruppu
Meeting with Centre Manager	NYSC – Training Centre - Puthukudiruppu
Discussion with NAITA District Manager	NAITA – District office, Kallady, Batticaloa.
Discussion with Director	Miani Technical Institute, Batticaloa
Discussion with Field officers UNDP & UNICEF	Unicef – field office, Batticaloa
Friday, 29 September 2017	
Discussion with PES - Batticaloa	PES – Centre at Batticaloa
Focus Group meeting with trainers	Miani Technical Institute, Batticaloa
Meeting with District Chamber	Office of District Chamber
Interview with National Programme Coordinator	ILO Office, Batticaloa
Meeting with SKILLED M&E consultant	
Discussion with Government Agent/ Director planning	District Secretariat – Batticaloa
Saturday, Sunday 30th Sep and 01st Oct 2017 - Travelling from Batticaloa to Vavuniya	
Monday, 2 October 2017	
Discussion with Assistant Director-VTASL, Vavuniya	VTA – Centre, station Road, Vavuniya
Discussion with AD – non formal	Non Formal Education Unit – Vavuniya South Zonal Education Office – Vavuniya

Discussion with Director-Planning, Vavuniya	District Secretariat, Vavuniya
Discussion with – President	ORHAN – Training Centre – Thavasikulam Vavuniya
Tuesday, 3 October 2017	
Discussion with - PES staff	District Secretariat, Vavuniya
Discussion with NYSC Training centre	NYSC Training Centre at Vavuniya.
Discussion with – Technical College Mannar Principal	NYSC Training Centre at Vavuniya.
Focus group meeting of trainers	NYSC Centre, Vavuniya
Wednesday, 4 October 2017 – Travel to Mannar – Stay in Hotel Akash, Mannar	
Discussion with NAITA – District Manager	NAITA office, Nallayan Road, Mannar.
Focus group meeting with trainers	Technical College Mannar – Pannaivadduvan
Meeting with GA/Director-Planning	District Secretariat, Mannar
Thursday, 5 October 2017 – POYA DAY - Government non-working day	
UNDP	UNDP office Mannar Katchery
UNOPS	UNDP office Mannar Katchery
VT providers Forum	UNDP office Mannar Katchery
Friday, 6 October 2017	
Valvodayam (Director/ Focus Group discussion Trainers/ Students)	At Valvodayam VT Centre in Mannar
NYSC – Garment - Murunkan	Discussion Garments Centre – Murunkan
Discussion with PES - Staff	Discussion District Secretariat, Mannar
Saturday, Sunday 7th & 8th October - Travelling from Mannar to Ampara	
Monday, 09 October	
Discussion with VTA – Assistant Director	VTACentre, Ninthavur
Discussion with PES Ampara staff	PES Centre – Labour department Ampara
Discussion with LG construction Engineer	LG – Construction Com Pvt Ltd
Tuesday, 10 October	
Focus group RPL participants Discussion with NAITA – District Manager Visit to equipped RPL Centre of NAITA	District Manager - Kalmunai
Discussion with NYSC – Assistant Director	NYSC – Office Ampara
Meeting GA/ Additional GA, Ampara	District Secretariat, Ampara.
Wednesday 11 October 2017 – Travelling to Colombo	
Thursday, 12 October 2017 – In Colombo	
Preparation for debriefing workshop with stakeholders Meeting with Colombo focal points and project finance manager	
Friday, 13 October 2017	

Debriefing on findings in a workshop with stakeholders	In Colombo Movenpick Hotel
Meeting with Director, Colombo focal points and Project team	In ILO Country Office.

Annex 6 – Good Practice

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

Project Title: Skills to support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) Project under the European Union (EU) Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP).

Project TC/SYMBOL: SRL/12/01/EEC

Name of Evaluator: Sandy Wark

Date: 29 October, 2017

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><u>Scaling up of National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) Recognition of Prior Learning Programme</u></p> <p>SKILLED supported NAITA to scale up an existing programme that offers trade persons the opportunity to gain National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) certification of their skills through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) testing and certification. Project support consisted of funding an awareness raising campaign at the sub-district level targeting mainly the self-employed in areas such as construction (plumbers, electricians, and masons), tailoring, and food processing and pre-school teaching. The project covered NAITA fees for certification and in some cases, procured equipment to be used by candidates in NAITA centres for the certification exam. According to participants, the awareness raising programme was critical in informing them about the potential to be certified. The support covering their fees was a strong incentive to participate.</p>
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	<p>The Recognition of Prior Learning activity facilitated the implemented an existing but underutilized policy on skills certification in Sri Lanka. The policy offers certification of skills based on the national competency framework developed by the Technical and Vocational Training Council. The policy allows people who have acquired skills on the job to be tested and if they meet competency standards, to be awarded a certification whether or not they attend an official training institution.</p>

<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>The Government of Sri Lanka provides incentives for certification including requiring it for access to some government jobs and contracts. Foreign employers also require certification before hiring some categories of skill labourers. The policy therefore creates benefits for certification.</p> <p>The policy allowing recognition of prior learning has been in place for a number of years but was not well known. Before ILO support for awareness raising and fees, the programme reached very few tradespersons (less than 20 per district). Demand from trades persons for this activity exceeded original expectations; as a result, project management offered support for a second campaign and as a result, it greatly surpassed its original targets. The ILO supported programme reached 1,719 tradespersons (1,377 males and 342 females) in four districts.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>Potential Outcomes</p> <p><u>Provided both social and economic benefits for participants:</u> RPL certification participants highlighted how the receiving a certificate from the government documenting their skills provided them with greater social recognition. They felt it put them on the same social level as “better educated” peers. From an economic standpoint, participants in RPL participant focus groups cited numerous ways that having NVQ certification was or may in the future be beneficial by: enabling access to work on publically funded projects, helping them to market their skills better to potential clients, enabling them to move up in rank and salary in existing workplaces, and to access employment abroad.</p> <p><u>Created demand for higher levels of certification:</u> Another positive of the RPL activity, was that it appears to have stimulated demand for higher levels of certification and associated vocational training programmes among practicing trades people. Tradespeople who had achieved level 3 and 4 NVQ certification wanted to know how they could be certified in higher levels and indicated that if appropriate training programmes were available nearby, they would enrol. Several RPL certificate holders in one district had already enrolled in a local training college. Others indicated that they were unaware of how they might access additional training, citing deficits in locally available training programmes.</p>
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>To replicate this activity in another project in another country, it would be necessary for there to be a similar framework for skill certification. The framework should include national or sector specific skills standards that clearly identify required competencies for a given level of certification, a system to test whether or not a candidate has skills that comply with standards, and a legal/regulatory framework that recognizes and provides incentives for certification.</p>
<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>This good practice is linked to Sri Lanka DWCP Outcome 1.1 Government and social partners enhance employability and productivity of young women and men through market oriented skills training and measures to facilitate entry into the labour force.</p>
<p>Other documents or relevant comments</p>	

Annex 7 – Lesson Learned

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Skills to support Local Economic Development (SKILLED) Project under the European Union (EU) Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP).

Project TC/SYMBOL: SRL/12/01/EEC

Name of Evaluator: Sandy Wark

Date: 29 October, 2017

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<p><u>To implement successful joint programmes that create synergies among implementing organization, coordination meetings are not sufficient. UN agencies need to have intentional strategies and plans on collaboration. They also need to be held accountable for following through on these strategies and plans.</u></p> <p>The SKILLED project evaluation highlights some successes but overall weak coordination among the 6 agencies implementing the EU SDDP in Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Despite regular coordination meetings and even sharing office space in some cases, the agencies did not initially coordinate their work in such a way to build significant synergies and offer integrated services to communities and individuals. Various challenges contributed to this result, including some external factors. However, improvement occurred when the EU SDDP Joint Programme Manager facilitated an intentional exercise to identify concrete areas for collaboration which were followed up in subsequent coordination meetings.</p>

<p>Context and any related preconditions</p>	<p>The SKILLED project is part of the European Union Support to District Development Programme (EU-SDDP), a 5 year, 60 million Euro programme. The overall programme objective of EU-SDDP was to contribute to poverty reduction in North and East Sri Lanka and to bridge the socio-economic gap with the rest of the country by supporting sustainable regional and local development and good governance in conflict-affected areas.</p> <p>The ILO was one of six lead implementing organisations that include the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United National Office of Project Services (UNOPS) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC).</p> <p>After the EU SDDP mid-term evaluation, which cited deficiencies in inter-agency collaboration, the EU-SDDP coordinator organized a workshop that resulted in improved collaboration. During the workshop, the implementing agencies identified specific areas of collaboration and followed up on these in subsequent coordination meetings. This more intentional approach and additional layer of accountability contributed to the examples of programme synergies highlighted below.</p>
<p>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</p>	<p>UN Agencies implementing joint projects</p>
<p>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</p>	<p>KII with agency programme managers identified several factors that limited their cooperation. These included: the shortened Implementation period and pressure to spend resources quickly, differences in the various agencies’ modes of operation, lack of commitment to joint approaches versus independent ones which may have been affected by overlapping methodologies and agency tendencies to favour their own methodologies (for example ILO, IFC and UNDP all have their own approaches to entrepreneurship development), and the wide geographic spread of activities which resulted in less overlap in the project implementation sites than had been initially planned.</p> <p>Greater collaboration between the IFC and ILO on component 2 of the EU SDDP was affected by challenges sequencing interventions (most ILO trainees finished their training relatively late in project implementation) and differences in approach (the IFC does not provide grants directly to beneficiaries but works with financial institutions as intermediaries. As such, it is not able to force the institutions to provide assistance to youth if it does not align with their credit policies.)</p>

<p>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</p>	<p>The ILO shared office space with other UN agencies in both Batticaloa and Vavuniya and met regularly with other agency counterparts during coordination meeting. The ILO engaged in small scale joint efforts with UNOPS, UNDP, IFC and UNICEF that benefited project beneficiaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ILO placed trainees and RPL certificate holders in UNOPS construction sites for jobs and OJT; • The ILO and UNDP worked together to establish a small scale garment factory in Mannar district with the ILO providing training and the UNDP purchasing equipment; • The IFC enrolled vocational training graduates in a programme on entrepreneurship; • ILO and UNICEF collaborated on awareness raising about vocational training opportunities for teachers and career guidance instructors in schools.
<p>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</p>	