



Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh

ILO DC/SYMBOL: BGD/15/03/MUL

Type of Evaluation: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Evaluation nature: Independent

Project countries: Bangladesh

P&B Outcome(s): Outcome 1: Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue

SDG(s): 8

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 30 December 2022

Date when evaluation was approved by EVAL: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

ILO Administrative Office: ILO Country Office for Bangladesh (CO-Dhaka)

ILO Technical Office(s): GOVERNANCE

Joint evaluation agencies:

Project duration: 1 November 2016 – 31 December 2022

Donor and budget: Governments of Sweden & Denmark. Budget: USD 9m (9,131,262,71)

Name of consultant(s): Lotta Nycander (lead consultant) and Zakia Haque

Name of Evaluation Manager: Zeinu Seid

Evaluation Office oversight: Craig Russon

Evaluation budget: USD 40,000

Key Words: Social dialogue, industrial relations, labour administration, gender equality, non-discrimination, disability, labour court, ILO conventions, independent arbitration, conciliation, Bangladesh Labour Law, Ready-made Garments, Standard Operation Procedures, Monitoring and evaluation, tripartism, workplace cooperation, grievance handling, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs)

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

- ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS 4**
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 6**
- 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7**
- BACKGROUND & CONTEXT 7**
- MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS 8**
- RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES 12**
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND 14**
- 2.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT 14
- 2.2 THE PROJECT – SOME BASIC FACTS 15
- Background*..... 15
- Project purpose, logic, objectives, outcomes, outputs*..... 15
- Project management and staff, coordination and advisory committee structure* 16
- Administration, technical support* 16
- Project evaluations* 17
- 3 EVALUATION BACKGROUND 18**
- 3.1 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION 18
- 3.2 CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS..... 18
- 3.3 METHODOLOGY..... 20
- 3.4 LIMITATIONS..... 21
- 4 MAIN FINDINGS 22**
- 4.1 RELEVANCE AND VALIDITY OF INTERVENTION DESIGN..... 22
- Some reflections on the Project design*..... 23
- 4.2 COHERENCE..... 24
- 4.3 EFFECTIVENESS..... 25
- Some challenges in implementation*..... 25
- Working with the stakeholders*..... 25
- Capacity building – a large component of the SDIR project* 26
- Specific activities and outputs under the 3 key Outcomes*..... 27
- Outcome 1. Sustainable improvement in social dialogue, workplace cooperation & grievance handling*. 27
- Outcome 2: Sustainable and effective mechanisms for Conciliation and Arbitration are established* 28
- Outcome 3. Enhanced capacities of employers’ and workers’ organizations to dialogue and prevent and resolve disputes including those of gender concerns*..... 29
- 4.4 EFFICIENCY OF RESOURCE USE..... 30
- 4.5 IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY 30
- Impact*..... 30
- Sustainability* 31
- 4.6 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES 32
- Tripartism and international labour standards* 32
- Gender equality* 32
- COVID-19 and Environment*..... 33
- Disability* 33
- 5 CONCLUSIONS 34**
- 6 RECOMMENDATIONS..... 36**
- 7 LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES..... 38**
- ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE 41**
- ANNEX II. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS OF CAPACITY BUILDING..... 51**

ANNEX III. COVID-19 AWARENESS COMMUNICATION (BRAC)	56
ANNEX IV. PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS IN THE STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP, DHAKA 28.11.22	57
ANNEX V. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS (INSTRUMENTS)	63
A) EVALUATION QUESTIONS TO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF STAKEHOLDERS	63
B) QUESTIONNAIRE – ADDRESSED TO SDIR PROJECT STAFF	65
ANNEX VI. LESSONS LEARNED & EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
ANNEX VII. PERSONS INTERVIEWED AND DISCUSSED WITH IN FGDS & STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS	68
ANNEX VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY	76

[Tables and Figures](#)

Table 1. The SDIR project “traditional” training package: Courses/topics and No. of participants (gender disaggregated), p. 28

Table 2. The Covid adapted training package: Courses/topics and number of participants (gender disaggregated), p. 29

Figure 1. Ratio of male and female participants in the training under SDIR project in the SDIR project 2016/17 – October 2022, p. 29

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers Activities
ACTRAV	Bureau of Workers Activities
BEF	Bangladesh Employers Federation
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BILS	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
BKMEA	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BLA	Bangladesh Labour Act
CEBAI	Centre of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DIFE	Department for Inspection for Factories and Establishments
DoL	Department of Labour
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program
GBV	Gender based violence (GBV)
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HR	Human Resources
IBC	IndustriALL Bangladesh Council
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
LIMA	Labour Inspection Management Application
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
NCCWE	National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education
NPO	National Programme Officer
NTCC	National Tripartite Consultative Council
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PCC	Project Coordination Committee
RMG	Ready-Made Garments

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SoP	Standard Operating Procedure
TCC	Tripartite Consultative Council
ToR	Terms of Reference
TUSSO	Trade Union Solidarity Support Organizations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
WRC	Workers Resource Centre

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation team wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to all ILO tripartite partner organisations (constituents) and stakeholders, including private sector actors, who took part in the evaluation process through virtual (online) and physical interviews, meetings and discussions, providing documents and data; and attending the Stakeholder Workshop.

Special thanks go to all ILO staff and ILO SDIR Project staff in Dhaka for arranging interview appointments and field visits for the evaluation team; sharing documents and data, answering questionnaires and communicating via e-mail – who throughout the process did their utmost to ensure that the evaluation team had access to relevant documentation and information.

Lotta Nycander, Evaluation team leader

and

Zakia Haque, Consultant

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT	
Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure	<p>The overall purpose of the SDIR project is to promote social dialogue and harmonious industrial relations in RMG industry.</p> <p>The development objective of the SDIR Project is “Contributing to establish an effective industrial relations framework with a focus on the RMG sector.” There are three key outcomes to be reached at the end of the Project as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sustainable improvement in social dialogue, workplace cooperation and grievance handling (to be reached through three outputs; each output in turn to be reached by a number of activities);2. Sustainable and effective mechanisms for conciliation and arbitration are established (to be reached through four outputs; each output in turn to be reached by a number of activities); and3. Enhanced capacities of employers’ and workers’ organizations to dialogue and prevent and resolve disputes including those of gender concerns (to be reached through two outputs; each output in turn to be reached by a number of activities).
Present situation of the project	The Project came to an end 31 st December 2022.
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	<p>The main purpose of this evaluation is accountability, learning, planning, and building knowledge to the key stakeholders, and identify and share learnings for design of similar projects in the future. There are a number of specific objectives, including assessing the project performance; weighing coherence and compatibility of the project with broader ILO works; gauging the effectiveness and efficient use of project resources; assessing its sustainability and impact; and documenting lessons learned from project implementation.</p> <p>The scope includes assessing the Project’s progress, implementation, partnerships, achievements, challenges and to identify good practices, and lessons learned during the project’s entire duration, i.e., from 2015-16 to August 2022.</p> <p>The clients of this evaluation are the ILO, including the project team, the ILO constituents (Government of Bangladesh, Employers’ and Workers’ organisations), the development partner (donor agencies), and other project implementing partners.</p>
Methodology of evaluation	A mix of methods has been applied in the collection of both quantitative and qualitative information/data. Efforts were made to identify activities and interventions that have contributed to the achievement of the Project’s three outcomes. Multiple sources of evidence have been used. The evaluation has cross-validated data to

verify their accuracy, and used different data gathering methods including documentation review; Key Informant Interviews (KII) via the Zoom platform and face-to-face; Focus Group Discussions (FGD); E-mails and a questionnaire. To ensure credibility and validity of the results, methodological **triangulation** of the data/information from the various above-mentioned methods was applied throughout - the information received was cross-checked with other sources.

The evaluation team made **40 KIIs (10 women)**, and led the discussions in **6 FGDs in which 44 persons (21 women)** actively took part. One field visit was made to a DECCO garment factory in Mirpur.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of participants in the evaluation – and triangulation and cross-checking have been applied *throughout* data collection and analysis to mitigate any risk for bias. The evaluation has been mindful of **gender equality and discrimination issues**, as well as other cross-cutting concerns. On 28 November, 2022, the Evaluation presented its preliminary findings in a Stakeholders´ Workshop in Dhaka, in which 47 persons participated, representing the key stakeholders and ILO. This was an opportunity for the evaluation team to gather more information from the participants.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

MAIN FINDINGS

It was found that the SDIR project is **relevant**, and the intervention design **overall is valid**. The stakeholder needs and priorities identified at the design stage in consultations with the ILO tripartite partners (constituents) have to a *large* extent been addressed. The Project is also relevant in view of ILO Dhaka Country Office´s Cluster initiative, in particular work stream iii) Labour administration and working conditions, and the fact that it is in line with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) roadmap and National Action Plan (NAP) on the Labour Sector of Bangladesh (2021-2026) that entail specific actions needed to be taken regarding legal and administrative reforms, enforcement of laws, and capacity building. The Project has had good cooperation with the Trade for Decent Work Project (EU) and the brand H&M.

It was found that there is mutual leveraging and complementarity (**coherence**) among SDIR and other ILO projects in the RMG sector and it has been able to adapt to contextual changes in the course of implementation, as when the COVID -19 virus started spreading in March 2020. Complementarity also exists between the different streams/themes of work under the three outcomes, and also synergy e.g. in terms of cooperation of the involved stakeholders.

Regarding the Project´s design, it was found that, **overall, it is valid**, however, it was noted that Collective Bargaining Agreements and are not part of any outcomes/outputs, and there are no policy-related outputs/outcomes which would have been logical in view of the policy-oriented activities. It was also found that the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) matrix is not sufficiently *user-friendly* in showing the relationships between outputs and outcomes.

The SDIR Project has worked in close cooperation with the tripartite constituents and also other partners/stakeholders that ILO commissioned to undertake specific activities, such as BRAC. BRAC was commissioned to develop a COVID-19 safety outreach campaign for RMG workers and their communities and a communication materials package was produced/used. The H&M also cooperated with the Project, engaging factories to participate in the Project's activities.

Regarding project **effectiveness** (in implementation) **tangible outputs, under each outcome, were identified**. The Project contributed to the establishing of the National Tripartite Consultative Council and the RMG Tripartite Consultative Council in 2017, to institutionalize social dialogue in the sector. The Project was instrumental in supporting the Government in setting up of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on Trade Union Registration and Investigation of Anti-Union Discrimination, and Unfair Labour Practices. GoB has included these SOPs in the 2018 amended Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA). The Workers Resource Centre (WRC), is a "brain child" of the Project, set up in cooperation with NCCWE and IBC in 2017. Another successful result is that Paralegals (trained in 2019 and 2021) linked to the WRC have been able to help resolve many disputes at enterprise/factory level and thus prevented workers' complaints to go into the national machinery and end up at the Labour Court – where the backlog reportedly is more than 20,000 pending cases.

In some other components, effectiveness has been *lower*, such as the establishing an effective arbitration system/mechanism and dispute resolution at national level, as well as the lack of tangible results from collective bargaining training in the form of materialising CBAs. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major challenge to the Project, as was the challenge to encourage unionized factories to participate in the activities. A large and quite successful component of the Project is awareness raising activities and capacity building.

Looking at the entirety of the Project, it was found that the **efficiency** in relation to the use of resources was at medium level. Overall, the results achieved justify the costs, including resources used to promote gender equality. Although the covid situation brought more funds into the Project, its ability to use the resources as planned was seriously weakened. as these had to be used mainly for other covid-related training activities, which was a situation that was outside its control.

For the National TCC and a RMG TCC (which the Project helped set up) to have real and long-lasting impact *these need to be fully active* - which requires commitment from the tripartite partners to hold meetings and discussions as intended. The two SoPs that were integrated into the BLA, are examples of tangible **impact**, which led to a rise in membership of basic unions from 2012 to 2019. The Publicly Accessible Database is likely to have an impact in the sense that it contributes to transparency on labour market information.

Another important impact of the Project is the WRC that has brought NCCWE and IBC to one single platform, two bodies that “earlier did not talk to each other”. Several of the key stakeholders claim that they have acquired knowledge from the various awareness raising events and training courses, or from cooperating with the Project – which is another important impact - particularly DoL, NCCWE, IBC, and WRC representatives claimed that they have increased their learning. Impact from Paralegal’s work is evident.

Regarding **sustainability**, the new Cluster approach is expected to safeguard continuation of ILO’s core work in the country and funding from e.g. the EU member states, but also from other donors that have been approached and who have shown interest to fund technical cooperation initiatives. Regarding the WRC, it has published a comprehensive *sustainability plan* in consultation with broader labour constituents with the goal to achieve financial sustainability of WRC.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Relevance and validity of intervention design

a) It is concluded that the SDIR Project is relevant and that there exists complementarity among the different streams/themes of work areas. The stakeholder needs and priorities identified at the design stage have been addressed to a large extent. The Project is relevant in a larger perspective also, in view of the GOB roadmap and the NAP.

b) The SDIR project design as reflected in the Project document and LFA matrices, is not sufficiently user-friendly in showing the relationship between the outputs and outcomes.

2. Coherence

SDIR is clearly in line with international and national development and strategic plans. It is concluded that some coherence and mutual leveraging, and complementarity, exist between SDIR and two other RMG sector projects (RMGP II and the BWB Programme). It is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 8; the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2017-2020 (extended to 2021) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017- 2021.

2. Effectiveness

It is concluded that, overall, the Project has been able to demonstrate **above medium level effectiveness**, despite delays and challenges brought on by COVID-19. It has throughout, placed much importance on promoting dialogue, social dialogue and harmonious relations. The “institutionalization” of social dialogue and harmonious relations, in the form of National TCC and RMG-TCC, is a good achievement that needs to be maintained by the constituents, through holding regular meetings among other.

Some of the other major achievements are the “traditional” capacity building and awareness raising activities with numbers of trainees that sometimes have exceeded the targets; the Covid related training; the active operations of the WRC which could continue to be very

beneficial for the trade unions' work and the workers in the sector if the centre could earn revenue and become more sustainable.

Other good achievements are two SoPs, the publicly accessible Database at DoL. Regarding this database it is necessary to ensure that the trade unions that are registered are *real* trade unions and that trade union federations are involved in the process of identifying this problem. An effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system - i.e. with information to users about monitoring questions and relevant data collection processes - has been lacking in the SDIR project which is something the ILO should consider putting more efforts into, in the new cluster initiative.

3. Efficiency

Looking at the entire Project, the conclusion is that the **efficiency was at medium level**. The COVID-19 situation brought more funds into the Project but its ability to use the resources as planned was seriously weakened as these had to be used mainly for the covid-related training activities. No physical gatherings could be organised during the COVID pandemic for capacity building and awareness raising workshops – instead these were done virtually (online) (with much lower costs involved). Regarding the Project's human resources it is also concluded that for a project in which M&E and gender mainstreaming are so crucial - the Project would have benefitted from having fulltime staff posts and expertise on Communication and M&E; and Gender equality mainstreaming, respectively.

4. Impact

It is concluded that the **Project has had impact both at national and enterprise level** – the latter mainly in terms of dispute resolution. Increased learning and improved knowledge resulting from the comprehensive capacity building is also a positive impact of the Project. The two SoPs that were integrated into the BLA, is a tangible impact which led to a rise in membership of basic unions from 2012 to 2019, and so is the Publicly Accessible Database set up at DoL with a likely impact transparency and accountability regarding labour market information in the country. The NTCC and a RMG TCC are good project achievements, as mentioned here - but if they are to have real and long-lasting impact, they need to be fully active - which requires commitment from the tripartite partners.

5. Sustainability

The themes of the current SDIR Project will **continue to the pursued** through the new Labour Administration and Working Conditions (LAWC) Cluster. Regarding the **sustainability of the WRC**, it has produced a Sustainability Plan and both NCCWE and IBC have agreed to look for ways where WRC can contribute more at national level, rather than only sectoral level.

The plan suggests ways for the WRC to generate revenue and depicts short and medium activities - plus identifying 3 to 4 areas where work can be done in longer term.

WRC has a pool of Master trainers who can be used to provide services to generate revenue, and paralegal services that WRC can

“market” to other organisations/sectors. It is also concluded that it would need external support to set up a viable M&E system to enable to conduct its own assessments of progress, and also improve its capacity to develop realistic proposals, soliciting for funds from potential funders.

Cross-cutting issues

Regarding **gender equality**, the Project has made good efforts to ensure and improve women’s participation in the various capacity building activities and in supporting the WRC’s Women’s Committee and its GBV advocacy and women leadership training. The ILO should continue to support this important work of the WRC.

Tripartism and **International standards** were also addressed.

Covid-19 has been a major component in the Project, while **environment issues** has not played any significant role in the Project. The evaluation has not been able to identify any specific analysis, action, output or strategy to address **disability**.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main recommendations

Recommendation 1. When developing Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) matrices as management tools for projects/cluster initiatives, ILO should ensure that they are user-friendly and coherent, clearly showing logical relationships between the components, particularly outputs and outcomes. *The recommendation is directed to ILO.*

*Timeframe: Immediate (when new projects are being formulated).
Priority: High; Level of resources: Low.*

Recommendation 2. In the new ILO Cluster initiative, ILO should ensure that there are regular meetings/discussions and activities where the managers for the various ILO streams/clusters share information to a) avoid duplication of efforts; and b) have joint activities. *The recommendation is directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months -1 year. Priority: High; Level of resources: Low.*

Recommendation 3. ILO should continue to support WRC, including the Women Committee in its quest for more self-reliance and sustainability, including working with the Paralegals. *The recommendations is are directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months -1 year. Priority: High; Level of resources: Medium.*

Recommendation 4. DoL and the Trade Union Federations should ensure that only real trade unions are registered in the publicly available database, and avoid the so called “yellow unions” to be registered. *The recommendation is directed to DoL, NCCWE and IBC. Timeframe: Immediate. Priority: High; Level of resources: Low-Medium*

Recommendation 5. In view of the dire needs for reform in the RMG sector ILO should (in close cooperation with MoLE/DoL) continue to pursue issues that were unsuccessful in the SDIR project, namely:

Grievance handling and dispute resolution mechanisms at national level; A functional independent arbitration cell to be part of a separate Statutory Regulatory Ordinance (and SoP to guide the

functioning of such a cell); Encourage the GoB to amend the Labour Law in 2023, and promote CBAs at enterprise level. *The recommendation is directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year. Priority: High; Level of resources: Medium-high.*

Recommendation 6. In the new proposal for a cluster initiative on labour administration, the ILO should ensure that the work stream/cluster initiative has the following: **a)** Dedicated expertise on posts for Communication and M&E; and **b)** A user-friendly digital M&E system; and c) Expertise and experience on non-discrimination (including gender equality mainstreaming and disability issues). *The recommendation is directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year. Priority: Medium; Level of resources: High*

Recommendation 7.

a) In the new cluster on labour administration proposed to be implemented, ILO should ensure that a specific and separate non-discrimination analysis is conducted, with results that can serve as the basis for relevant strategies on both gender equality and disability themes– as both these should be mainstreamed in the cluster;

b) ILO should increase its efforts to highlight gender-based violence and support the WRC’s Women’s Committee.
The recommendation is directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year. Priority: High; Level of resources: Medium-high.

Main lessons learned and good practices

Lessons Learned

ILO cluster initiatives and projects should specify that disability (related to non-discrimination) is important **and need to be specified as activities and outputs, with performance indicators** in the Project Documents and Logical Framework Analysis matrices.

Good Practice

The Covid 19 virus spread, and the circumstances surrounding it, has required flexibility and initiatives from the project staff. **This project has shown the importance of being able to redesign approaches for capacity building**, including retraining of Master Trainers and adapt, or produce, new training materials and guidelines in order for them to conduct virtual online capacity building. Costs can be kept low in comparison with face-to-face training.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Bangladesh has been among the fastest growing economies in the world over the past decade, much due to its strong ready-made garment (RMG) exports, remittances, and stable macroeconomic conditions.¹ Although significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a strong economic recovery, as pandemic-related restrictions eased, mainly due to exports and private consumption, with a rebound of activities in the manufacturing and service sectors. Exports declined in FY20, but grew again by 9.2 percent in FY21 and by 28.4 percent in H1 FY22 resulting from the global demand for RMG.²

The country is going through a much-needed reform process, that relates to the improvement of workers' and employers' rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and dialogue at the workplace, as well as improving working conditions and rights at work. It has a very low active trade union density of total employment (4.5 per cent³) and the tripartite stakeholders involved in the SDIR Project under evaluation have had difficulties in getting trade unions in unionised factories to engage in the Project's activities. In October 2021, Bangladesh was rated amongst the ten worst countries for working people.⁴ In the last seven years the number of registered trade unions in the RMG sector has increased significantly. One of the impacts of the Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA) amendment in 2018, consisted of a rise in the number of basic unions' membership. In 2012 there were only 132 registered trade unions, a number which was increased to 945 in August 2020.⁵ The International Labour Organisation (ILO) project titled "Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations" (SDIR) had been able to influence this through contributing to the development of two Standard Operation Procedures (SoP) i.e. one on *Trade Union Registration and on Investigation of Anti-union Discrimination*, and the other on *Unfair Labour Practices* – both which were included in the 2018 amended BLA.

The RMG industry consists of woven, knit and sweater production and has grown faster than any other industry in the country since the 1980s. The SDIR Project was designed in 2015 to address the fact that there were still no effective institutional mechanisms in place to enable implementation of the BLA (2006), amended in 2013, to "match" the remarkable expansion in the RMG industry. Working conditions and rights at work needed to be improved, and to be *at par* with relevant international labour standards. Trust between workers and employers needed to be improved, as well as dialogue at the workplace – which is limited or non-existent at sector level.⁶

The SDIR Project Document makes a strong point of the fact that majority of the workers in the RMG industry are female, who for various socio-economic reasons, do not have much bargaining power to demand their rights. In the 1990s, the percentage of women workers in the RMG industry was very high, almost 90 per cent⁷ - however, the proportion has declined over the years. In 2019, an ILO Baseline Study stated that there was downward trend in the sector and that approximately 60 per cent of the work force were women, out of a total work force of about 4.2 million people.⁸ The real reasons for the decline would be an important theme for ILO to explore.

¹ Source: *The World Bank in Bangladesh*, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>. Last Updated: April 11, 2022.

² Source: *Bangladesh Development Update Recovery and Resilience Amid Global Uncertainty*, World Bank, April 2022.

³ Source: *The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index, Bangladesh Labour Market Profile 2020*, by the Danish Trade Union Development Agency, p. iii.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Source: *Registered trade union in BD RMG sector has increased*, in *Textile Today*, Bangladesh.

⁶ Source: SDIR Project Document.

⁷ Source: "Why are female workers disappearing from our RMG factories?", Article by Promila Kanya, 22 March 2022, in *Panorama*, an online paper: <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/why-are-female-workers-disappearing-our-rmg-factories-389102>

⁸ Source: *Baseline Study: Improving Working Conditions in the Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme, 2019*, ILO. This study was based on data collected between January and May 2017.

2.2 THE PROJECT – SOME BASIC FACTS

Background

The Project is implemented by the ILO Country Office in Dhaka, in close cooperation with the tripartite partners (ILO constituents) i.e., the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), the Employers and Workers organizations, as well as private sector and non-governmental partners. The Governments of Denmark and Sweden are the development partners (donor agencies).

The official implementation period is November 2015 to December 2022. However, the actual implementation took off only in July 2016, following an inception period. The GoB endorsed the Project on 31 July 2016 for the period July 2016 to June 2021.

The Project Document indicates a total budget of USD 8,426,257. However, the total project budget at the time of the evaluation in August 2022 was USD 9,131,262,71 as the Government of Sweden, had topped up the funds (US\$ 810,837) in April-March 2020, with the purpose of also implementing COVID-19 response work in the RMG sector. In March 2021, the Project was granted additional funds (USD 1.3 million) and a time extension from the Government of Denmark to enable it to implement activities up to end of December 2022. In June 2021, the Government of Sweden followed suit, in granting the project a “no-cost” extension to end December 2022.⁹

The SDIR project contributes to Outcome 1 in the ILO Programme & Budget for 2018/19 and 2020/21 which reads *Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue*. It also contributes towards *Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP)*, in particular Strategic Priority 3 (“International labour standards and rights at work promoted, labour market governance strengthened, and social dialogue enhanced”). It is also in line with GoB’s development frameworks such *Development Planning in Bangladesh: 7th Five Year Plan FY 2016 - FY 2020*¹⁰ which clearly acknowledges the need to provide regulatory frameworks for female workers, and regulations to facilitate the participation of female workers in the labour market (e.g. maternity leave, skill development, child care facilities, etc.) - and the need to do more to improve safety standards in the RMG industry. It also stresses the need for coordination with development partners, to make development aid in Bangladesh more effective, by creating common platforms for national and sectoral dialogues.

The Project was developed within the framework of the medium-term development cooperation strategy of Denmark for Bangladesh and Sweden’s strategy for Bangladesh for the period 2014-2020. It is also in line with the Global Deal concept, called for by Sweden as an essential strategy to achieve the post-2015 SDGs.

Project purpose, logic, objectives, outcomes¹¹, outputs

The overall *purpose* of the SDIR project is to promote social dialogue and harmonious industrial relations in RMG industry.

The *development objective* of the Project is to contribute to an effective industrial relations framework with a focus on the RMG sector.

The following are the *original 3 key outcomes* and *9 nine outputs*¹² along with several *sub-outputs* to be reached at the end of the Project:

Outcome 1. Sustainable improvement in social dialogue, workplace cooperation and grievance handling.

Output 1.1: Improved dialogue between unions and employers in at least 150 enterprises¹³.

⁹ Source: TPR 2021 p. 2-3.

¹⁰ Source: Section 2.7.8. The Plan is published by the General Economics Division, Planning Commission.

¹¹ This term is used in the original signed Project Document, but in the latest revised logical framework named as “specific objectives”.

¹² The nine original outputs in the Project Document are in the latest revised logical framework increased to ten - but in the latest TPR 2021, they are six. The reason for these differences will be accounted for in the draft evaluation report.

¹³ This target has later been reduced to 123.

Output 1.2: A scaled up and systematic approach on workplace cooperation introduced in at least 350 enterprises.¹⁴

Output 1.3: A simple and effective grievance handling procedures in place in 500 enterprises.¹⁵

Outcome 2. Sustainable and effective mechanisms for conciliation and arbitration are established

Output 2.1: Improved capacity and organizational tasks of the conciliation functions in the Director of Labour.

Output 2.2: A pool of national conciliators established.

Output 2.3: A transparent mechanism in place for receiving, recording and handling disputes.

Output 2.4: A credible, efficient and transparent system of arbitration in place.

Outcome 3. Enhanced capacities of employers' and workers' organizations to dialogue and prevent and resolve disputes including those of gender concerns

Output 3.1 Trade Unions (National Coordination Committee on Workers' Education (NCCWE), IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC) and other affiliated unions' federations) are better equipped to dialogue and service their affiliates, including those of gender concern.

Output 3.2: Employers' organizations (Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), and Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF)) are better equipped to dialogue and defend the interests of their members.

The Project was enabled to implement COVID-19 response work in March 2020, through top up funds (US\$ 810,837) from the Government of Sweden. Two separate streams of work evolved when COVID-19 broke out, namely "traditional" project activities; and Covid-19 related activities, the latter which included an outreach training programme involving the following themes: (i) COVID-19 Awareness-raising; (ii) Occupational Safety and health (OSH); (iii) Managing labour relations.¹⁶

The partners and stakeholders that responded to the challenges brought on by COVID-19, were primarily the Department of Labour, BGMEA, BKMEA, Workers Resource Centre (WRC) and BRAC.

Project management and staff, coordination and advisory committee structure

A Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)¹⁷ manages the Project and reports to the ILO Country Office Director. There are three National Programme Officers (NPOs): 1) Labour Administration and Working Conditions; 2) Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations Programme; and 3) Governance, Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations. Two national consultants have worked on "excol" basis but have left the Project. There is one Finance/Admin Officer, and a Driver. The Project had recently been supported by a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) function.

There are two committees: The Project Advisory Committee (PAC), with the Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) as Chairperson; and a Project Steering Committee (PCC), with the Joint Secretary, MoLE, designated as Chairperson.

Administration, technical support

The ILO Dhaka Country Office is responsible for providing administrative support to the Project. Responsibility for providing technical support and advice (backstopping) at Headquarters lies with the Labour Law and Social Dialogue units under the Department of Governance and Tripartism (GOVERNANCE) and ACTRAV, ACT/EMP, as well as the Decent Work Team based in New Delhi.¹⁸

¹⁴ This target has later been reduced to 287.

¹⁵ This target has later been reduced to 410.

¹⁶ Source: Technical Progress Report (TPR) 2021.

¹⁷ Since July 2022, the CTA has another position in Bangladesh, but has offered to be the most senior ILO project manager to brief the evaluation team on the SDIR project.

¹⁸ Source: Project Document.

Project evaluations

In June-July 2019, ILO conducted an independent (external) Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) and, in September 2021, an independent Interim project evaluation. The purpose of the latter evaluation was to make recommendations for project improvements for the (then) remaining period to December 2022, and identify potential areas of future work beyond December 2022.¹⁹

¹⁹ The purposes were also to promote accountability to the ILO, partners, national key stakeholders, and donors; and enhance learning within the ILO and key stakeholders. *Source: Interim Independent Evaluation of the SDIR project*, by Reza Patwary, September 2021.

3 EVALUATION BACKGROUND

3.1 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Evaluations in the ILO are undertaken for the purpose of accountability, learning, planning, and building knowledge. The **main purpose** of this evaluation is accountability, learning, planning, and building knowledge to the key stakeholders, and identify and share learnings for design of similar projects in the future. The **specific objectives** are to:

- Assess the project performance and interpret intended and unintended results;
- Weigh coherence and compatibility of the project with broader ILO works at all level and other in-country similar interventions;
- Gauge the effectiveness and efficient use of project resources (finance, human and assets);
- Assess its sustainability and high-level impact the project has on its beneficiaries; and
- Document lessons learned from project implementation.

The **scope** includes assessing its progress, implementation, partnerships, achievements, challenges, good practices, and lessons learned during the project's entire duration, i.e., from 2015-16 to August 2022.

The key **clients** of this evaluation are the ILO constituents, the development partner (the donor agency), the project team, and project implementing partners.

The **direct recipients** (implementing partners) are the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) and Department of Labour (DoL); Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF); Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA); Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA); National Coordination Committee on Workers' Education (NCCWE); IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC); Workers Resource Centre (WRC); and 410 garment enterprises/factories; BRAC and H&M (the brand).²⁰ The **indirect (ultimate) beneficiaries** are Ready-Made Garment (RMG) employers, workers and their families - with the expectation that the project will benefits a large number of women.²¹

The **key deliverables** of this evaluation are 1) Inception report; 2) Stakeholders workshop in which the preliminary findings will be presented through a detailed PPT²²; 3) Draft evaluation report; 4) Final evaluation report, 5) An Evaluation Summary report.

3.2 CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The **evaluation criteria** used by the evaluation are relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, results/impact orientation and sustainability.

A number of **key evaluation questions**²³, sorted under each of the above-mentioned evaluation criteria, guided the evaluation's data gathering process and analysis, as follows:

Relevance and validity of the Project design

1. To what extent has the SDIR project addressed stakeholder needs and priorities identified during project design?
2. How has the project adapted to political or other contextual changes and new insights in the course of implementation?
3. Does the project strategy and intervention design remain valid in the context of COVID-19?

²⁰ The original number of targeted factories was 500, but later reduced to 410.

²¹ *Source*: This is spelled out clearly in the Project Document, p. 7.

²² See details in section 3.3.

²³ As per Terms of Reference.

4. How has the project demonstrated synergy and complementarity among its different functions/thematic areas?

Coherence

5. How is the Project coherent with Bangladesh RMG sector strategy and government development frameworks and plans?
6. How does the project complement similar/related ILO and non-ILO development cooperation projects in Bangladesh?
7. How well aligned was the project with the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)/UNDAF and how has the project contributed to the DWCP and UNSDCF/UNDAF? Is there evidence of mutual leveraging and complementarity?

Effectiveness

8. To what extent has the project made progress towards achieving its planned objectives? What are the main constraints, problems encountered in relation to what the project set out to achieve
9. How have stakeholders at national, sectoral and global levels, including the private sector, been involved in the project?
10. To what extent have the project interventions been successful in reaching/ benefitting its beneficiaries outlined in the PRODOC?
11. What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives/outcomes?
12. What have been the strengths and weaknesses of the SDIR project?
13. How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced project results and effectiveness and how has the project overcome the challenge?

Efficiency

14. To what extent have the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve project results?
15. Have the resources been used efficiently? Do the results achieved justify the costs?
16. Have the project fund and activities delivered without delay that entail additional cost?
17. To what extent did the project leverage resources to promote gender equality and non-discrimination; and inclusion of people with disability?

Impact

18. To what extent is there evidence of positive changes in the life of the ultimate project beneficiaries and on policies and practices at national and county levels?
19. What is the anticipated risks that would affect positive impact of the project?
20. To what extent does the COVID-19 project adaptation contributed to increased impact

Sustainability

21. What measures and actions have been put in place to ensure ownership and sustainability of the project results by stakeholders – and an exit strategy been developed?
22. To what extent are the net benefits of the project likely to be continued?
23. What are potential risks affecting sustainability of the project net benefits? What measures should be built to increase sustainability?

Cross-cutting themes

The evaluation has assessed how the Project have **mainstreamed (integrated) cross-cutting** themes in the design, implementation and follow-up, i.e. gender equality, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues, ILO standards, social dialogue and tripartism.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

The **methodology** applied in the data collection process included a mix of different data collection methods including documentation review; Key Informant Interviews (KII) via the Zoom platform and face-to-face; Focus Group Discussions (FGD); e-mails and a questionnaire. Efforts were made to identify activities and interventions that have contributed to the achievement of the Project's three outcomes. To ensure credibility and validity of the results, *methodological triangulation* of the data/information from the various above-mentioned methods was applied throughout – and the information received was cross-checked with other sources.

The **documentation review** included a number of secondary data sources such as the Project Document and Logical Framework Analysis (LFA), Annual Progress reports, Evaluation reports and policy documents (see Annex VIII. Bibliography for the full list of documents reviewed). The review phase also included developing data collection instruments and writing the Inception report. Relevant documents surfaced also after the initial review phase, and continued to be received during the entire data collection phase. The evaluation team participated in online (virtual) introductory briefing sessions with the Evaluation Manager and members of the Project team. A briefing session (also virtual) with the CTA and the focal point for the evaluation at the ILO Dhaka office took place on 18th September. Practical matters and logistics concerning interview appointments, the field visit to a factory, and the planned Stakeholder Workshop were discussed with the SDIR project team.

The evaluation team made **40 KIIs** (10 women) with ILO staff, key tripartite stakeholders/partners (direct recipients); RMG factory managers, mid-management factory staff and participation committee members, and factory workers (female and male).²⁴ The discussions were semi-structured and in-depth, lasting 45- 60 minutes. In total **6 FGD** were held, in which **44 persons** (21 women) actively participated, with Master Trainers and former Trainers (BGMEA and BKMEA); WRC Board of Trustee (BoT) Members; WRC Women Committee members; Paralegals and Trainers (WRC), Master Trainers (DoL) and factory managers, mid-managers and workers (female and male, see Annex VII).

A **brief questionnaire** for KII was designed during the review phase (Annex V). This served the purpose of picking up on any remaining points/issues (mainly qualitative) after interviews and meetings were done.

The ILO and BGMEA assisted the evaluation team to **visit one large factory in Mirpur** (DECCO Apparels) where the team interviewed mid-level management staff and had a FGD with workers (women and men) including members of the Participation Committee of the factory.

Regarding the **sampling of participants** for KIIs and FGDs, this was purposive. To the extent possible the evaluation team has mitigated any bias arising from having a purposive sampling, through triangulation.

The evaluation collected both qualitative and quantitative data, analysed through a deductive approach, forming the basis of the conclusions in the evaluation. In cases when the language in FGDs was in *Bangla*, the notes with qualitative data/information was translated/summarised in English. Quantitative data was drawn from secondary sources, with clear references, and presented in this report.

Cross-cutting concerns and considerations **were part of the work process throughout**, such as gender equality, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues, ILO standards, social dialogue and

tripartism, and medium and long-term effects of capacity development initiatives throughout the evaluation methodology and all deliverables, including the final report.²⁵

The **evaluation's findings** were presented with the use of a PPT in a participatory 2 ½ hours **Stakeholder Workshop on 28 November, 2022**, at Hotel Westin in Dhaka. The purpose was to share the learning with the (tripartite) stakeholders and partners involved in the Project, and receive feedback. Following the Workshop, the ILO Evaluation Manager circulated the draft report to the stakeholders for review/comments, providing an opportunity to make comments on the evaluation findings. The relevant points made by the workshop participants in the discussion that followed the presentation, have been taken into account and addressed in this report (Annex IV. See also the text of the workshop presentation in this Annex. The workshop participants are listed in Annex VII.).

The evaluation has adhered **to evaluation norms, standards and ethical considerations** followed by the ILO, such as the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluations (revised in 2020)²⁶, as well as the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards (2010).

3.4 LIMITATIONS

A limitation in the evaluation process was the fact that the evaluation team was provided two different Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) matrices by the Project – here also referred to as Logframes. This added to a confusion regarding which one was actually in use. One is named “Revised Log-Frame of the SDIR project. Cumulative achievement of the objective outcome of the SDIR Project until August 22” which the evaluation was told is the “*right Logframe*”. The other is named “Revised Logframe of the SDIR Project, and this was updated *later*, in September 2022”.

²⁵ Source: ToR.

²⁶ Source: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>) revised in 2020

4 MAIN FINDINGS

This chapter accounts for the key findings of the evaluation, in relation to each of the standard evaluation criteria and the evaluation questions.

4.1 RELEVANCE AND VALIDITY OF INTERVENTION DESIGN

It was found that the SDIR project is relevant and the intervention design *overall* is valid. The stakeholder needs and priorities identified at the design stage have to a large extent been addressed. The Project has been able to adapt to contextual changes and new insights in the course of implementation, such as the revisions and adaptations of its Work Plans and implementation when COVID-19 broke out in March 2020, and impacted on its ability to organise (face-to-face) workshops and training events. The strategy that was developed in this situation was a continuation with the “traditional” activity programme, while also designing and implementing a *new Covid-19 response programme* consisting of the following activities/themes:

1. Factory outreach of COVID-19 related training packages to 410 factories;
2. Awareness-raising for workers about the COVID-19 disease;
3. Occupational Safety and Health (OSH);
4. Managing labour relations;
5. Development of a COVID-19 Communication and Advocacy strategy;
6. Community level outreach to workers community; and
7. Support the formation of a trade unions rights watch team at the Worker’s Resources Centre WRC.

The evaluation also found that there exists complementarity between the different streams/themes of work under the outcomes, between working with the government including on policy related themes; and employer and trade union dialogue issues (WRC, Paralegals and gender) that relate to factory/enterprise level. Synergy has also existed, for instance in terms of cooperation of the involved stakeholders.

SDIR project is relevant also in a larger perspective in view of the following: At its 337th Session (October–November 2019), the Governing Body had before it a report of the Officers regarding a complaint concerning non-observance by the Government of Bangladesh of the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), submitted under article 26 of the ILO Constitution by several Workers’ delegates to the 108th Session (June 2019) of the International Labour Conference. Such a complaint has *only been used 13 times earlier* in the history of the ILO, which shows the severity of the issue.²⁷ In particular, the Conventions No. 87 and No. 98 are all very relevant in the implementation of the SDIR project. There now exist both a Governing Body roadmap and a National Action Plan (NAP)²⁸ - two similar documents containing specific actions that the GoB should take (through consultative processes) regarding legal and administrative reforms, enforcement of laws, and capacity building.

ILO’s experiences from this Project are very relevant in view of the Cluster approach/initiative under development in the ILO Country Office for the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (2022-26), in particular cluster iii) Labour administration and working conditions. The new way of

²⁷ Source: Report by the Government of Bangladesh on progress made on the implementation of the road map taken to address all outstanding issues mentioned in the complaint concerning alleged non-observance of Conventions Nos 81, 87 and 98, Governing Body 344th Session, Geneva, March 2022.

²⁸ This follows the outcome of the 9th session of the EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission held in October 2019. Source: *National Action Plan (NAP) on the Labour Sector of Bangladesh (2021-2026)*, Ministry of Labour and Employment Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, June, 2021. EU’s engagement in the RMG sector is very important as it is largest trading block (*evaluator’s comment*).

working means a transitioning from implementation of separate/individual technical assistance projects - to work streams under specific themes.

Some reflections on the Project *design*

The logical relationship between outputs and outcomes are not clearly shown:

A project's LFA should **clearly** show the logical relationships between the different components, namely which outputs are intended to lead to which outcomes. This means that all outputs should be sorted *directly under* the respective outcomes. In the SDIR LFA this is not sufficiently clear, as all three outcomes are listed first, followed by a list of indicators, and followed by outputs. The outputs do have numbers, but it is not easy to relate them to the outcomes. The issue also came up in the discussion with the representative of the donor at the Embassy of Sweden.

Collective bargaining:

Regarding collective bargaining, when looking into the Project *design*²⁹ the evaluation found that it has been given a lower priority in the Logframe than it probably should have, as it does not match the importance it is given in the Project Document's narrative part. *Collective bargaining is not part of any outcome or output.* In one instant it is found at the level of training activities, mentioned as "bargaining skills" (activity 1.1.4), and listed among other activities as a training subject (3.2.1). In the latter, it is intended to support the reach of output 3.1 – which does not mention collective bargaining.³⁰ It is also mentioned in one *indicator*³¹ *to measure the reach of an output* (1.2) which is vaguely formulated: "Improved dialogue between unions and employers in at least 150 enterprises" (collective bargaining is not mentioned).

Lack of policy outcomes and outputs:

Policy level work is only mentioned once in the whole Project Document: "To design and adopt policy guidelines for factories on human resources" (activity 3.2.2). Curiously, *there is no output or outcome mentioning policy* although policy level work clearly has been part of the activities. Policy/policies is only mentioned once in the Logframe, namely in an indicator to the development objective (industrial relations in the RMG sector) level.³² Policy outputs need to be clearly formulated and backed up by activities and measured through performance indicators.

Assumptions and risks:

Assumptions should be *outside the influence and control* of the Project, including its key stakeholders. In the Logframe perspective, the assumptions quoted below, are not valid – as they clearly lie in the realm of the Project's influence and constitute the very core of the implementation:

"Working together, preventing and mitigating disputes"; and "Both workers and employer organizations express willingness to encourage members to effectively participate in expected activities"; and "DoL will have the willingness to establish identified internal dispute resolution capacity and systems, to respond constructively to disputes"; and "Bangladeshi constituents are confident and pursue the use of social dialogue and workplace cooperation".

Indicators for the development objective:

Another observation regarding validity of project design, is that the Development Objective has been "given" indicators – which is not fruitful, the reason being that *also other* organisations/actors contribute to this level and therefore the attainment of the objective could not be measured, or attributed to the SDIR Project as such.

³⁰ Source: Written comment from the Project.

³¹ The indicator reads: "No of CB agreements, WP cooperation plans and no of written agreements reached between employers and workers groups on issues brought by employers and workers".

³² Indicator reads "Level of compliance of labour legislation and policies with ILS".

Workers Resource Centre:

The WRC is a “brain child”³³ of the SDIR project and has received financial and technical support by the Project throughout. It would have been logical if the WRC had featured as tangible output or even outcome in the LFA and operational plans, which also would have enabled progress to be *measured* with the help of indicators. It would also have been beneficial if the design of WRC would have included an M&E system to be installed - to help WRC management become self-reliant in view of assessing its progress, i.e. post SDIR project in 2023.

4.2 COHERENCE

This section looks at coherence vis-à-vis the national strategies in the country and complementarity with other ILO and GoB development frameworks and plans – as well as to what extent SDIR project is aligned with international strategies and frameworks.

It was found that the Project is in line with national development and strategic plans, e.g. the 7th Five Year Strategic Plan which was out at the time the SDIR Project took off, and DWCP (2017-2020) which was extended to 2021. Regarding UNDAF (2017- 2021) and the SDG 8, the activities also contribute to the goals. As for the (direct and indirect) beneficiaries and their needs, it was found that they to a large extent were addressed.

Some mutual leveraging and complementarity exist among the three larger technical assistance interventions in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. The “Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme in Bangladesh (2017-2023) (RMGP II project) funded by DFID³⁴, Canada and the Netherlands, works with the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) - which is not a *key* stakeholder for the SDIR project. The Better Work Bangladesh (BWB) project³⁵ works with more than hundred buyers and offers a package of services to all factories enrolled in the project which are not the same as the ones that participate in the SDIR project. Its main tasks are assessments, advisory services and capacity building and it visits the factories 6 to 8 times per year.

Around mid-term of the SDIR project, both donor representatives were concerned about the lack of progress. It was decided to “hand over” the activity/output to establish a *Helpline/online system* to the RMGP II project³⁶. This has been successfully implemented. Between June 2021 and January 2022 the project received 2,137 complaints, out of which 2,081 were followed up (98 per cent resolution rate).³⁷ Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) has been one common denominator for the two projects.

The SDIR Project has had good cooperation with the “Trade for Decent Work Project”. Through improved labour relations and working conditions this EU funded Project aims at enhancing the application of the ILO fundamental conventions in EU trading partner countries.³⁸ The SDIR, RMGP II and BWB projects do not meet regularly, but SDIR and BWB projects have organised training together on social dialogue, and had some cooperation on grievance mechanism training and trade union registration. The interviewed representatives stated that in the future they should have more cooperation and that the cluster approach would provide good opportunities to work more closely together. The H&M in Dhaka has had good cooperation with SDIR (see also section 4.3).

³³ *Source:* Documentation, KIIs and comments provided in the Stakeholders’ Workshop.

³⁴ This is a US\$24.5 million, six-year programme aimed at improving working conditions and safety standards in the sector. It was first a USDOL funded fire and safety project in 2016 which eventually developed into what is now RMGP II. This programme currently provides technical assistance to the GoB to address and monitor safety non-compliances in factory buildings. NB: *Dfid* does not exist anymore - it has been replaced by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

³⁵ BWB is part of the global Better Work Programme.

³⁶ This output was originally part of the SDIR. Regarding the Helpline, the RMGP II works with the Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA) a knowledge management system that brings together all key information needs of DIFE, helping it to operate more effectively.

³⁷ In-depth interview with KII.

³⁸ *Source:* ILO written comments to the draft evaluation report.

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS

This section brings out findings in relation to the three key outcomes of the SDIR project. The evaluation has looked for, and assessed, tangible outputs (and activities, implementation strategies) that contribute to attaining the respective outcomes.

The Project has focused on the development of dialogue mechanisms and relations between employers and workers. Dialogue at sectoral/workplace level is seen as a way to prevent disputes. Development of transparent conciliation and arbitration mechanisms/systems trusted by both workers' and employers' representatives - are key components in the Project Document.

Some challenges in implementation

There were delays in starting the Project and it took eight months after the official starting date in 2015 until implementation could take off due to the need for endorsement by the Planning Commission. One contributing factor to the delayed start-up is the fact that there were changes in the MoLE and DoL leadership at the time.

The implementation has lacked speed at times, especially during COVID-19 pandemic period, which proved to be a major challenge. There was a country-wide lock down, resulting in the closing of many RMG factories and the layoffs of workers. The Government's restrictions of movements meant that the Project could not conduct regular face-to-face work for a long period of time in 2020 and 2021. This also impacted on the Project's life cycle as the staff had to make way for adjustments in its planning to accommodate the situation. Not all activities/outputs could be undertaken as planned. There were some changes on the post of the CTA which also made implementation less smooth than it could have been. The first CTA started in June 2016, and left in March 2018. A Technical Officer was in Charge until the next CTA arrived. During this time, however, technical backstopping was provided by the Decent Work Team (DWT) New Delhi and the ITCILO. There have also been staff changes of the NPO posts.

Working with the stakeholders

The Project has mostly worked closely with its key stakeholders e.g. those representing the ILO constituents, the government, the employers and the workers representatives, the University of Dhaka (Centre for Advanced Legal Studies – CALS). The evaluation has not been able to identify any cooperation with another UN agency. BRAC was commissioned to develop a COVID-19 safety outreach campaign for RMG workers and their communities, which has worked well. A communication materials package was produced, mainly consisting of jingle and audio messaging which can also be used in the RMG factory production floors, through a PA system. Videos were also produced with particular focus on pregnant and lactating women; as well as leaflets, e-posters, flip-charts that can be used in workers' orientation training.

The partnership between ILO and the H&M Group in Bangladesh (and Cambodia) has aimed at improving the contributions to the ILO Decent Work Agenda. The cooperation has related to wages, work quality, productivity, and the documentation and recognition of workers' skills. In the SDIR project, H&M has assisted the Project to engage factories in participating in the Project³⁹. The H&M has appreciated its cooperation with the ILO and stated that the SDIR-produced materials were of good quality, for instance the grievance handling material.

The Project has placed much effort in supporting the establishment of both a National Tripartite Consultative Council (NTCC) and a RMG Tripartite Consultative Council (RMG TCC) in 2017, in order to institutionalize social dialogue in the sector. This included developing Guidelines and support to a unit at the MoLE for the purpose of making them functioning. The Project has highlighted the *need for MoLE to take necessary action to ensure that regular RMG -TCC meetings are organised and held more frequently* - in order to have a fruitful dialogue and address the current and future challenges, such as dispute resolution among others.

³⁹ Source: MTE report. The cooperation extended to SDIR has been from H&M's social market innovation and capacity development section.

The original target was to work with 500 RMG factories to be directly involved with the project. This target was later reduced to 410. Participation in the project was on voluntary basis.⁴⁰ The Project has faced huge challenges in encouraging unionized factories to participate in the SDIR activities, despite efforts from by BGMEA / BKMEA and WRC to urge them to participate. In some unionized factories, there is resistance among the employers to engage in social dialogue and to participate in the Project’s capacity building program relating to industrial relations.⁴¹

Capacity building – a large component of the SDIR project

A large and quite successful component of the Project is awareness raising activities and capacity building through both a *traditional* training package, and a *Covid-19 training package*⁴².

DoL, BEF, BGMEA/BKMEA and workers’ organizations nominated Master Trainers who were trained by the SDIR project. They first *face-to-face* 2-days training courses/sessions were held in training venues, with sessions lasting for about 8 hours. During Covid (from March 2020), prioritization regarding training content and methods had to be done, and programmes were adjusted and provided as virtual (online) learning. This adjustment was clearly a great challenge for both Trainers and trainees. Master Trainers, thus, held *virtual* training sessions consisting of 2-days training (via the Zoom platform) for about maximum 3 hours, to which the participants joined from their respective factories. Enterprise-level training started in August 2018, when the Trainers started training factory Participation Committee members on Workplace cooperation training.

In addition, training on topics such as Leadership and Gender Based Violence (GBV) were designed and organised for women leaders nominated by the WRC constituents (NCCWE and IBC affiliate TU Federations), in cooperation with the RMGP II project.

In several capacity building areas, the number of persons participating in training courses has exceeded the targets. The “**traditional**” training sessions were on the following topics: Workplace cooperation (for *non-unionized* factories); Grievance handling; Best HR practices; Supervisory skills; Collective bargaining and negotiation (for *unionized* factories), and Trade union administration (for *unionized* factories). Table 1 provides details on the number of participants who attended the training under the SDIR project, of male and female.

Table 1. The SDIR project “traditional” training package: Courses/topics and No. of participants (gender disaggregated)

Training Courses	No. of participants	% Female	% Male
Workplace Cooperation	1680	41%	59%
Grievance Handling	837	49%	51%
Best HR Practices	1278	40%	60%
Supervisory Skills	1194	20%	80%
Collective Bargaining	328	38%	62%
Trade Union Administration	115	43%	57%
Total	5432		

In the traditional training, 43% of female trainees participated in the Trade Union Administration training. Female participation in Collective Bargaining was 38%. Only 20% of the female trainees attended the Supervisory skills training. In Best HR Practices and Workplace Cooperation⁴³ training, the percentage of female trainees were 40% and 41 % respectively – while 49% of females attended the Grievance Handling training. The highest number of female participants was found in the latter – while the lowest number was found in Supervisory skills training.

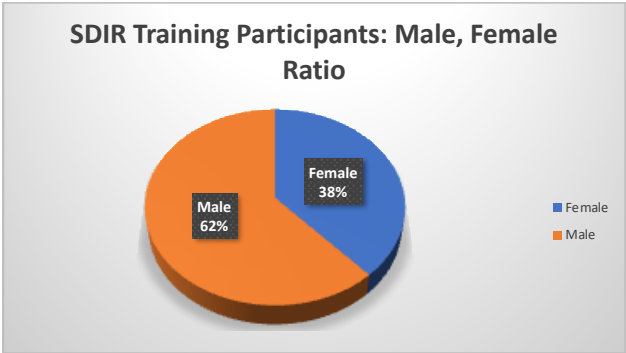
⁴⁰ Ibid.
⁴¹ In Oct 2021, Bangladesh was rated amongst the ten worst countries for working people in 2021. *Source:* ITUC Global Rights Index and in-depth interview.
⁴² For details on training courses and no of participants see Annex II. Quantitative results on capacity building activities.
⁴³ This course was discontinued and merged with the Managing Labour Replacement training course after COVID-19 pandemic broke out.

The training courses that were implemented, **as part of the Project’s COVID-19 response** had to be put together mid-way of the Project, requiring creative adaptation skills and flexibility from the Project to provide virtual training (online). It consisted of the following courses: Covid-19 awareness; Return to work; and Occupational Safety and Health, see Table 2. The evaluation has found that online training for participants having lower education, has not always been maintained the quality and effectiveness of training conducted physically (face-to-face).⁴⁴ This affected the level of learning for this category, as reported by trainees. Sometimes trainees also had difficulties in accessing the required technology. For instance, at times, several trainees shared a mobile phone to access internet and follow the training programme.

Table 2. The Covid adapted training package: Courses/topics and number of participants (gender disaggregated)

Training Course	No. of Participants	% Female	% Male
Covid-19 Awareness	1772	47%	53%
Return to Work OSH	2220	47%	53%
Managing Labour Relations	1680	44%	56%
Total	5672		

Figure 1. below shows the ratio of male and female participants in the training under SDIR project in the SDIR project 2016/17 – October 2022. Male participants were 62% and female was 38%.



Specific activities and outputs under the 3 key Outcomes

The following account provide examples of progress and results from the Project’s efforts on different key themes and outputs intended to reach the three major outcomes:

Outcome 1. Sustainable improvement in social dialogue, workplace cooperation & grievance handling

A systematic approach to *workplace cooperation* was to be introduced in (originally) at least 350 enterprises – a target that later was reduced to 287, and 30 Master trainers of the DoL were trained (33 per cent female). In turn, these Trainers trained 595 management worker representatives of factory level Participation Committees (41 per cent female). Workplace corporation training courses were merged with the Managing Labour Relations training due to adjustments that had to be made in view of COVID-19 (30 Master trainers were trained on the latter subject). The outreach by the DoL Master trainers were in total: 1680 worker-management representatives (44 per cent women) in 420 RMG factories, resulting in a 92 per cent satisfaction rate among the participants).

⁴⁴ Source: In-depth KII and FGDs (triangulation).

The Bangladesh Labour Law (BLA) 2006 regulates the processes for the conclusion of, and adherence to **Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs)**⁴⁵. Collective bargaining is a crucial means for employers and trade unions to establish terms and conditions on wages, working conditions, reduce inequality and extend labour protection. A recently published study commissioned by the Project states “the likelihood of conflict is much higher in the absence of collective bargaining agreements mainly because a collective agreement sets the conditions of employment more fairly with the consent of both the parties, the employer and the workers”. However, CBAs is an unusual feature in the RMG and textile sector in Bangladesh. In 2017, only 1 per cent of the RMG factories in Bangladesh had CBAs, which points to the fact that trade unions lack real negotiation power. Between 2013 and 2018, – only 51 CBAs were signed in the industry, however, this number should be seen against the approximate number of 4,000 active factories. Furthermore, most of the agreements have now expired.⁴⁶

The Project set a target of 50 CBAs, i.e. it was expected that the capacity building would result in this number of CBAs. This has not been successful as **only 3 CBAs materialized** among the unions that participated in the above-mentioned training. There was no follow up with the trainees to help them apply their knowledge and skills in *practice*, as this was not designed to be part of the Project’s role.⁴⁷ This shows that training does not make a project successful *per se* – which also relates to conciliation, investigation, and settlement of complaints regarding unfair labour practices.

Resolution of disputes is an important pillar of a sound labour relations system. WRC has been able to make a very good contribution toward the settling of grievances and disputes at the *ground* level (enterprise level), through the support to the Paralegals to perform this function. Regarding efforts to establish/strengthen dispute resolution mechanisms at *national* level, this has not been successful, despite efforts including discussions with the DoL/MoLE and the other constituents.

Outcome 2: Sustainable and effective mechanisms for Conciliation and Arbitration are established

Following the official launch of the Project in December 2016, the Project was able to support the GoB to finalize policy guidelines. It has been instrumental in its support to the GoB regarding the setting up of SOPs on **Trade Union Registration** and on **Investigation of Anti-union Discrimination, and Unfair Labour Practices**. GoB has included these SOPs in the 2018 amended Bangladesh Labour Act – made possible through the coordination among the stakeholders especially the BGMEA, BKMEA and WRC, with the technical assistance of international ILO Experts.

The Project has supported DoL to develop a **digital publicly accessible Database on registered trade unions and unfair labour practices** – which was launched by the State Minister of MoLE on 30 September 2021. This is increasing transparency and has reduced the time for trade union registration from 60 to 55 days (the target was 30 days). The database present, among other, the resolving of the cases of unfair labour practices and anti-union discrimination).⁴⁸ Regarding this database it is important to ensure that the trade unions registered are *real* trade unions, as there exists a practice to pick union leaders from among managers, creating “yellow unions”. Trade union federations have to be involved in the process of identifying this problem.⁴⁹

The outputs under this outcome include “a credible, efficient and transparent system of arbitration in place” – as the conciliation and arbitration mechanisms are not functioning well. Independent arbitration is not part of the Labour Law. The ILO has held discussions with the stakeholders and constituents on the need to establish a functioning **independent Arbitration Cell** to be incorporated in the Labour Law, as part of the alternative dispute resolution system. However, this **very important** aspect of the work is

⁴⁵ BLA, Chapters XIII and XIV. There will be a new amendment of the Labour Law in 2023.

⁴⁶ Source: *Collective bargaining process in readymade garment (RMG) sector before and during COVID-19: A situational analysis focusing on Ashulia and Tongi*, by BILS, October, 2022. In the Stakeholder Workshop it was stated that “it takes 488 days to form a CBA, through a MoU. Therefore, CBAs are avoided”.

⁴⁷ Source: Written comment by ILO. See also the discussion on this in section 3.2.

⁴⁸ Source: Interviews comments in writing (triangulation).

⁴⁹ This was mentioned as important in the Stakeholder Workshop’s Q&A session and discussion that followed the presentation.

noted to be behind schedule/delayed⁵⁰ - and at the time of the evaluation had not materialised. The idea is that this would fall under a separate Statutory Regulatory Ordinance, to be followed by a SOP to guide its functioning. In 2023, the Labour Law will be amended, thus there could be more opportunities for the ILO to contribute to making this a reality.

Outcome 3. Enhanced capacities of employers' and workers' organizations to dialogue and prevent and resolve disputes including those of gender concerns

Dialogue/social dialogue has been at the heart of the SDIR project, in its capacity building and discussions with the tripartite partners. The establishment of the *Workers Resource Centre (WRC)*, is a single platform for trade unions and is an example of good Project work with the stakeholders. In the long run it could prove very beneficial for the trade unions and, more importantly, for the ultimate beneficiaries (the workers) in RMG and other sectors, if it could be sustainable. The employers (BGMEA, BKMEA and BEF) as well as the government representatives, and the two donor representatives have *all expressed satisfaction with the WRC*. In the Project Document, this is mentioned as a “RMG Union Hub” to act as a coordinating and supporting office. The WRC was formed in 2017 in cooperation with NCCWE⁵¹ and IBC⁵² who took part of the initial discussions with ILO on the design of the centre. NCCWE’s expressed motivation for the existence of the WRC is that it has enabled NCCWE and IBC to work with the trade unions, and the need for a good working environment, as well as more people being attracted and willing to join the labour force.

The two federations each have seven members in its Board of Trustees (BoT). The WRC Chair and Vice-chair rotates every six months, while the WRC BoT rotates every two years. The reason that it focuses on the RMG sector is the hundreds of thousands of workers in the sector, the majority being women – thus it was decided that the sector be prioritized. Recently, *WRC has decided to have an outreach also beyond the RMG sector*.⁵³

With support from the Project, the *NCCWE and IBC have nominated Paralegals to be affiliated with WRC*, to help resolve disputes at enterprise/factory level. The training was done in cooperation with the Centre for Advanced Legal Studies - CALS (University of Dhaka). The primary role of the Paralegals is to document the complaints in specific complaints forms, and contact the employers in the RMG sector. The first batch of Paralegals (25) was trained in 2019, coordinated by the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), ILO International Training Centre (ITCILO). Some of the Paralegals left (6) and WRC therefore trained a second batch (27) in in 2021.

Their services within the framework of WRC have proved useful. They are available and can be approached from the lowest level to help resolve issues in enterprises/factories. Out of the 6018 cases, 49 per cent were resolved quickly, while others were in progress, and followed up by the Paralegals.⁵⁴ The cases reported are illegal suspension from work; forced resignation; maternity cases and non-payments of wages and service benefits. Early resolution has prevented workers’ complaints to go into the national machinery and end up at the Labour Court – where the backlog reportedly is more than 20,000 pending cases. A *WRC database* has been developed for the cases that have been resolved by the Paralegals.

Research performed under the SDIR project

Research initiated and funded through the SDIR project include a study titled *A Rapid Assessment in times of COVID-19 of Workers and Workplaces in the RMG Sector*, by Advocacy for Social Change (ASC), BRAC, published on 18th August 2020. Another research study is titled “*Collective bargaining process in readymade garment sector before and during Covid-19: a situational analysis focusing on Ashulia and Tongi*”, undertaken by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) for the WRC, with the report published in September 2022. Yet another piece of research was undertaken by Dr Jakir

⁵⁰ Source:SDIR Progress report 1 January 2021 – 31st December 2021, p. 12.

⁵¹ NCCWE unites 14 national trade union federations.

⁵² IBC unites 15 trade union federations.

⁵³ This required a change in the WRC Deed of Trustees.

⁵⁴ Source: *The Paralegal Case Handling Report*, WRC, 2019-2022.

Hossain and Dr Afroza Akter, for the WRC, published in August 2022, titled *Trade union organizing in Bangladesh's readymade garment sector amidst covid pandemic: status, challenges and scope*.

4.4 EFFICIENCY OF RESOURCE USE

Looking at the entirety of the Project, it was found that the efficiency in relation to the use of resources was at medium level. *Overall*, the results achieved justify the costs, including resources used to promote gender equality.

In 2018, the budget delivery (usage rate) was low, only 43 per cent of the total allocated budget (source: MTE report). In October 2022, at the time of the final evaluation, the expenditure out of the total budget (USD 9,131,262,71) was USD 7,800, 341,68 - showing a budget delivery of 74 per cent. The reason that the budget expenditure was not higher at this time, when only a few months were left, was mainly due to the shift from the “traditional” physical activities after March 2020 when Covid-19 hit and required a lockdown. The Project’s traditional programme activities would have required physical workshops which are costly - while holding virtual/online trainings and workshops entailed much lower costs. Furthermore, although the covid situation brought more funds into the Project, its ability to use the resources as planned was seriously weakened. as these had to be used mainly for *other* covid-related training activities, which was a situation that was outside its control.

The delayed start-up implementation - most likely also outside the control of the Project ILO – also impacted on the Project’s resource use and subsequently the activities, e.g. the Baseline study, and was one of the reasons that it was granted a “no-cost” extension by the donors. Regarding human resources, the budget in the signed Project Document lists the staff requirement for the implementation of the SDIR project. It included a CTA; a senior Communications officer; an Expert on workers activities; a Social Dialogue/IR expert; two National Project Officers (NPOs) on Social Dialogue/IR; A NPO as a Communication officer (to work under the senior Communications officer) plus a Finance/Admin officer and a Driver.

The Communications officer post included “monitoring” but an evaluation function is not mentioned (such as M&E), neither is the need to work through a well-functioning M&E *system* or mainstreaming gender. It is appreciated that the Project budget eventually could not support all the above-mentioned posts - but ILO should have ensured that, at the start, resources were leveraged specifically for M&E and gender mainstreaming, i.e. that expertise in these areas were part of the Project’s human resource requirements. Currently, gender is part of the responsibility of *one* of the three NPOs. Lately an M&E function has been brought in to the Project to support M&E. No resources have been used (or allocated) to address disability, which is an important aspect of non-discrimination. However, it is noted this was *not mentioned* in the Project Document, and thus the Project did not perceive it being part of the cross-cutting issues. While specific gender equality activities have taken place in the Project, no resources have been leveraged for the purpose of addressing people with disabilities in the programme.⁵⁵

4.5 IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Impact and sustainability of the Project are closely intertwined, as seen in this section:

Impact

For the National TCC and a RMG TCC (which the Project helped set up) to have *real and long-lasting* impact they need to be fully active - which requires commitment from the tripartite partners to hold meetings and discussions as intended. The two SoPs that were integrated into the BLA, is a tangible impact of the Project’s activities, that led to a rise in membership of basic unions from 2012 to 2019. The Publicly Accessible Database is likely to have an impact in the sense that it contributes to transparency on labour market information.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Source*: Documentation, interviews, FGDs (triangulation).

⁵⁶ Examples: It shows statistics on resolving the cases of Unfair Labour Practices (ULP) and Anti-Union Discrimination (AUD), showing a sharp rise in number of resolved cases. *Source*: DoL and SDIR Project in written comments (triangulation).

An important project impact is that the WRC has brought NCCWE and IBC to one single platform, two bodies that “earlier did not talk to each other”. The representatives of the NCCWE and IBC ensured that they are willing to continue to operate for the benefit of maintaining and improving industrial relations and spreading knowledge, *even beyond* the RMG sector. WRC’s commitment shown in interviews and discussions toward making the centre a viable and relevant platform (shown by the Management, the Board of Trustees, Paralegals and Women Committee) has impressed the evaluation team.

Several of the key stakeholders claim that they have acquired knowledge from the various awareness raising events and training courses, or from cooperating with the Project – which is another important impact - particularly DoL, NCCWE, IBC, and WRC representatives claimed that they have increased their learning.

Impact from Paralegal’s work is evident. They have been able to resolve numerous cases of complaints from factory/enterprise workers, through alerting the employers - thus preventing escalation of disputes and cases being referred to the Labour Court, where the backlog of unsolved cases apparently is more 20,000 cases pending in seven tribunals. RMG factory managers have also said they benefited from the Paralegal teams - as dispute resolution at that level “saves time”.⁵⁷ With no functioning independent conciliation and arbitration system, or body in place in the country, there seem to be an endless need for Paralegals in the RMG industry, as well as in other sectors.

The COVID-19 safety campaign has also likely had some impact on enterprise managers’ and workers’ awareness and knowledge about how to behave in order not to contract and spread the virus and minimize its spread. It is very likely that there is an impact from the advocacy campaign in workers’ communities by BRAC and the Master trainers’ sessions on Covid safety, in the sense that the virus might have spread more, and more workers and families would have contracted the virus had it *not* been conducted. The campaign, together with other advocacy during this time, might also have had impact in the sense that the actors are more prepared if/when a new virus occur again in the future - as mentioned by some of the FGD participants.

Sustainability

The ongoing ILO programmes implemented by ILO Country Office are sorted under three clusters of work (i) Employment, skills and enterprise cluster; (ii) Vulnerable groups, social protection and migration cluster and (iii) Labour administration and working conditions cluster. According to the information received, the RMG programme will not continue after 2023, but BWB will continue on its own, and will include labour administration and labour inspection - and be a *learning hub* with start in July 2023. All of the themes of the current SDIR Project are likely to fall under cluster iii.⁵⁸ This new approach is expected to safeguard continuation of ILO’s core work and funding from e.g. the EU member states, but also other donors that have been approached and who have shown interest to fund technical cooperation initiatives. As the different projects have different completion dates, the actual start of the cluster approach is planned to be at some point during the first half of 2023.

Regarding WRC, the evaluation learnt that house rent and salaries of the WRC staff, and equipment, have been financed by the Project. It was expected that a sustainability plan for WRC would be developed during its *first* project year - which perhaps was not a realistic expectation. The Project Document states that the Project “will cover the initial costing for the setting up of the Hub and the salary of its personnel till the proper transition and control is vested back to the national trade union federations”⁵⁹ – but with no particular deadline for this transition. It is also mentioned that “complementary resources (such as other donors’ funding) will be identified, until the Hubs are able to be self-financed through membership dues and/or income earned from their services.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Source: Written comments from Project, KII and FGDs.

⁵⁸ Source: In-depth KII.

⁵⁹ Source: NB: This is a quote from the Project Document.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

The WRC has a Planning and Sustainability Committee. In June 2021 it published a comprehensive **Sustainability Plan**⁶¹. It was produced in consultation with broader labour constituents with the goal of achieving financial sustainability of WRC, through setting up a partnership development unit and continue to explore the possibilities of revenue generation. Both NCCWE and IBC have agreed to look for ways where WRC can contribute more at national level, rather than sectorial level.⁶² It is clear that WRC also is going to need external funding to continue the services that it has provided quite successfully. The existing plan suggests ways for the WRC to generate revenue (some more realistic than others). It depicts short and medium-term activities and has identified 3-4 areas where work can be done in the longer term. WRC has a pool of Master trainers and they can be used to provide services and to earn revenue and paralegal services that it can “market” to other programmes/organisations, working in the RMG sector - and possibly also beyond.

The latter is made possible through revising the original WRC Trust Deed.⁶³ It was found that the WRC BoT also intends to collaborate with Trade Union Solidarity Organisations (TUSSO) for future course of action. Further, there are initiatives already that will support, and/or collaborate with the WRC, such as a new Japanese-funded project for construction and domestic workers (informal economy), which was launched on 10th August, 2022.⁶⁴ It was suggested that this project would cover approximately 20 per cent of WRC’s costs.⁶⁵

4.6 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The ToR mentions that a number of cross-cutting issues need to be identified, i.e. their level of attention and integration in the programme. These are tripartism and standards, gender equality, disability inclusion, environment and COVID-19.

Tripartism and international labour standards

Both of these have been addressed in the SDIR project. Tripartite cooperation to a high extent, as the committees set up (RMG TCC, National TCC PAC, PCC, and Monthly Coordination Meetings) are tripartite in nature, consisting of representatives of the government, employers and workers organisations. Regarding the infrequency in holding the TCC meetings, the Project has repeatedly highlighted the need for MoLE to take necessary action to initiate regular RMG-TCC and National TCC meetings.⁶⁶ Regarding international labour standards, the Project’s mandate was to address two out of the four core standards through its training courses and other events, namely ‘Freedom from discrimination at work’; and ‘Freedom to form and join a union and to bargain collectively’.

Gender equality

The Project Document makes many references to the importance of ensuring full representation of women and in “mainstreaming gender issues” in the activities, and points to the specific challenges women employees face in the RMG sector. However, the evaluation has not been able to identify any gender analysis or gender strategy to guide the Project in mainstreaming gender in its programme, and none of the detailed tasks that were to be performed by the *originally* (planned) staff posts, included a gender dimension, or tasks related to gender mainstreaming. It was also found that, strangely, the word “gender” was removed from the wording of Outcome 3, and output 3.1 in the Annual Reports – but were again reinstalled in Outcome 3 (but not in output 3.1) in the latest Annual Report, December 2021. The MTE report refers to the donors’ request to see a specific report on the gender achievements of the project, but this evaluation had not come across such a report.

However, in *practice* the Project has made good efforts to ensure women’s participation in the various capacity building activities and events, and in the support provided to WRC’s Womens’ Committee This

⁶¹ WRC Sustainability Strategy Document 2022-2026.

⁶² *Source:* Minutes from a Donor Meeting (19 April 2021).

⁶³ *Source:* WRC Trust Deed, revised in 2022 (the date of revision is not shown in English in the actual Deed).

⁶⁴ The project is named as “Promoting Decent Work & Women’s Rights in the backdrop of COVID-19” supported by the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral programme (PRS/STRIDE). *Source:* https://wrcbd.org/dt_gallery/launching-meeting-on-ilo-prs-stride-project-of-workers-resource-centre-wrc/

⁶⁵ *Source:* In-depth KII.

⁶⁶ *Source:* 4th PAC Meeting Minutes and KIIs (triangulation).

committee was constituted in 2019 to continue efforts, through seminars and workshops, to develop more women leadership, secure better working environment for women, gender sensitization, promotion, and advocate for the international labour conventions as such ILO conventions C87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948), C98 (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949), C189 (domestic workers conventions, 2011), and C190 (violence and harassment convention, 2019).

The SDIR project supported the WRC to connect with TUSO and other social partner platforms, i.e. workplace based dialogue network meeting; and the Women Committee have benefitted from the technical support provided by the Gender Focal Point in the RMGP II project, for instance in relation to a WRC training on 11-13 December 2021, on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Cox's Bazar. Support was also provided for the advocacy campaign against violence and harassment at the workplace and the 16-days activism on GBV. A Handbook on Gender equality and rights for women workers was published by WRC, which is of good quality. Among other, it addresses the *important role that unions can play* in supporting the struggle for women's rights at work, how they can be achieved and the type of policy and programmes trade unions need to introduce and support.⁶⁷

Finally, it was learnt that none of the factories that are involved with the SDIR project has reported on sexual-harassment – however, BWB programme is following three cases of complaints made by women workers on sexual harassment⁶⁸ which means that although the issue is very sensitive it is possible to have it highlighted in the RMG industry.

COVID-19 and Environment

Environment, as such, has not played any major role in the project – but BRAC (commissioned during COVID-19) designed and undertook an advocacy campaign in communities where RMG workers and families reside, raising the awareness among the residents to stop the spread of the virus – thus social and health related environmental issues played a part in the campaign. Training of management and workers on OSH in RMG factories have also addressed environmental issues.

Disability

Disability is mentioned as a cross-cutting issue in the Terms of Reference for this final evaluation. The evaluation has not been able to identify any specific analysis or strategy to address disability (as part of non-discrimination).⁶⁹ Different explanations to this lack of attention were given, referring to the SDIR project's focus on institution-building, making the disability issue non-relevant; and disability not being a cross-cutting issue relevant for this project, indicating that other ILO projects can focus on this theme.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Source: Hand Book-6: Gender Equality & Rights for Women Workers, by WRC.

⁶⁸ Source: Interviews, document review (triangulation).

⁶⁹ Source: Document review, Interviews (triangulation).

⁷⁰ Source: Interviews, questionnaire responses.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions below are built on the findings:

1. Relevance and validity of intervention design

a) It is concluded that the SDIR Project is **relevant** and that there exists complementarity among the different streams/themes of work areas. The stakeholder needs and priorities identified at the design stage have been addressed to a large extent. The Project is relevant in a larger perspective also, in view of the GOB roadmap and the NAP. **b)** The SDIR project *design* as reflected in the Project document and LFA matrices, is not sufficiently user-friendly in showing the relationship between the outputs and outcomes.

2. Coherence

SDIR is clearly in line with international and national development and strategic plans. It is concluded that **some coherence** and mutual leveraging, and complementarity, exist between SDIR and two other RMG sector projects (RMGP II and the BWB Programme). It is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 8; the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2017-2020 (extended to 2021) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017- 2021.

2. Effectiveness

It is concluded that, overall, the Project has been able to demonstrate **above medium level effectiveness**, despite delays and challenges brought on by COVID-19. It has throughout, placed much importance on promoting dialogue, social dialogue and harmonious relations. The “institutionalization” of social dialogue and harmonious relations, in the form of National TCC and RMG-TCC, is a good achievement that needs to be maintained by the constituents, through holding regular meetings among other. Some of the other major achievements are the “traditional” capacity building and awareness raising activities with numbers of trainees that sometimes have exceeded the targets; the Covid related training; the active operations of the WRC which could continue to be very beneficial for the trade unions’ work and the workers in the sector if the centre could earn revenue and become more sustainable. Other good achievements are two SoPs, the publicly accessible Database at DoL. Regarding this database it is necessary to ensure that the trade unions that are registered are real trade unions and that trade union federations are involved in the process of identifying this problem. An effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system - i.e. with information to users about monitoring questions and relevant data collection processes - has been lacking in the SDIR project which is something the ILO should consider putting more efforts into, in the new cluster initiative.

3. Efficiency

Looking at the entire Project, the conclusion is that the **efficiency was at medium level**. The COVID-19 situation brought more funds into the Project but its ability to use the resources *as planned* was seriously weakened as these had to be used mainly for the covid-related training activities. No physical gatherings could be organised during the COVID pandemic for capacity building and awareness raising workshops – instead these were done virtually (online) (with much lower costs involved). Regarding the Project’s human resources it is also concluded that for a project in which M&E and gender mainstreaming are so crucial - the Project would have benefitted from having fulltime staff posts and expertise on Communication and M&E; and Gender equality mainstreaming, respectively.

4. Impact

It is concluded that the Project has had **impact both at national and enterprise level** – the latter mainly in terms of dispute resolution. Increased learning and improved knowledge resulting from the comprehensive capacity building is also a positive impact of the Project. The two SoPs that were integrated into the BLA, is a tangible impact which led to a rise in membership of basic unions from 2012 to 2019, and so is the Publicly Accessible Database set up at DoL with a likely impact transparency and accountability regarding labour market information in the country. The NTCC and a RMG TCC are good project achievements, as mentioned here - but if they are to have *real and long lasting impact they need to be fully active* - which requires commitment from the tripartite partners.

5. Sustainability

The themes of the current SDIR Project will **continue to be pursued** through the new Labour Administration and Working Conditions (LAWC) Cluster. Regarding the **sustainability of the WRC**, it has produced a Sustainability Plan and both NCCWE and IBC have agreed to look for ways where WRC can contribute more at national level, rather than only sectoral level. The plan suggests ways for the WRC to generate revenue and depicts short and medium activities - plus identifying 3 to 4 areas where work can be done in longer term.

WRC has a pool of Master trainers who can be used to provide services to generate revenue, and paralegal services that WRC can “market” to other organisations/sectors. It is also concluded that it would need external support to set up a viable M&E system to enable to conduct its own assessments of progress, and also improve its capacity to develop realistic proposals, soliciting for funds from potential funders.

Cross-cutting issues

- *Gender equality mainstreaming*: The **Project has made good efforts** to ensure and improve women’s participation in the various capacity building activities and in supporting the WRC’s Women’s Committee and its GBV advocacy and women leadership training through e.g. technical assistance and expertise provided by the Gender Focal Point working in the RMGP II project. The ILO should continue to support this important work of the WRC.
- *Tripartism* has **been addressed in the SDIR project**: Tripartite cooperation to a rather high extent, as seen in the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), the Project Steering Committee (PCC), the Monthly Coordination Meetings, and the two Tripartite Consultative Councils (National TCC and RMG TCC) – consisting of representatives of the government, employers and workers organisations. However, regarding the infrequency of the RMG-TCC meetings, there is a need for Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) to take necessary action to initiate their regularity and promote a better coordinated approach.
- *International standards were also addressed*: The project’s mandate was to pay attention to two core standards through its capacity building program – i.e. Freedom from discrimination at work (through its work on gender equality) and Freedom to form and join a union, and to bargain collectively.
- *COVID-19 and environment*: **Covid-19 has been a major component** in the Project. Environment as such has not played any significant role in the Project.
- *Disability (as part of non-discrimination)*: The evaluation has **not been able to identify** any specific analysis, or strategy to address disability. Care should be taken that new ILO initiatives do not miss the opportunity to address the important disability issue as part of non-discrimination.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations based on the findings in chapter 3 and conclusions in chapter 4:

Recommendation 1. When developing Logical Framework Analysis matrices as management tools for projects/cluster initiatives, **ILO should** ensure that they are user-friendly and coherent, clearly showing logical relationships between the components, particularly outputs and outcomes.

The recommendation is directed to: ILO. Timeframe: Immediate (when new projects are being formulated). Priority: High; Level of resources: Low

Recommendation 2. In the new ILO Cluster initiative, **ILO should** ensure that there are regular meetings/discussions and activities where the managers for the various ILO streams/clusters share information to a) avoid duplication of efforts; and b) have joint activities.

The recommendation is directed to: ILO. Timeframe: 6 months -1 year. Priority: High; Level of resources: Low

Recommendation 3. **ILO should** continue to support WRC, including the Women Committee in its quest for more self-reliance and sustainability, including working with the Paralegals.

The recommendations is are directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months -1 year. Priority: High; Level of resources: Medium

Recommendation 4.

DoL and the **Trade Union Federations should** ensure that only *real* trade unions are registered in the publicly available database, and avoid the so called “yellow unions” to be registered.

The recommendation is directed to DoL, NCCWE and IBC. Timeframe: Immediate. Priority: High; Level of resources: Low-Medium

Recommendation 5.

In view of the dire needs for reform in the RMG sector **ILO should** (in close cooperation with MoLE/DoL) continue to pursue issues that were unsuccessful in the SDIR project, namely:

Grievance handling and dispute resolution mechanisms at national level; A functional independent arbitration cell to be part of a separate Statutory Regulatory Ordinance (and SoP to guide the functioning of such a cell); Encourage the GoB to amend the Labour Law in 2023, and promote CBAs at enterprise level.

The recommendation is directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year. Priority: High; Level of resources: Medium-high

Recommendation 6.

In the new proposal for a cluster initiative on labour administration, the **ILO should** ensure that the work stream/cluster initiative has the following:

- a) Dedicated expertise on posts for Communication and M&E;
- b) A user-friendly digital M&E system; and
- c) Expertise and experience on non-discrimination (including gender equality mainstreaming and disability issues).

The recommendation is directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year. Priority: Medium; Level of resources: High

Recommendation 7.

a) In the new cluster on labour administration proposed to be implemented, **ILO should** ensure that a specific and separate non-discrimination analysis is conducted, with results that can serve as the basis for relevant strategies on both gender equality and disability themes– as both these should be mainstreamed in the cluster;

b) **ILO should** increase its efforts to highlight gender-based violence and support the WRC's Women's Committee.

The recommendation is directed to ILO. Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year. Priority: High; Level of resources: Medium-high

7 LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES



► Template 4.1: Lessons Learned

Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment (RMG) Industry

Project DC/SYMBOL: BGD/15/03/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Lotta Nycander, Zakia Haque

Date: 30 December 2022

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.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	It's important that ILO cluster initiatives and projects specifies that disability - as a cross-cutting issue related to non-discrimination) is important and need to be specified as activities and outputs, with performance indicators in the Project Documents and Logical Framework Analysis matrices.
Context and any related preconditions	“Cross-cutting” means the issue should cut across several components or outcomes and not only be an added separate/isolated activity – in the same way as gender equality mainstreaming does imply a separate activity/output.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Direct beneficiaries (constituents, partner organisations) and indirect beneficiaries (workers and their families).
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	If “disability” is not very clearly spelled out – it will be overlooked by project managers.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The actual inclusion of people with disabilities, or their specific needs as beneficiaries, could be based on specific discrimination studies and analysis that <i>can be part of baseline surveys</i> – to help projects and involved constituents in their operational planning.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Investing in this issue means that also resources are allocated, e.g. for studies and consultants.



Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh

Project DC/SYMBOL: BGD/15/03/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Lotta Nycander, Zakia Haque

Date: 30 December 2022

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

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The Covid-19 virus spread and circumstances surrounding it, has required flexibility and initiatives from project staff. This Project has shown the importance of being able to redesign approaches for capacity-building , including retraining of Master Trainers and adapt, or produce, new training materials and guidelines – in order for them to conduct virtual (online) capacity building. Costs can be kept low in comparison with face-to-face training.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The precondition for online capacity building is that materials are adapted to the needs and capacities of the direct/ultimate beneficiaries and that Master Trainers are well trained and have the skills and educational tools to undertake training online – for at times many people.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Online training can involve many more people during sessions training to physical training and as such has great potential for imparting, or acquiring learning.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The impact on learning through online training can be assessed in similar ways to physical face-to-face training.
Potential for replication and by whom	The above applies for all ILO projects when crisis occur in the middle of implementation.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	Reference is made to Outcome 3.1 in the DWCP: “Employers’ and Workers’ organizations’ capacity developed to strengthen freedom of association, collective bargaining and sound industrial relations”; and 3.2 “Capacity of labour administration enhanced leading to good governance in the labour market.”
Other documents or relevant comments	When designing/developing materials for people who are less educated, efforts must be made to ensure that the training content is relevant to their situation and that they have access to internet to benefit from online training.



Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh

Project DC/SYMBOL: BGD/15/03/MUL

Name of Evaluator: Lotta Nycander, Zakia Haque

Date: 30 December 2022

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

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The establishment of a Workers Resource Center (WRC) is a very good practice. It serves as a platform for different trade unions to meet under one roof. WRC has enabled capacity building and learning; information sharing; for actions including activism against gender-based violence by the WRC Women Committee.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The WRC has enabled the settling of disputes at <i>enterprise</i> level, through the Paralegal support. It has filed workers' complaints and contacted employers, among other.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The Paralegals' work has prevented cases to go through the dysfunctional system (bringing complaints to the Labour Court where approximately 20000 cases are pending). It has also enabled developing sustainability strategies to earn revenue after the ILO Project has ended. WRC has benefitted not only the trade unions but also the RMG workers and other employees at enterprise level.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Direct beneficiaries (workers in the RMG industry) – the solving of disputes at enterprise level is entered into a transparent Database maintained by the WRC.
Potential for replication and by whom	"Replication" of the WRC may possible in several other countries in Asian countries where ILO is actively engaged in promoting social dialogue and contributing to improving labour administration.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Bangladesh DWCP outcome 3
Other documents or relevant comments	

ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference Final independent evaluation of Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment Industry

7.1 KEY FACTS

Title of project being evaluated	Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment Industry
Project DC Code	BGD/15/03/MUL
Type of evaluation (e.g., independent, internal)	Final Independent Evaluation
Timing of evaluation (e.g., midterm, final)	Final
Donor	Multi-donor funding Sweden and Denmark
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	ILO Country Office for Bangladesh (CO-Dhaka)
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	GOVERNANCE
P&B outcome (s) under evaluation	Outcome 1: Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue
SDG(s) under evaluation	8
Budget	9.1 million USD
Project Period	From November 01, 2015, to December 30, 2022 (first 6-month inception period)

7.2 BACKGROUND

The Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh has grown rapidly since the 1980's. This fast-paced growth has not been accompanied by similar developments in labour market institutions, resulting in significant challenges in working conditions and labour rights. Moreover, literature suggests that many women employed in this sector are illiterate or semiliterate and come from economically weak sections, which leave them with little bargaining power. These factors have posed gender specific challenges in the RMG sector.

The project, Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment Industry (SDIR RMG) builds upon the results achieved by previous ILO technical cooperation programme to improve safety, working conditions and rights at work in the RMG sector in Bangladesh. The results achieved from the programme include a reformed legislative framework and gradual improvement in the government's enforcement mechanisms in the areas of workers' rights, working conditions, safety, and health, as well as continuous improvements in the capacity, knowledge and understanding of both employers and workers representatives. The SDIR RMG project focused on three specific outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Sustainable improvement in social dialogue, workplace cooperation and grievance handling.
- Outcome 2: Sustainable and effective mechanisms for conciliation and arbitration are established.
- Outcomes 3: Enhanced capacities of employers' and workers' organizations to dialogue and prevent and resolve disputes including those of gender concerns.

Furthermore, given the large presence of women in the workforce in the lower ranks of the occupational hierarchy, inclusive strategies and gender mainstreaming are emphasized so that the project achieves gender balance in the project beneficiaries, as well as full representation of women's workers' interests and requirements.

The project is linked to other international cooperation frameworks and initiatives in the following ways. The project was elaborated in view of the next medium-term development cooperation strategy of Denmark for Bangladesh and in the framework of the Sweden's International Development Cooperation 2014-20⁷¹. The programme is also embedded in the concept of a 'Global Deal', called for by Sweden as an essential strategy to achieve the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

The following stakeholders and target groups are the direct recipients of the project's activities: representatives from employers' organizations, such as the Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF), the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), and representatives from trade union federations at the national level have been workers' union federations affiliated to the National Coordination Committee on Workers' Education (NCCWE), and in the RMG Sector the IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC). The government of Bangladesh placed as one of the first constituent. At least 410 enterprises were targeted to be directly reached by the project. Given the high percentage of women working in the RMG industry, the project benefited a large number of women workers.

The SDIR RMG Project, funded by the Governments of Sweden and Denmark, commenced in November 2015, with a current no cost extension to December 2022. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) officially approved the project on 06 February 2017 for the period July 2016-June 2021. The original project document refers to a total project budget of USD 8,426,257 with a corresponding outreach target of 500 factories. The target number of factories to be reached was later adjusted to 410 (in agreement with the donors). In March 2020, due to the global outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Sweden made a top up contribution US\$ 810,837 to the SDIR Project to support the ILO's COVID-19 response work, specifically in the RMG Sector.

In the RMG sector, the ILO's pandemic response work included a joint response with the Department of Labour (DOL), Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Export Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Export Association (BKMEA), and the Worker's Resources Centre (WRC) through the implementation of a training and monitoring initiative to support the RMG industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The top up of Swedish funds meant that from April 2020 the SDIR project branched into two so called streams of work (i) "traditional project work" and (ii) "COVID-19 response work." The following areas are covered by the COVID-19 response work:

1. Factory outreach of COVID-19 related training packages to 410 factories
2. Awareness-raising for workers about the COVID-19 disease
3. Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)
4. Managing labour relations
5. Development of a COVID-19 Communication and Advocacy strategy
6. Community level outreach to workers community
7. Support the formation of a trade unions rights watch team at the Worker's Resources Centre WRC.

In Q4 of 2020, the Danish donor expressed an interest for a cost and time extension of the project. Consideration was for additional financial contributions by the Government of Denmark in an amount of USD 1.3 million with a time extension till end of December 2022. In March 2021, the cost and time extension were agreed and signed between the Government of Denmark and ILO. The rationale for the cost and time extension by Denmark was related to the good results that were achieved by the project as per both the mid-term review by the ILO and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs individually. In April 2021, the project asked the Swedish donor to consider a no cost extension, to align with the project's new end date of December 2022 (as had been agreed to with Denmark). After consideration, a no cost extension until December 2022 was also signed between Sweden and the ILO in June 2021.

⁷¹ <http://www.regeringen.se/land--och-regionstrategier/2014/08/uf201451155udasol/>

The SDIR RMG project has achieved significant results since its inception. As per ILO's evaluation policy, the project is subject to an independent mid-term and final evaluation. The mid-term evaluation was already completed in October 2019⁷². Twelve recommendations and two key lessons were drawn from the mid-term evaluation. Also, an interim evaluation was carried-out in 2021 to provide donors with timely information about the project status. The SDIR RMG planned to complete delivering major activities throughout September 2022 and will reach end of project life by December 2022. So, the final independent evaluation inception phase expected to commence in August 2022 and will be concluded by end November 2022. This will allow dissemination of findings in first week of December 2022. The evaluation aims to assess the project results and share learnings internally and externally for design of future programmes.

7.3 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

As per ILO's evaluation policy, the SDIR RMG project is required to conduct a final independent evaluation. The main purpose of the evaluation is promoting accountability to stakeholders and identify and share learnings for design of similar projects in the future. The specific objectives are:

- To assess the project performance and interpret intended and unintended results by
- To weigh coherence and compatibility of the project with broader ILO works at all level and other in-country similar interventions
- To gauge the effectiveness and efficient use of project resources (finance, human and assets)
- To assess its sustainability and high-level impact the project has on its beneficiaries
- To document lessons learned from project implementation

The final independent evaluation will cover all project intervention sites and implementation period from November 2015 to September 2022. The insight gained from the final evaluation will be used to ensure accountability, learning and decision making by donors (Sweden and Denmark governments), the ILO and the Government of Bangladesh who are primary clients of the evaluation. Implementing partners and stakeholders involved in the execution of the project will also use the evaluation findings and lessons learned, as appropriate for future programming. Dissemination workshop will be organized to share learning with all relevant bodies. The ILO Evaluation Office will publish summary of the final report, recommendations and lessons learned on its public website to ensure accountability and enhanced learning among wide range of audience.

The evaluation will integrate ILO's cross-cutting issues, including tripartism and standards (the essence of the ILO is normative and tripartite nature), gender equality, disability inclusion, environment and COVID-19. To the extent possible, data collection and analysis should be gender disaggregated. The evaluation will take in to account the relevance of the project to the ILO strategies at national and global level and initiatives of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) and Bangladesh government policies and frameworks including for the RMG sector.

7.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS (INCLUDING CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES/ ISSUES OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE ILO)

The evaluation criteria and questions are presented below. The evaluator may adapt the evaluation criteria and questions, but any fundamental changes should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluator and be reflected in the inception report.

Relevance	1. Has the SDIR RMG project addressed stakeholder needs and priorities identified during project design?
	2. How has the project adapted to political or other contextual changes and new insights in the course of implementation used
	3. Does the project strategy and intervention design remain valid in the context of COVID-19

⁷² <https://www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/#a7sq6wv>

Coherence	4. Has the project demonstrated synergy and complementarity among its different functions/ thematic areas?
	5. Is the project coherent with Bangladesh RMG sector strategy and government development frameworks and plans?
	6. How does the project complement with similar/ related ILO and non-ILO DC projects In Bangladesh?
	7. How well aligned was the project with the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)/UNDAF? How has the project been contributing to the DWCP and UNSDCF/UNDAF? Is there evidence of mutual leveraging and complementarity?
Effectiveness	8. To what extent has the project made progress towards achieving its planned objectives? What are the main constraints, problems encountered in relation to what the project set out to achieve
	9. How have stakeholders at national, sectoral and global levels, including the private sector, been involved in the project?
	10. To what extent have the project interventions been successful in reaching/ benefitting its beneficiaries outlined in the PRODOC?
	11. What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives
	12. What have been the strengths and weaknesses of the SDIR RMG project?
	13. How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced project results and effectiveness and how has the project overcome the challenge?
Efficiency	14. Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve project results?
	15. Have the resources been used efficiently? Do the results achieved justify the costs?
	16. Have the project fund and activities delivered without delay that entail additional cost?
	17. To what extent did the project leverage resource to promote gender equality and non-discrimination; and inclusion of people with disability?
Impact	18. To what extent is there evidence of positive changes in the life of the ultimate project beneficiaries and on policies and practices at national and county levels?
	19. What is the anticipated risks that would affect positive impact of the project?
	20. To what extent does the COVID-19 project adaptation contributed to increased impact
Sustainability	21. What measures and actions have been put in place to ensure ownership of the project results by stakeholders? Does the project implemented an effective exit strategy to ensure sustainability?
	22. To what extent are the net benefits of the project likely to be continued?
	23. What are potential risks affecting sustainability of the project net benefits? What measures should be built to increase sustainability?

7.5 METHODOLOGY

The independent end-line evaluation ensures a participatory approach and involve donors, implementing partners, stakeholders, project team and different ILO departments at country, regional and HQ level. The evaluation will comply with evaluation norms and standards and

follow ethical safeguards, all as specified in ILO's evaluation procedures. The ILO adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation norms and standards as well as to the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards. The evaluation is an independent evaluation, and the final methodology and evaluation questions will be determined by the evaluator in consultation with the Evaluation Manager.

The evaluation will apply a mixed methods approach, including triangulation to increase the validity and rigor of the evaluation findings, engaging with tripartite constituents, stakeholders and partners of the project, as much as feasible, at all levels during the data collection and reporting phases.

In order to enhance usefulness and impartiality of the evaluation, evidence-based approach to evaluation will be adopted. A combination of tools and methods will be used to collect relevant evidences. Adequate time will be allocated to plan for critical reflection processes and to analyse data and information. The methodology for collection of evidence will include:

- Review of documents related to the project, including the initial project document, annual technical progress reports, project monitoring plan, mid-term evaluation (2019), interim end-line evaluation, and other relevant documents shared by project team
- Conduct an evaluation field mission which will be qualitative and participatory in nature. Qualitative information will be obtained through field visits, interviews and focus groups as appropriate. Opinions coming from stakeholders will improve and clarify the use of quantitative analysis.
- Gather relevant quantitative data which may be drawn from project documents including the Technical Progress Reports (TPRs) and other reports to the extent that it is available.
- Examine the project Theory of Change or reconstruct one, with a particular attention to the identification of assumptions, risk and mitigation strategies, and the logical connect between levels of results and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at the global and national levels, as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets.
- The data and information should be collected, presented and analysed with appropriate gender disaggregation.
- The data collection, analysis and presentation should be responsive to and include issues relating to ILO's normative work, social dialogue, diversity and non-discrimination, including disability issues
- At the completion of the field mission, a meeting will be organized by the Project for the evaluator to share the preliminary findings with stakeholders (to validate the preliminary findings)
- The draft terms of reference for the evaluation and a draft evaluation report will be shared with relevant stakeholders

The detailed methodology including the work-plan will be part of the inception report. The evaluator may adapt the methodology where appropriate, but any fundamental changes should be agreed between the Evaluation Manager and the evaluator and reflected in the inception report. The Evaluation Manager will facilitate access to documents and will facilitate an interview schedule with stakeholders.

7.6 MAIN DELIVERABLES

Listed below are expected deliverables of the independent evaluation:

- ☞ Deliverable 1. Inception report

- ☞ Deliverable 2. Draft evaluation report
- ☞ Deliverable 3. Stakeholders' validation workshop
- ☞ Deliverable 4. Final evaluation report (using the relevant templates for the Title Page, the Executive Summary and Annexes including lessons learned and emerging good practices in the ILO Template)
- ☞ Deliverable 5: An Evaluation Summary report
- ☞ Deliverable 6: Presentation for dissemination workshop

As per the ILO evaluation guideline, the inception report should include:

- Describe the conceptual framework that will be used to undertake the evaluation.
- Elaborate the methodology proposed in the terms of reference, notably the clustered approach, with any changes as required.
- Set out in some detail the data required to answer the evaluation questions, data sources by specific evaluation questions, data collection methods, sampling and selection criteria of respondents for interviews.
- Detail the work plan for the evaluation, indicating the phases in the evaluation, their key deliverables.
- Identify key stakeholders to be interviewed and the tools to be used for interviews and discussions; and
- Provide an outline for the final evaluation report.

The final report, excluding annexes but including the executive summary (as per template provided in ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation) should not exceed 35 pages. The quality of the final report will be assessed against the standards set out in the ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation. The report will ultimately be approved by the ILO Evaluation Office.

Suggested outline for the evaluation report:

- Cover page with key project data
- Executive summary
- Brief background on the project and its intervention logic
- Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation
- Methodology applied
- Review of implementation
- Presentation of findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations (specifying to whom they are addressed)
- Lessons learnt
- Good practices
- Possible future directions
- Annexes

An Evaluation Summary shall also be prepared, adhering to the template provided in ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation Checklist 8. The Evaluation Summary shall only be prepared once the final evaluation report has been approved.

7.7 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND WORK PLAN (INCLUDING TIMEFRAME)

The evaluation will be managed by assigned Evaluation Manager – Zeinu Seid. He is specifically in charge of developing the evaluation TOR, the selection of the consultants in consultation with the M&E Officer for RO-Asia and the Pacific and the Evaluation Office (EVAL) who will provide quality assurance to the evaluation process. The Evaluation Manager will work under the oversight of M&E Officer for RO-Asia and in close collaboration with the ILO Evaluation Office. An international consultant (Team Leader) will be recruited to conduct the independent evaluation. The Team Leader will report to the Evaluation Manager and is responsible for the timely submission of expected deliverables. S/He will be responsible for refining the proposed

methodology in consultation with the evaluation manager; gathering information from key stakeholders during the field visit; directly conducting interviews and facilitating other data collection processes; analysing the evaluation material gathered; present findings on validation workshop and preparing the draft and final evaluation report. A national consultant will also be hired for shorter period of time to support the evaluation at country level. The national consultants will report to the Team Leader. Both consultants will be selected through a competitive process from amongst qualified consultants.

The evaluation will be funded by the project budget. The funds will cover daily fees of the evaluation team, any evaluation mission cost and any expenses related to communication and data collection.

The Evaluation Manager will undertake the following tasks:

- Conduct a desk review of project documents and prepare the draft Terms of Reference and circulate them
- Revise the Terms of Reference based on the comments received
- Involve in the selection process of the evaluation consultant/team who will conduct the evaluation
- Undertake an initial briefing with the evaluation consultant
- Review and approve the inception report
- Coordinate and manage the evaluation process
- Review the quality of the evaluation report to verify if it meets international standards
- Circulate the draft evaluation report for comments by stakeholders
- Provide comments on the draft report
- Consolidate comments on the draft evaluation report

The SDIR RMG project team:

- Responsible for administrative and contractual arrangements with the evaluator and provide any logistical and other assistance as needed. Specific tasks of the team will be:
- Provide programme background materials to the evaluator through the Evaluation Manager.
- Facilitate and communicate interviewees.
- Coordinate in-country logistical arrangements.
- Provide inputs as requested by the evaluator during the evaluation process.
- Review and provide comments to draft evaluation report particularly critical review of data and information and its sensitivity.
- Organize and participate in stakeholder consultations, as appropriate; and
- Provide other logistical and administrative support to the evaluators

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer –Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

- Provide quality assurance for the evaluation process including quality review of the draft TOR and draft evaluation report
- Approve the final TOR and the choice of possible evaluators in consultation with EVAL

Evaluation Office (Geneva)

- Approve the final TOR and final evaluation report
- Follow up with CO-Dhaka on the actions undertaken as per evaluation's recommendations

Tentative workplan/ timeframe

It is anticipated that the independent evaluation will be carried out by a team of evaluators, an international consultant (team leader) and Bangladesh national local consultant. The team of evaluators will be identified and recruited by mid-July, 2022 with an expected starting date from 1st

week of August 2022. It is envisaged that a final report will be submitted by November 30, 2022. It is anticipated that the evaluation assignment will require a total of 40 working days for the international consultant and 25 working days for national consultant.

Draft workplan with timeframe

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	DATE
PLANNING - DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION	
TOR preparation (first draft, consultation, and revision of draft)	June 15 – July 5, 2022
Consultant recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate call for EOI and receive applications • Review applications, shortlist, interview and announce result • Contractual process 	July 7-18, 2022 July 19 - 28, 2022 Jul 31 – Aug 25, 2022
Initial consultation with the consultant / team	August 28-31, 2022
INCEPTION PHASE	
Desk review of documents Interview and consultation with project team and key partners Drafting of inception report (first draft, and revision based on comments) Development of data collection tools / stakeholders identification for main data collection stage	Sept 1 – Sep 29, 2022
DATA COLLECTION - FIELD WORK & SURVEY PHASE AND ANALYSIS	
Conduct interviews and FGDS Conduct additional relevant data collection Data analysis and triangulation	Oct 2 – Oct 27, 2022
REPORTING	
Prepare and submit first draft report	Oct 30 – Nov 10, 2022
Collect comments on first draft report address comments and submit revised final draft report	Nov 13 – Nov 30, 2022
Validation workshop (presentation and validation of evaluation findings)	Dec 1, 2022
Address comments from validation workshop and submit the final evaluation report	Dec 4-8, 2022
Approval of report (EM, REO/DEPF, EVAL)	Dec 11-15, 2022
Dissemination and learning workshop	TBD by EVAL

7.8 PROFILE OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

For International consultant:

- Master's Degree in law, social sciences, economics, development studies, evaluation or related fields, with demonstrated research experience.
- Contextual knowledge of the UN system in general and the ILO specifically.
- Demonstrated knowledge of labour related issues in readymade garment sector is desirable.
- At least 7 years' experience in evaluating policies, programmes and projects at the international level.
- Experience in conducting independent evaluations for ILO DC projects is desirable
- Completion of EVAL's [self-induction programme is desirable](#)
- Expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods.
- Advanced understanding of ILO cross-cutting issues is desirable.

- Fluency in written and spoken English.
- Excellent communication, interview and report writing skills.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines.
- Good interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills; and
- Facilitation skills and ability to manage diversity of views in different cultural contexts

For national consultant

- First degree in law, social sciences, economics, development studies, evaluation or related fields, with demonstrated research experience.
- At least three years' experience in evaluating development projects.
- Contextual knowledge of the UN system in general and the ILO specifically is desirable.
- Demonstrated knowledge of labour related issues in readymade garment sector of Bangladesh is desirable.
- Experience in conducting independent evaluations for ILO or other UN organizations is desirable
- Completion of EVAL's [self-induction programme is desirable](#)
- Expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods.
- Fluency in written and spoken both English and local language.
- Excellent communication, interview and report writing skills.
- Good interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills; and
- Facilitation skills and ability to manage diversity of views in different cultural contexts.

7.9 TERMS OF PAYMENT

- **For international Consultant**

The contract covers the period from August 28, 2022 to December 31, 2022. The payment will be calculated based on the total of 40 working days with USD 650 daily professional fee.

- **For National Consultant:**

The contract covers the period from September 4, 2022 to December 31, 2022. The payment will be calculated based on the total of 25 working days with USD 300 daily professional fee.

- **Payment schedule:**

- The first payment - 30 percent will be made on delivery of the inception report (Set 29, 2022)
- The second payment – 30 percent will be made on delivery of the draft evaluation report (Nov 10, 2022)
- The third and final payment – 40 percent will be made on delivery of all the deliverables includes validation workshop, final report and summary report, and evaluated as satisfactorily by ILO (Dec 31, 2022)

7.10 LEGAL AND ETHICAL MATTERS

The final independent evaluation will strictly comply with UN standards for evaluations as specified in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and be guided by the ILO Evaluation Policy. A copy of the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system attached below and the evaluators are expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to its standards.



2016 Norms and
Standards_PPT.pdf

The evaluators will also commit to adhere to the ILO Code of Conduct for Evaluators embedded below. This document has to be signed and returned by evaluator to the evaluation manager.



Template 3.1 ILO
Code of Conduct_Agr

The evaluators are expected to disclose any possible conflicts of interest that could interfere with the independence of the evaluation. The evaluation will observe confidentiality with regards to sensitive information and feedback obtained through individual and group interviews.

7.11 ANNEX

1. All relevant UNEG and ILO evaluation guidelines and standard templates

- [ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations 4th edition](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the ILO](#) (to be signed and returned by evaluator to the evaluation manager)
- [Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 Response measures through project and programme evaluations](#)

Guidance Notes

- ✓ [Guidance Note 3.1 Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 3.2 Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 3.3 Strategic clustered evaluations to gather evaluative information more effectively](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 4.3 Data collection methods](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 4.5 Stakeholder engagement](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 5.5 Dissemination of lessons learned and good practices](#)

EVAL Checklists and Templates for the Evaluator:

- ✓ [Checklist 4.8 Writing the inception report](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.2 Preparing the evaluation report](#) [including the templates for completing [lessons learned](#) and [emerging good practices](#), as well as the templates for the title page and [executive summary](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.3 Filling in the title page](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.4 Preparing the Evaluation Report Summary](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.5: Documents for Project Evaluators](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.9 Rating the quality of evaluation report](#)

ANNEX II. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS OF CAPACITY BUILDING

NB. a) All information and figures are received from the SDIR, updated in August 2022;⁷³ and b) The comments regarding rate of satisfaction (on reaching targets) are made by the Project.

Outcome 1. Sustainable improvement in social dialogue, workplace cooperation and grievance handling

Output 1.1 A pool of IRI/DOL Trainers certified competent in the training of workers and employers in effective workplace cooperation. (output 1.1. “new”)

- The Project satisfactory recorded 197 cases of anti-union discrimination and/or unfair labour practices and tracked them through the case management system. The satisfaction rate, however, of the formal grievance system by users was very low (unsatisfactory).
- Highly satisfactory - Implementation of almost all (>80%) indicator milestones have been met. Target exceeded
- 30 Trainers on Workplace cooperation (33 female), reaching out to 595 management and worker representatives in Participation Committees (PCs) (41 per cent female).

Output 1.2 Improved dialogue between unions and employers in at least 123 enterprises (output 1.2)

- Highly satisfactory - Implementation of almost all (>80%) indicator milestones have been met.
- Full existence of National and RMG tripartite sectoral dialogue mechanism tripartite sectoral dialogue established and operational.
- 27 batches of CB training completed and outreached 152 factories; 3 Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) concluded (NOT satisfactory in terms of reaching the target).
- The signed CBAs will benefit more than 8000 workers (41% female) of 04 unionized factories. and 7 Charter of Demand submitted after receiving training on Collective Bargaining and Negotiation Skills from the project.
- Collective Bargaining. By September 2021, 328 trade unions and management representatives (38% female) had participated in SDIR project training - from 78 unionized RMG factories. Also, 115 factory-level trade union leaders (43% female) from 46 unionized RMG factories were trained on trade union administration; and 410 trade unions and management representatives (38% female) from 99 factories were trained on the same subjects

Output 1.3 A scaled up and systematic approach on workplace cooperation introduced in at least 287 enterprises

- A systematic approach to workplace cooperation was to be introduced in at least 350 enterprises 30 Master trainers of the DoL were trained (33% female). In turn, these trainers trained 595 management worker representatives of factory level Participation Committees (41% female). Workplace corporation training courses were merged with the Managing Labour Relations training, due to adjustments that had to be made in view of COVID-19 (30 Master trainers were trained on the latter subject). The outreach by the DoL Master trainers were in total: 1680 worker-management representatives (44 % women) in 420 RMG factories, resulting in a 92 per cent satisfaction rate among the participants).
- The Covid-related activities, additional to the original work plan, included: a) COVID-19 awareness training (1 day); b) Return to work and OSH (2 days): and c) Managing labour relations at workplace (2 days). The work on this has exceeded the targets and is assessed as successful. 164 additional Master Trainers (23 % female), nominated by DoL, BEF, BGMEA, BKMEA and WRC conducted training for a great number RMG enterprises, using a Covid-19 training package developed by the Project.

⁷³ Source: Cumulated achievement, SDIR project matrix, also named “Final revised Logframe”, August 2022.

- Highly satisfactory
- 81% of targeted factories established and implemented gender sensitive workplace cooperation plan (Data collected from a survey of 120 factories in Jan 2022). The Managing Labour Relations training:
- Cumulative 420 factories outreached; Cumulative 903 workers covered; Cumulative 777 management covered; 44% female. Additional support to withstand against COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Notable to mention that due to the adjustment of training courses to address the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the RMG sector of Bangladesh, the workplace cooperation training course has been merged with the managing labour relations training, which was implemented at 324 factories by the DOL master trainers, outreaching to 1296 worker-management representatives (44% female).

Output 1.4 Simple and effective grievance handling in place in 410 enterprises

Highly satisfactory

- The Project's training on this subject resulted in 93 per cent of the targeted factories having set up formal grievance processes within 12 months.
- 93% of targeted RMG factories that established formal grievance processes within 12 months after GH training
- Additional support to withstand against COVID-19 Pandemic
- Under the RMG clustered industry-wide COVID-19 labour relations and OSH capacity building support of ILO Dhaka, the project developed the following 03 additional courses.
 1. COVID-19 Awareness training (1-day);
 2. 2-days training on Return-to-Work OSH
 3. 2-days training on Managing Labour Relations at workplace.
- Further, with support from the learning hub, the project additionally developed total 164 master trainers (23% female) nominated from DOL, Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), BGMEA, BKMEA and WRC on the 03 training courses under COVID-19 Training Package.
- Until December 2021, the master trainers of the respective courses outreached
- 443 factories (101 unionized and 342 non-unionized); and total 1772 worker-management representatives (47% female) have been trained.
- 555 factories (101 unionized and 454 non-unionized); and total 2220 worker-management representatives (47% female) have been trained; and
- 420 factories (96 unionized and 324 non-unionized); and total 1680 worker-management representatives (44% female) have been trained.

Outcome 2. Sustainable and effective mechanisms for conciliation and arbitration are established.

Output 2.1 Improved capacity and organisational tasks of the conciliation functions in the Department of Labour

- Highly satisfactory - Targets reached and exceeded
- 90 DoL officials were trained on the Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) for unfair labour practices and anti-union discrimination; 60 DoL officials were trained on SoP for registration of trade unions; and 60 officials were trained on conciliation of labour disputes. 57 cases were resolved through conciliation. 10 DoL officials participated in training courses by ITCILO, Turin, Italy, in association with the University of Dhaka and in the 2021 edition of this course 30 workers representatives and 6 employer representatives participated.

- 90 Officials from the DoL were trained on the SoP for Unfair Labour Practices and Anti-Union Discrimination (2018, 2021, 2022).
- 60 Officials from the DoL were trained on the SoP for registration of Trade Unions (2021, 2022).
- 60 DoL Officials trained on conciliation of labour disputes (Feb 2018, 31 August 2022)
- A draft SoP was developed by the DoL following a residential workshop facilitated by the ILO Project having officials from both DoL and MoLE. ILO reviewed the draft and put recommendations for the needed changes; more than 4 recommendations were reflected and incorporated in the revised draft and was sent to the MoLE for final adoption and incorporation in the law.
- 57 cases resolved through conciliation by trained DOL conciliators
- The ILO Project facilitated a one day-long capacity building session for the DoL Conciliators on 31 August 2022.
- 10 Officials from the DoL received a training from ITC-ILO in collaboration with the University of Dhaka on Labour Relations in October to December of 2021.
- Diploma programme on IR with training materials developed by the project incorporated with Dhaka University.
- The following number of participants attended the 2021 edition of the course
- 10 DOL Officials
- 30 Worker representatives

Output 2.2 A transparent mechanism in place for receiving, recording, and handling disputes

- 197 cases of Anti-Union Discrimination and/or Unfair Labour Practices recorded, reverted, and tracked through case management system
- Publicly accessible database on 6 September 2022.
- Effective remedial dispute resolution system is in place for the users

Output 2.3 Credible, efficient and transparent system of arbitration in place output 2.3

- Unsatisfactory – targets not reached
- Having an arbitration system has not succeeded, although an independent arbitration cell was set up – but not active (arbitration mechanism is not included in the BLA).
- The implementation plan and/or only some (40-60%) indicator milestones have been met.
- Target not achieved
- Arbitration mechanism has not been incorporated in BLA. The achievement of output 2.3.1 depends on the establishment of an independent Arbitration Cell. Establishing an independent arbitration cell is not under the purview of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006. The ILO is continuing discussions with key stakeholders to establish an independent Arbitration Cell under a separate Statutory Regulatory Ordinance (SRO).

Outcome 3 Enhanced capacities of employers' and workers' organizations to dialogue and prevent and resolve disputes including those of gender concerns

Output 3.1 Trade Unions (NCCWE, IBC and other) are better equipped to dialogue and service their affiliates, including those of gender concern

Output 3.2 Employers' organisations (BGMEA, BKMEA and BEF) are better equipped to dialogue and defend the interests of their members

- 45 trainings conducted by certified HR master trainers and 889 HR managers (28% female) of 411 factories trained.
- 70% Satisfaction rate
- (Factory survey conducted in January 2022)
- 23% Knowledge Increase
- (Training report of best HR training, in-person)
- As per the implementation agreement with ILO (ended in Nov 2020), CEBAI had been coordinating the training courses on Grievance Handling, Best HR practices and Supervisory Skills for the enrolled factories from April 2018 to November 2020. In this regard, CEBAI had coordinated training sessions on - Satisfactory
- Grievance Handling: 29 batches to outreach 184 factories, covering 744 worker and management representatives (including 49% female);
- Best HR Practices: 40 batches to outreach 361 factories, covering 1278 HR officials and worker representatives (including 40% female);
- Supervisory Skills: 36 batches to outreach 354 factories, covering 1194 production supervisors (20% female).
- 23 active master trainers (including 39% women) in Supervisory Skills (03 dropped)
- 19 master trainers (including 42% women) in Best HR Practices
- 28 master trainers (including 61% women) in Grievance Handling
- Note: Masters' trainers' incorporation with CEBAI largely depends on the CEBAI BoT's decisions and their budget constraints.

The following list shows the **rate of participation of women** in many of the Project's capacity-building activities:

- i) Developed 164 tripartite Master trainers (29% female) on C-19 Training Package (funded by the Government of Sweden)
- ii) 147 national Master trainers (40% female) developed on diverse training modules promoting social dialogue and industrial relations
- iii) 595 management – worker representatives (41% female) from enterprise level participation committees trained on workplace cooperation
- iv) 1669 bipartite representatives (50% female) received training on grievance handling
- v) 1344 production supervisors (20% female) received training on effective supervisory skills
- vi) 1428 bi-partite representatives (39% female) received training on best HR practices
- vii) 574 TU-Management representatives (38% female) received training on collective bargaining and negotiation skills
- viii) 292 enterprise level TU leaders (46% female) received training on trade union administration
- ix) 10 DoL officials (20% female) obtained Diploma on Labour Relations facilitated by ITC-ILO in conjunction with Dhaka University
- x) 60 DoL officials (13% female) were trained on conciliation of labour disputes

- xi) 120 DoL officials (14% female) were trained on Standard Operation Procedure on investigation of unfair labour practices, Trade Union registration
- xiv) 27 union leaders from WRC member federations (33% female) received training followed inclusive curriculum for a certificate of paralegal from ITC-ILO in collaboration with Centre for Advanced Legal Studies. Since July 2019 to Aug 2022, those trained paralegals attended a total of 5,111 workplace labour complaints (c/Forms) – of which 32% c/Forms (1625) were attended by the trained women paralegals.

নিজে সুস্থ থাকুন, প্রিয়জনকে সুস্থ রাখুন



করোনাভাইরাস থেকে বাঁচতে যা খাবেন

ভিটামিন-সি যুক্ত খাবার, যেমন: পেয়ারা, আমলকী, আমড়া, কমলা, লেবু, কাঁচা মরিচ ইত্যাদি শরীরের রোগ ঠেকানোর ক্ষমতা বাড়ায় এবং করোনা সহ অনেক রোগ থেকে বাঁচিয়ে দিতে পারে।

খোলা খাবারকে না বলুন

যতটা সম্ভব ঘরে তৈরি খাবার খান। বাইরের খোলা খাবার, যেমন: আচার, বালমুড়ি, ভাজাপোড়া ও শরবত খাওয়া থেকে বিরত থাকুন।



করোনায় আক্রান্ত হলে আলাদা থাকুন

বাড়ির অন্যদের কাছ থেকে আলাদা থাকুন। তা সম্ভব না হলে মাস্ক ব্যবহার করুন এবং অন্যদের কাছ থেকে অন্তত ৩ ফুট দূরে থাকুন। আলাদা বিছানা, বিছানার চাদর, বাসনপত্র, তোয়ালে এবং পোশাক ব্যবহার করুন।

টিকা নিন, সুরক্ষিত থাকুন

টিকা নেয়ার সুযোগ আসলে আপনি নিজে টিকা নিন এবং পরিবারের অন্যদেরও টিকা নেয়ার ব্যবস্থা করুন। টিকা নেওয়ার পরও বাইরে বা কাজে গেলে মুখে মাস্ক পরুন।



করোনার লক্ষণ (জ্বর, সর্দি, শুকনো কাশি, গলাব্যথা, শ্বাসকষ্ট ইত্যাদি) দেখা দিলে স্বাস্থ্যসেবা, পরামর্শ এবং বিনামূল্যে করোনা পরীক্ষার তথ্য পেতে ফোন করুন:

৩৩৩, ০১৯৪৪৩৩৩২২২ ও স্বাস্থ্য বাতায়ন-১৬২৬৩

অর্থায়নে



SWEDEN



EMBASSY OF DENMARK

সহযোগিতায়



Department of Labour



BCF



BKMEA



BKMEA

Working Today to Shine Tomorrow



Workers Resource Centre

All assistance for labour

ANNEX IV. PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS IN THE STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP, DHAKA 28.11.22

On 28th November, the SDIR project organised a **Stakeholder Workshop** at the Westin Hotel, Dhaka. It was opened by Neeran Ramjuthan, Project Manager/CTA (currently Programme Manager, Labour Administration and Working Conditions Cluster, ILO Dhaka). This was followed by reflections on the SDIR project in perspective of the GoB by Ms. Hazera Khatun, Joint Secretary MoLE; Md Gias Uddin, Director, DoL, and BEF, by Mr. Santosh Kumar Dutta, Deputy Secretary General.

The evaluation team leader, Ms. Lotta Nycander, then made a 40 minutes virtual (online) **presentation of the preliminary findings**, through a PPT shared with the participants. A Question & Answer session and a discussion about the **Way Forward** followed, including aspects of sustainability after the SDIR project comes to a close. The discussion was facilitated by Ms. Zakia Haque, evaluation team member, who also acted as a translator. Mr. Zeinu Seid Ahmed, Evaluation Manager, ILO, Ethiopia, gave some concluding remarks.

The text of the Evaluation team's PPT used in the Evaluation's presentation:

Purpose, evaluation criteria, scope & methods

Key facts about the SDIR project

Key findings related to the outcomes

Cross-cutting issues – how were they addressed? Gender equality, non-discrimination (e.g. disability inclusion), ILO standards, tripartism & social dialogue

What challenges were faced in the project implementation?

Main purpose of the evaluation: Ensure accountability to the key stakeholders and identify and share learnings for design of similar projects in the future.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance and validity of design, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact and sustainability

Scope: To assess and evaluate the Project's implementation for its entire duration, i.e., from 2016 to 2022.

Methods to collect data

Document review; Key informant interviews; Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Questionnaire survey.

47 persons (12 women) participated in key informant interviews; and

41 persons (24 women) participated in focus group discussions.

Visited a garment factory.

This Stakeholder Workshop is also an opportunity to collect/correct data.

Key facts about the project

“Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment Industry (SDIR RMG)” – is a decentralised, technical cooperation project.

Started in 2016 (7 years duration) – will end 31 Dec 2022. Total budget: USD 9m (USD 9,131,262,71).

Implemented by ILO, closely w Government, the Employers and the Workers organisations.

Governments of Sweden and Denmark are development partners (donor agencies). Total budget: USD 9m (9,131,262,71)

Project intends to reach 3 outcomes:

Outcome 1. Sustainable improvement in social dialogue, workplace cooperation and grievance handling.

Outcome 2. Sustainable and effective mechanisms for conciliation and arbitration are established

Outcome 3. Enhanced capacities of employers' and workers' organizations to dialogue and prevent and resolve disputes including those of gender concerns

Key facts about the Project continued

Stakeholders/partners

Governments of Denmark and Sweden;
Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE), including the Department of Labour (DOL);
Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF);
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA);
Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA);
National Coordination Committee on Workers' Education (NCCWE) - and RMG workers' union federations affiliated to it;
IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC);
CEBAI
Worker's Resources Centre (WRC);
Garment manufacturers; and
BRAC

SDIR Project team:

A Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)
3 National Programme Officers (NPOs) with expertise on the following areas:
1) Labour Administration and Working Conditions;
2) Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations Programme; and
3) Governance, Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations.
Finance/Admin Officer; and Driver. Recently also technical support on M&E (Programme Officer)

Two "project" committees were set up: Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and Project Coordination Committee (PCC).

Technical support ("backstopping") is received from ILO experts in Decent Work Team based in New Delhi and the ITCILO, Turin.

Preliminary findings:**Relevance**

The Project is overall found to be relevant:

Relevant in terms of the core themes in its implementation and addressing the needs of key stakeholders & beneficiaries – and being in line with national and international development policies

Relevant for the development of the ILO cluster approach which includes labour administration and working conditions, among either themes.

Relevant in view of GoB's attempts to follow the (ILO) Governing Body roadmap and a National Action Plan 2021-2026 that were drawn after a complaint was made the ILO the Governing Body in 2019 - on non-observance of important core ILO conventions.

Some points are noted regarding the logical framework

A Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) matrix is a management tool. The relationships of the components (outputs and outcomes) have to be clearly visual so that it is easy to understand which output is supposed to contribute to which outcome. This is not quite so in project's LFA.

The Project wanted to make a difference and increase the number of collective bargaining agreements at enterprise level but Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) does not feature as an output - which it should have – to enable it to be assessed and measured with the help of indicators.

Disability, being part of non-discrimination, should have been part of the cross-cutting issues in the LFA.

Gender analysis and gender strategy should have part of the LFA - as outputs.

Coherence

The Project's level of coherence is assessed as satisfactory:

It is in line with national development and strategic plans, the DWCP and UNDAF.

It is developed based on the needs identified through ILO's long time presence in the country and the consultations.

There is complementarity among the SDIR, RMGP II and BWB projects (e.g. they work with different factories). Some cooperation on training but no regular joint meetings, and more cooperation with the Trade for Decent Work project (EU).

The upcoming cluster initiative the cluster approach is likely to provide good opportunities to work more closely together.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness, as an evaluation criteria, is used to assess how far goals and objectives have been reached. It is assessed that level of effectiveness is satisfactory (above medium level) despite delays & challenges brought on by COVID-19.

Outcome 1: Examples

Training of Master Trainers (creating a pool of Trainers)

Capacity building through traditional training package – and Covid-19 training package has been a substantial component of the Project. Total outreach over the years is 11104 (42 per cent women). “Traditional” training consisted of Workplace cooperation, grievance handling, best HR practices, supervisory skills, collective bargaining, trade union administration (WPC merged with MLR when Covid started).

Covid training package consisted of Covid-19 awareness, Return to work and OSH & Managing labour relations.

BRAC provided a good input - commissioned to develop a Covid-19 safety campaign for RMG workers and their communities.

Focus Group Discussion at DOL

FGD – BKMEA

Effectiveness continued

Outcome 2 – examples

Contributed to the setting up of a National Tripartite Consultative Council (NTCC) and a RMG Tripartite Consultative Council (RMG TCC) in 2017, which included developing Guidelines and support to a unit at the MoLE for the purpose of making them functioning

Project was instrumental in GoB's setting up two Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) now included in the 2018 amended Bangladesh Labour Act. These are:

1) Trade Union Registration; and 2) Investigation of Anti-union Discrimination and Unfair Labour Practices.

A Publicly Accessible Database on registered trade unions and unfair labour practices at DoL - showing statistics on labour market information (Sept. 2022). This is increasing transparency, reducing time for registration & presents resolving of cases.

Outcome 3 – examples

The establishment of the trade union Workers Resource Centre (WRC), jointly with NCCWE and IBC - a platform for trade unions – a model that could be replicated.

The training of, and services by the Paralegals (from the various federations) who are available from the “lowest” RMG employee level. Documenting complaints and contacting employers to resolve

disputes (49% cases resolved quickly, others in progress): Illegal suspension, forced resignation, maternity, non-payments of wages, service benefits.

WRC database for the cases/complaints solved; the Board of Trustees; Women's Committee; and training of women union leaders on gender based violence.

Some activities were less effective:

Examples:

The Employers stated that the Project's Covid-related training was not very suitable – and they had already conducted Covid training at the time it came through the Project.

Lack of tangible results from collective bargaining training in the form of having collective agreements (CBAs) at enterprise level – shows that training does not generate successful per se.

The efforts to contribute to having an independent Arbitration Cell has still not come through despite many discussions. The idea is that this would fall under a separate Statutory Regulatory Ordinance, to be followed by a SOP to guide its functioning.

Lack of CBAs at enterprise level in participating factories. The target was 50 but only 3 have materialised.

Efficiency (resource use)

Looking at the entirety of the Project it was found that the efficiency in relation to the use of resources was at satisfactory level.

These aspects were noted that have played a role in the assessment:

At the time of the final evaluation, the budget delivery was budget delivery of 74 per cent.

Ability to use resources as planned was weakened when the Covid restrictions in movement were imposed. From March 2020, capacity building activities were done virtually (online) (with much lower costs involved).

Regarding human resource use, it was found that in a project where M&E and gender mainstreaming are so crucial, the Project would have benefitted from having fulltime project posts with expertise on Communication & M&E; and Non-discrimination (gender equality and disability) – however disability was not included as a cross-cutting issue in the Project Document.

Tables and diagrams showing:

-“Traditional” training package

-Covid training package

-Number of Master Trainers (trade unions) having expertise in various project relevant themes

-Numbers and expertise of Master Trainers from the Employers organisations (gender disaggregated)

-Male and female ratio of trade union Master Trainers

Impact

Examples of project's impact:

Two SoPs and the publicly accessible database;

Increased learning and knowledge resulting from the comprehensive capacity building undertaken by the SDIR project are part of positive impact;

Covid-19 safety campaign, including BRAC's advocacy raised workers and enterprise managers' awareness and knowledge about how to behave in order to minimize the spread of the virus, and what protective measures need to be taken.

Resolving of cases by the Paralegals, WRC – no need to go to Labour Court (backlog of more than 20,000 cases).

Support to Workers Resource Unit and Women's Committee – possibility of expansion to other sectors in the future if made sustainable

Sustainability

Some factors that point to possible sustainability:

The SDIR project and its core themes are part of the new ILO Cluster approach in the ILO office. As such, focus on “Labour administration and working conditions” in Bangladesh will continue from the part of the ILO – as one of the three key clusters.

WRC has a Planning and Sustainability Committee and its Sustainability Strategy Document (2022-2026) was shared in June 2021 – with many suggestions on how the management can start working for continuation once the project ends. The plan depicts short and medium term activities - plus identifying 3 to 4 areas where work can be done in longer term. Support from a new project STRIDE will help.

Both NCCWE and IBC have agreed to look for ways where WRC can contribute more at national level rather sectorial level.

The publicly accessible Database at DoL will continue to be used but has to be maintained by designated DoL staff and with external support if problems arise.

Cross-cutting issues

Tripartism addressed to a high extent (RMG TCC, National TCC PAC, PCC & Monthly Coordination Meetings)

International labour standards – also addressed, esp. 2 out of the 4 core standards:

“Freedom from discrimination at work“ through its work on inclusion of women training, but no other part of non-discrimination e.g. disability,

“Freedom to form and join a union, and to bargain collectively” through its training courses.

Gender equality

No gender analysis or gender strategy were drawn to guide the Project in this important work.

However, efforts were made to increase women participation in the various capacity building activities and events, and in the support provided to, e.g. the WRC’s Womens’ Committee with technical assistance by the Gender focal point at the ILO CO Dhaka.

Project supported training on Gender Based Violence and 16-days activism and Handbook on Gender equality and rights for women workers (published by WRC).

Some of the challenges faced

Late endorsement by the Planning Commission delaying the start up, plus changes among Government officials.

Changes of project staff: Project managers/Chief Technical Advisers and National officers in the SDIR project.

Covid-19 lockdown made the Project change its work plan and methods and conduct training and meetings virtually (online) - switching to online training was difficult.

Huge difficulties regarding activities related to unionized factories and it has been hard to influence these factories to participate in the SDIR activities, despite efforts from by BGMEA / BKMEA and WRC to encourage them to participate. In some unionized factories, there is a great resistance among the employers to engage in social dialogue and even capacity building activities relating to industrial relations

In the discussions that followed the evaluation team’s presentation, the following are the *points, questions and opinions raised by participants* from the floor:

1. Earlier we have failed in following our mutual interest but we believe in consensus – not conflict We should have more activities like this (the Project) on a larger scale. More monitoring mechanisms – to have reflection.
2. The NCCWE and the IBC have made significant contributions to create a single platform.
3. The RMG councils; 20-member TCCs, contribution to the amendment of the 2018 BLA through 3 SoPs.
4. A question arose “Out of the Tk. 91 crore (9 m project budget) – who got the money?”. The reply was that money had not been provided as such to the different stakeholder organisations but the *operational* funds had been spent for capacity building and other events/campaign over the years. The exact and detailed information was not available to the evaluation team but could be sought from the finance section of the ILO.
5. How many CBAs are made and how many social dialogues are organised? This is very important to follow-up.
6. Minimum wage is a very important issue in the industry that needs to be followed up.
7. Both parties (employers and workers) have their *own* strategies – often completely *opposite* (*on a spectrum, author’s note*). There is a practice to pick union leaders from among managers which is not right – creating “yellow unions”. Trade union federations have to be involved in the process of identifying this problem – to ensure that the trade unions registered are *real* trade unions.
8. It takes 488 days to form a CBA, through a MoU. Therefore, CBAs are avoided.
9. To work in 150 factories is not enough.
10. A second phase of the project for two years is needed. How many workers have been trained? They are ignorant. There is a need to start the programme again.
11. There has been a very close cooperation between the Project and DoL.
12. The SDIR project has done lot of good things.
13. The SDIR has been an effective project.
14. The TU federations should be involved in all processes and tripartite discussions.
15. How to make the two SoPs *functioning*?
16. There are only 155 factories that have been involved in the project – we want to reach so many more.
17. We have to work for more women representatives in “trade union groups” and federations.
18. We are hopeful that WRC will survive. Training is related to sustainability. Is it only the TUs that need training? Also, the employers and GoB need to be trained. WRC is a (training) resource also for the employers and the country. We should work together to sustain the WRC.
19. I am a very optimistic man. We should work to minimize the differences between workers and employers. We should be a single constituent (both employers and TUs) (BGMEA).
20. The STRIDE project (under the WRC) is a brainchild of the ILO. We need more support, we will also search for support from TUSSO.
21. The WRC is an excellent idea. A vehicle for constructive relations. The tripartite sector should support the WRC. You should make use of the training expertise available through the WRC. Paralegal service is low-cost resolution of grievances. Social dialogue is the best. WRC needs support.

ANNEX V. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS (INSTRUMENTS)

The following /A and B) questions developed during the data collection phase, posed to the different categories of stakeholders:

A) EVALUATION QUESTIONS TO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

Development partner (donor agency) - Key Informant Interviews

- What are your expectation regarding this project evaluation?
- To what extent is the Project relevant to your government's development cooperation strategy for Bangladesh?
- To what extent has this Project complemented other donor (other than Denmark and Sweden) supported initiatives in Bangladesh (and the region if possible)?
- Are there any particular issues or concerns that you have, or have had, regarding the Project's implementation, reporting and/or accountability?
- To what extent has the project been responsive to your comments/concerns (if any)?
- To what extent has the Project, from your perspective, delivered value for money as planned? If not delivered as expected/planned - please explain.
- Are you planning, or expecting to provide further financing for a continuation of this Project, or to start up another similar project in cooperation with ILO - or other donor?

ILO staff – Key Informant Interviews

- To what extent have representatives of (donor, constituents, partners) been involved in the Project design?
- Looking back - which were the main hurdles and challenges of this Project? How were they addressed/solved? Which have been the main successes and highlights?
- Which were the successful aspects of the Project?
- To what extent has the Project *achieved its planned outcomes/outputs* (qualitatively and quantitatively?)
- To what level has the Project partnered with other ILO or UN organisations/projects; and/or government or non-government initiatives in garments/knitwear industry?
- Are you aware of any unplanned effects (negative or positive) resulting from this Project?
- To what extent have the key stakeholders/constituents (government, and employers and workers organisations) been active in contributing to the outcomes of the Project? Have they taken part in follow-ups or evaluations of the Project?
- The *Project design* includes outcomes regarding gender equality issues. Please explain the strategy the Project has applied in working on gender issues and how this has benefitted workers at sector level, and/or had an impact at policy level.
- How has the Project addressed issues relevant for Persons with Disabilities (PWD)- especially women with disabilities? If not being addressed – what would be the reason/s? Please explain.
- To what extent has the Project been able to (involve/communicate with) the ILO constituents/social partners?
- To what extent has the project addressed the needs of workers at community level or responded to their living conditions.
- If constituents/social partners have not been much involved/engaged – what is the reason do you think?

- What is the extent of sustainability and ownership of the Project's activities at the end of the Project? Please explain the strategy to sustain the activities.
- To what level have you (Project staff) received adequate technical and administrative support from the ILO at country, regional, or at ITC in Turin?
- Have you identified any particular lessons learnt emanating from the Project implementation?
- According to you, what impact has the Project had so far (factory level, sector level, national and policy level)? Could there be any longer term impact of the Project?
- Looking back – is there anything that should have been differently regarding this Project (more relevant, effective, and/or sustainable) - in order to successfully deliver on the overall outcomes and goals? (examples: design, resources, staff recruitment, implementation, follow-up/evaluation, cooperation with stakeholders/international partners and/or reporting).
- Do you have any suggestion for ILO, and stakeholders, for future similar projects in the RMG sector in Bangladesh?

The questions below are generic and will be made more specific, i.e. adapted before used in interviews.

Key stakeholders (government; employers federation; trade associations representing the RMG industry; workers organisations/unions, Training institutions and Trainers; Factory and enterprise owners and managers - Key informant interviews

- To what extent were you involved in the design and implementation of the SDIR project?
- If you were consulted at an early (design) stage of the SDIR project - do you feel that your inputs/views were appreciated and taken into account by the ILO?
- Is your role in contributing to the implementation clearly defined by the Project? If not clear, please explain.
- To what extent has your collaboration with the project team been satisfactory (very/quite/not very/not at all)?
- To what extent have there been drawbacks, or obstacles (if any) that have slowed down implementation, or impeded the progress? Please explain.
- Does your organisation have any dedicated liaison staff (focal point) involved in the implementation of the project activities?
- Does your organisation have any dedicated official (M&E) who monitors and reports on the progress and/or performance of the project?
- According to you, how has the Project managed to undertake the activities and produce intended results?
- Could you mention any lesson learnt that you have learnt from the Project?
- If you have been involved in building capacity of the Project beneficiaries or factory management/staff - which subjects have you trained on? Have you had any use for your new knowledge at work?
- If you have taken part in any COVID-19 related safety or health activity/training – how could you use your knowledge from this training?
- According to you, to what extent have the trainees in the Project benefitted from the training - Do you have any knowledge about how they have used new learning?
- Are you aware of any achievements or results coming out of the Project?
- What factors (if any) have contributed to satisfactory achievements or results?

Garment factory workers (beneficiaries) – Focus Group Discussions

- Are you currently employed in the (garments factory/industry)? Yes/No. What is your current position?
- Have you participated in any training organised through this Project/BGMEA/BKMEA? If yes, explain the type/s of training you received. //NB: Here we should try to clarify that the questions relate to this Project not another ILO project//
- If “yes” what was the training about? How practical/relevant was the training to you?
- What did you like most about the training? Could the training have been done better to be more useful? If yes, what could have been done better? How has it improved your family wellbeing/ living conditions?
- How has the learning from the training improved your work situation or environment (if at all)?
- How has the learning from the training helped make your work more sound and “safe” from COVID-19 (if at all)?
- If your work environment has not become more “safe” from COVID-19 after the training - please explain why not.
- If you have had employment in the garments industry/factory but *lost* your job – what is the reason? Have you received any unemployment benefit/insurance?
- Have you ever brought complaints about your work, working condition, wages or benefits to the management?
- If “yes” (to the above question) how did the management handle your complaint? Was there any improvement in your work situation?

B) QUESTIONNAIRE – ADDRESSED TO SDIR PROJECT STAFF

In the process of gathering information for this evaluation, I would greatly appreciate if you could kindly participate in responding to a few questions. Please be brief in your answers and send you replies as attachment to e-mail to me only (Lotta Nycander). I will treat your response with discretion.

1. Project’s design

To what extent have you taken part in the design of this project?

Very much A little Not at all

2. Project’s achievement

a) Could you mention three key achievements of the Project that are you most satisfied with?

.....

b) What factors contributed to the (mentioned) achievements

.....

c) Could you mention any components (activities/outputs) that were not satisfactory – or where the Project did not achieve as planned, and any reflections as to why those components were considered not satisfactory?

.....

3. Cross-cutting issues

The cross-cutting issues for the project are: gender equality, human rights, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues, ILO standards, social dialogue and the “tripartite approach”:

A. To what extent has this Project given attention to, or integrated in the Project, any of the above-mentioned issues?

Lots of attention Some attention No attention (*Please give brief examples*):

- Gender equality
- Human rights
- Disability inclusion, i.e. inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) and or specific activities directed at PWD?
- Other non-discrimination issues e.g. sexual harassment
- ILO standards
- Social dialogue
- Tripartism

B. If these issues were *not* adequately addressed in the Project – what do you think are the reasons?

.....

4. Obstacles and/or challenges

a) To what extent have you faced any particular obstacles/challenges in performing your work in this Project? If, yes, please describe:

.....

5. Cooperation with tripartite and other partners

a) Is there any aspect of cooperating with the **tripartite partners** (government, employers, workers) that has NOT worked as well as could be expected to implement this Project? Please explain:

.....

- a) Have you had cooperation/partnership with any *other* projects/programmes or organisation/s in **operating and/or follow-up** of the SDIR project?
 - Other UN projects/UN organisations: Please explain
 - Other ILO RMG projects in Bangladesh: Please explain
 - NGOs (other than BRAC): Please explain
 - Community-based Organisations: Please explain

6. Technical backstopping/support

How do you rate the overall technical support at the field level (RO, CO, DWT) or from the headquarters to implement work on this Project?

Excellent Good Satisfactory Not satisfactory

Please explain if not satisfactory:.....

7. How do you rate the finance/administrative support to the Project?

Excellent Good Satisfactory Not satisfactory

Any comments?.....

8. Is there anything that should have been done differently?

In hindsight, what could the Project have been done differently to reach the Project Outcomes and Objectives? (This could refer to the project design, implementation, monitoring system, cooperation within the Project and with the Partners – or any work related aspect of the Project that you wish to highlight)

.....

9. How do you rate the Project’s achievement to date?

Excellent Good Satisfactory Not satisfactory

Comments if any.....

10. Based on your experience - are you aware of any particular lessons learned from this Project?

.....

11. Finally - do you have any comments on how the ILO partners could, or should, sustain SDIR project achievements beyond the implementation period (31st December 2022):

.....

ANNEX VII. PERSONS INTERVIEWED AND DISCUSSED WITH IN FGDS & STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

No	Name	Designation	Organisation	Interview	FGD
Government					
1.	Mr. Humayun Kabir	Joint Secretary	MoLE	x	
2.	Md. Nazmul Huda Shamim	Senior Assistant Secretary	MoLE	x	
3.	Md. Nasir Uddin	Director (Trade Union, Conciliation & Training)	MoLE	x	
4.	Md. Sohel Azim	Assistant Director	DoL	x	
5.	Ms. Minu Afroz	Deputy Director, Master Trainer	DoL		x
6.	Ms. Mitsu Shaolin	Deputy Director, Master Trainer	DoL		x
7.	Ms. Masuda Sultana	Deputy Director, Master Trainer	DoL		x
8.	Md. Alamgir Hossain	Assistant Director, Master Trainer	DoL		x
9.	Md. Firozur Rahman	Assistant Director, Master Trainer	DoL		x
10.	Ms. Sara Sultana	Assistant Director, Divisional Labour Office, Master Trainer	DoL		x
11.	Md. Abu Ashrif Mahmud	Director, Master Trainer	DoL		x
Employers organisations & private sector					
1.	Mr. Santosh Kumar Dutta	Deputy Secretary-General	BEF	x	
2.	Mr. Muhammad Habibur Rahman	Senior Legal Officer	BEF	x	
3.	Ms. Nishat Islam	Assistant Coordinator: Development & Training	BEF	x	
4.	Mr. A.N.M. Saifuddin	Chairman, Standing Committee on ILO & Labour Affairs	BGMEA	x	
5.	Md. Rafiqul Islam	Additional Secretary (Labour), Member, First Labour Court	BGMEA	x	
6.	Ms. Zahanara Rita	Monitoring officer, Master Trainer	BGMEA	x	
7.	Ms. Salma Akter	Sr. Ex. Officer, Master Trainer	Master Trainer, BGMEA		x
8.	Md. Rafiqul Alam	Assist. Secretary, Master Trainer	Master Trainer, BGMEA		x
9.	Mr. Nazibul Hasan	Monitoring officer, Master Trainer	Master Trainer, BGMEA		x

No	Name	Designation	Organisation	Interview	FGD
10.	Mr. Ashraf Wares	Asst. Secretary (SDP)	Master Trainer, BGMEA		x
11.	Mr. Sakib Ahmed Raivy	Monitoring officer (SD)	Master Trainer, BGMEA		x
12.	Mr. Fazlee Shamin Ehsan	2nd Vice President (Managing Director Fatullah Apparels)	BKMEA	x	
13.	Ms. Farzana Sharmin	Joint Secretary (Compliance Cell)	BKMEA	x	
14.	Ms. Fatema Tuj Johora	Asst. Secretary (Research & Development)	BKMEA	x	
15.	Ms. Farjana Yeasmin	Senior Assistant Secretary	BKMEA		x
16.	Md. Iftekhar Inam Elahi	Sr. Deputy Secretary (Safety)	BKMEA		x
17.	Md. Zakaria Khaled	Asst. Secretary (Compliance)	BKMEA		x
18.	Ms. Songeeta Mallik	Deputy Secretary, Compliance	BKMEA		x
Workers Federations/Trade unions and WRC platform					
1.	Mr. Rashadul Alam Raju	Secretary General	IndustryAll, IBC	x	
2.	Md. Towhidur Rahman	President	Bangladesh Apparels Workers Federation (BAWF) (& former Secretary General, IBC)	x	
3.	Ms Shamim Ara	Chairperson	NCCWE	x	
4.	Mr. Anwar Hossain	Chairperson WRC & Member of Board of Trustees	WRC	x	
5.	Ms. China Rahman	Vice Chairperson & Member of Board of Trustees	WRC	x	
6.	Mr. Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam,	Former Chairperson Member of Board of Trustees (& Sustainability Sub-Committee)	WRC	x	
7.	Md. Abdul Wahid	Member of Board of Trustees	WRC		x
8.	Mr. Rashadul Alam Raju	Member of Board of Trustees	WRC		x
9.	Md. Towhidur Rahman	Member of Board of Trustees	WRC		x

No	Name	Designation	Organisation	Interview	FGD
10.	Mr. Z.M Kamrul Anam	Member of Board of Trustees	WRC		x
11.	Mr. Quamrul Ahsan	Member of Board of Trustees	WRC		x
12.	Mr. Naimul Ahasan Jewel	Member of Board of Trustees (former Chairperson WRC)	WRC		x
13.	Mr. Khandoker Abdus Salam	Manager	WRC		x
14.	Mohammad Khorshed Alam	Paralegal	WRC		x
15.	Mohammad Rahat Ahmed	Paralegal	WRC		x
16.	Ms. Sumona Akter	Paralegal	WRC		x
17.	Ms. Asma Akter Mukti	Paralegal	WRC		x
18.	Ms. Yeasin Ahamed	Paralegal	WRC		x
19.	Md. Hussain Ali	Paralegal	WRC		x
20.	Ms. Soniya Akter Sukli	Paralegal	WRC		x
21.	Ms. Fahmina Mishu Kashem	Master Trainer	WRC		x
22.	Md. Sanowar Hussain Samsy	Master Trainer	WRC		x
23.	Md. Rafique	Master Trainer	WRC		x
24.	Mr. Ahasan Habib Bulbul	Master Trainer	WRC		x
25.	Ms. Sima Akter	Master Trainer	WRC		x
26.	Ms. Hasina Akter	Master Trainer	WRC		x
27.	Md. Ibrahim Khalil	Master Trainer	WRC		x
28.	Ms. Promila Podder	Member, Women Committee	WRC		x
29.	Ms. Afroza Rahman	Member, Women Committee	WRC		x
30.	Ms. Sheik Afroz Lovely	Member, Women Committee	WRC		x
31.	Ms. Fahmina Mishu Kashem	Member, Women Committee	WRC		x
International Labour Organisation					
1.	Mr. Mahandra Naidoo,	Social Dialogue Specialist, DWT	ILO	x	
2.	Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen	Director, Bangladesh CO-Dhaka	ILO	x	

No	Name	Designation	Organisation	Interview	FGD
3.	Mr. Neeran	Chief Technical Adviser, SDIR	ILO	x	
4.	Ms. Shammin Sultana	Shammin Sultana, Programme Officer, ILO-RMGP-2 & Chairperson Gender & Diversity Committee	ILO	x	
5.	Mr. Saidul Islam	National Programme Officer, CO-Dhaka	ILO	x	
6.	Mr. Amil Ansar	Programme Officer, Labour Administration and Working Conditions, SDIR	ILO	x	
7.	Mr. Abul Monsur Azad	Programme Officer, Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations Programme, SDIR	ILO	x	
8.	Mr. Borhan Uddin	Programme Officer, Governance Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations, SDIR	ILO	x	
9.	Mr. Mostafa Alam	Finance & Admin Officer, SDIR	ILO		
10.	Ms. Mahsin Hamuda	National Project Coordinator: CO Dhaka	ILO	x	
11.	Mr. Maurice Brooks	Project Manager	ILO	x	
12.	Mr. Rafael Mapalo	ACTRAV	ITCILO, Turin, Italy	x	
13.	Mr. Mohamad Anis Agung Nugroho	Project Manager, Better Work Bangladesh	ILO	x	
14.	Mr. Syed Kabir	Security officer	UNDP	Security course	
Private sector and non-governmental organisations					
1.	Mr. Enamul Karim	General Manager	DECCO Aparels Ltd.	x	
2.	Mr. Mohammod Masum	Sr. Manager (HR & Admin)	DECCO Aparels Ltd.	x	
3.	Ms. Nazma Haider	Asst. Manager (Compliance)	DECCO Aparels Ltd.	x	
4.	Ms. Panna Begum	Sr. Manager (HR & Admin)	DECCO Aparels Ltd.		x
5.	Ms. Sultana Parvin	Executive (Welfare)	DECCO Aparels Ltd.		x
6.	Ms. Hamida Khatoon	Executive (HR & Admin)	DECCO Aparels Ltd.		x
7.	Ms. Karobee Sultana	Program Specialist,	H&M	x	

No	Name	Designation	Organisation	Interview	FGD
		Social market innovation & capacity development			
8.	Mr. Prodip Gabriel Sku	Program Manager, Social market innovation & capacity development	H&M	x	
9.	Ms. Jenefa Jabber	Director, Social Compliance and Safeguarding	BRAC	x	
10.	Mr. SK Mojibul Huq	Programme Manager, Urban Development Programme	BRAC	x	
Development partners (donor representatives)					
1.	Mr. Marcus Johannesson	First Secretary	Embassy of Sweden	x	
2.	Mr. Soren Asbjørn Albertsen	Donor representative	Embassy of Denmark	x	

PARTICIPANTS IN THE STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP

Venue: Westin Hotel, Dhaka, 28 November 2022

SL#	Name, Designation and Organization
Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE)	
1	Ms. Hazera Khatun Joint Secretary Ministry of Labour and Employment
2	Dr. Mohammad Abdul Kader Deputy Secretary Ministry of Labour and Employment
3	Khondoker Md Nazmul Huda Shamim Senior Assistant Secretary Ministry of Labour and Employment
4	Mr S H M Magfurul Hasan Abbasi, Senior Assistant Secretary Ministry of Labour and Employment
Department of Labour (DoL)	
5	Mr Abu Ashrif Director Department of Labour, Dhaka
6	Mr S.M Anamul Hoque Director Department of Labour, Dhaka

SL#	Name, Designation and Organization
7	Mr Md. Gias Uddin Director Department of Labour, Gazipur
8	Mr Md. Bellal Hossain Sheikh Director Department of Labour, Dhaka
9	Ms Rukhsana Chowdhury Deputy Director Department of Labour, Dhaka
10	Ms Sara Sultana Assistant Director Divisional Labour Office, Dhaka
11	Mr. Md. Sohel Azim Assistant Director Department of Labour, Dhaka
Donor:	
12	Dr. Feroz Faruque, Donor representative, Canada, PFM
13	Ms Sylvia Islam Senior Development Advisor Global Affairs, Donor representative, Canada
Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)	
14	Mr Mar-A Nul Islam Shovin Assistant Joint Secretary BKMEA
15	Ms. Farzana Sharmin Joint Secretary (Compliance Cell), BKMEA, Dhaka
16	Ms. Songita Mallik Deputy Secretary BKMEA, Dhaka
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)	
17	Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam, Additional Secretary (Labour), BGMEA, Dhaka
Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF)	
18	Mr Md. Saidul Islam Additional Secretary General Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF)
19	Mr. Santosh Kumar Dutta Deputy Secretary-General, BEF
Workers: (WRC/NCCWE/IBC)	

SL#	Name, Designation and Organization
20	Mir Abul Kalam Azad President, IBC and Board of Trustee member
21	Mr Rashadul Alam Raju Member-WRC PISS; General Secretary-IBC
22	Mr. Quamrul Ahsan Member – WRC PISS; General Secretary - IBC
23	Mr Mr Khandoker Salam Manager, WRC
24	Mr Shakil Akhter Chowdhury Member Secretary – NCCWE
25	Mr. Naimul Ahsan Jewel Member – WRC PISS; General Secretary - IBC
26	Ms Promila Podder Chair – WRC Women Committee
27	Mr. Abdul Wahed Member – WRC PISS; General Secretary - IBC
28	Ms Shamim Ara Chair – NCCWE
29	Ms Afroza Rahman Vice Chair – WRC Women Committee
30	Mr Badal Khan General Secretary Bangladesh Jatio Sromik Jote
31	Mr. Towhidur Rahman Member – WRC PISS; General Secretary - IBC
Other stakeholders	
32	Mr Prodip Gabriel Sku, Social Programme Manager H&M
33	Ms. Karabee Sultana H&M, Program Specialist-Social H&M
34	Ms. Tanjila Akter Stakeholder engagement and Public Affairs Specialist H&M
International Labour Organization (ILO)	
35	Mr. Neeran Ramjuthan Programme Manager, LAWC Cluster

SL#	Name, Designation and Organization
36	Mr. Maurice Brooks Chief Technical Advisor (a.i), RMGP II Project
37	Nugroho, Mohamad Anis Agung Chief Technical Advisor Better Work Bangladesh
38	Thamparipattra Chayanich Project Technical Officer Trade for Decent Work
39	Mr. Md. Jamil Ansar Programme Officer SDIR Project
40	Mr. Abul Monsur Azad National Programme Officer SDIR Project
41	Ms. Shammin Sultana Programme Officer RMGP II Project
42	Ms Mahsin Hamuda Project Officer LAWC Cluster
43	Mr Abdullah Mohammad Tawsif Administrative Assistant RMGP II Project
44	Ms Hamida Begum Project Secretary RMGP II Project
National Consultant	
45	Ms Zakia Haque National Consultant (evaluation team member)
Virtual participants:	
46	Ms Lotta Nycander International Consultant
47	Mr Seid Zeinu Evaluation Manager ILO-Ethiopia
48	Mr Rafael E Mapalo ITC- ILO
49	Mr S.M. Uddin Programme Officer SDIR Project

ANNEX VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Decent Work Country Programme 2017-2020; Bangladesh.
- Project Document, Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment Industry, ILO
- National Action Plan (NAP) on the Labour Sector of Bangladesh (2021-2026), Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, June, 2021
- Revised Log-Frame of the SDIR project. Cumulative achievement of the objective outcome of the SDIR Project until August 22; and Revised Logframe of the SDIR Project, September 2022.
- SDIR Project Annual reports (technical progress reports).
- Mid term Evaluation report, SDIR project
- Interim Independent Evaluation of the SDIR project, by Reza Patwary, September 2021, ILO.
- Development Planning in Bangladesh: 7th Five Year Plan and SDG Implementation, Planning Commission, GoB.
- Overview of laws, policies and practices on gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work in Bangladesh, ILO, A study by ILO, 2020.
- Understanding the Gender Composition and Experience of Ready-Made Garment (RMG) Workers in Bangladesh, by Aya Matsuura and Carly Teng, ILO 2020.
- Hand Book-6: Gender Equality & Rights for Women Workers.
- Bangladesh Labour Market Profile 2020, by the Danish Trade Union Development Agency.
- An ILO free from sexual harassment - A right and our joint responsibility, ILO fact sheet.
- Trade union organizing in Bangladesh's ready-made garment sector amidst covid pandemic: status, challenges and scope. Authors Dr. Jakir Hossain, Professor, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi, and Dr. Afroza Akter, Research Director, Development Synergy Institute. Published June 2022 with the support of SDIR ILO project.
- Report by the Government of Bangladesh on progress made on the implementation of the road map taken to address all outstanding issues mentioned in the complaint concerning alleged non-observance of Conventions Nos 81, 87 and 98, Governing Body 344th Session, Geneva, March 2022.
- WRC Sustainability plan, 2021.
- Collective bargaining process in readymade garment (RMG) sector before and during COVID-19: A situational analysis focusing on Ashulia and Tongi, by BILS, October, 2022:
- COVID-19 Behaviour Change Communication materials (AVs and Prints); by BRAC and ILO
- Final evaluation report "Protecting garment sector workers: occupational safety and health and income support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic" 2022, Lotta Nycander
- Collective bargaining process in readymade garment sector before and during Covid-19: a situational analysis focusing on Ashulia and Tongi, by Institute of Labour Studies, October 2022.
- Bangladesh Development Update Recovery and Resilience Amid Global Uncertainty, World Bank, April 2022: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>. Last Updated: Apr 11, 2022.

- The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index, Bangladesh Labour Market Profile 2020, by the Danish Trade Union Development Agency.
- Registered Trade Union in BD RMG Sector has Increased, Article in Textile Today, Bangladesh (online).
- “Why are female workers disappearing from our RMG factories?”, Article by Promila Kanya, 22 March 2022, in Panorama, an online paper.
<https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/why-are-female-workers-disappearing-our-rmg-factories-389102>