



-Establishment of Unemployment Benefit Fund in Eswatini: Towards Comprehensive Social Protection for all - Support for DRC's tripartite constituents in combating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic– Final evaluation

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Eswatini, DRC

Evaluation date: 31 December 2023

Evaluation type: RBSA

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: ILO Country Offices in Kinshasa (DRC) and Pretoria (Eswatini)

Technical Office: SOCPRO, NORMS, OSH, HIMO, EMPLOYMENT, Gender, Social Dialogue, ACTRAV and ACTEMP

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DC Symbol: SWZ/20/01/RBS and COD/20/01/RBS

Donor(s) & budget: RBSA. DRC: US\$ 460,000, Eswatini: US\$ 430,000

Key Words: [Use themes as provided in i-eval Discovery](#) Social Protection, Eswatini, DRC, RBSA

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The intervention « **Appui aux mandants tripartites de la RDC dans la lutte contre l'impact de l'épidémie COVID19** » aimed to :

- Strengthen the social protection systems, with a focus on the extension to workers from the informal and rural economy in response to COVID-19, but also to build sustainable systems
- Operationalize progressively the Universal Health Coverage system
- Promote Operational Health and Safety (OSH) at the workplace, including the ratification of the Convention N° 176.

The intervention “**Establishment of Unemployment Benefit Fund in Eswatini: Towards Comprehensive Social Protection for all**” focused on:

- Supporting the implementation of the National Social Security Implementation Action Plan and Strategy (2019) and, the Government COVID-19 Unemployment Relief Fund, and the United Nations (UN) Multisector COVID-19 Response Plan
- Conducting feasibility studies and setting establishment and implementation arrangements for a gender-inclusive unemployment benefit fund/scheme (UBF/UBS)
- Building capacities of Government, social partners, and stakeholders to enhance social dialogue and good governance of social security

ILO Decent Work Team (DWT)/Country Office (CO) Yaoundé and the Kinshasa CO supported the intervention in DRC and the DWT Pretoria supported the intervention in Eswatini.

Present situation of the project

Both RBSA-funded projects are finalized.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

Evaluation purpose

- Assess the extent to which the interventions have achieved the stated objectives and expected results while identifying the supporting factors and constraints that have led to them;
- Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the interventions;
- Assess the extent to which the interventions’ outcomes will be sustainable;
- Establish the relevance of the intervention design and implementation strategy in relation to the ILO, UN, and national development frameworks;
- Identify lessons learned and potential good practices, especially

- regarding models of interventions that can be applied further;
- Provide recommendations to intervention stakeholders to promote sustainability and support further development of the intervention outcomes and to ILO towards similar initiatives.

Scope: The final evaluation covers the period from the start of the interventions (September 2020 for DRC and August 2020 for Eswatini interventions) until February 2023 (taking into consideration the results of the interventions ex-post). The evaluation covers all the planned outputs and outcomes under the intervention.

The **main evaluation clients** are ILO's constituents, and national and international partners, including the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Protection, and Ministry of Finance. Furthermore, the findings of this final evaluation are destined for ILO's management (Kinshasa and Pretoria Country Offices, ILO Decent Work Team (DWT)/Country Office (CO) Yaoundé and Pretoria), SOCPRO, NORMES, EMPLOYMENT, Gender, Social Dialogue, and the Regional Office for Africa.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluator used a theory-based evaluation approach for this final cluster evaluation. For primary data collection, the evaluator used semi-structured interviews, including during the field visit to Eswatini. The secondary data was derived from the intervention documentation, including workplans and progress reports, allowing for a robust data triangulation.

The evaluator interviewed 31 stakeholders of the RBSA-funded intervention in Eswatini, and 11 stakeholders related to the intervention in DRC.

Limitations: i) The official invitation letter for the visa application from Kinshasa did not arrive in time to obtain a visa to undertake the field visit, as envisaged. Hence the field visit to DRC could not take place; ii) This evaluation was designed as a cluster evaluation, given the social protection focus of both interventions. However, the interventions do not share a common planning framework or monitoring using similar indicators. Hence, the evaluation found that the evaluability as a cluster was not given.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The RBSA-funded ILO interventions were highly relevant to both countries in their efforts to establish comprehensive social protection after COVID-19 exposed significant gaps in social protection coverage.

The evaluation finds the validity of the design uneven, with unrealistic intervention duration for both interventions while sustainability was strategically addressed. Tripartite structures were overall coherently used for intervention design and implementation.

Effectiveness: The results achievement was uneven across the two interventions, with the more complex intervention in DRC showing results



in the OSH component, while the intervention in Eswatini showed good delivery across its two components.

Efficiency: Both interventions managed to leverage significant resources during implementation or for a follow-up intervention. Intervention management structures showed differences, resulting in varying efficiencies for intervention implementation.

The likelihood of sustainability of intervention results and related impacts is too early to assess. However, the ILO still has a role to play in facilitating the extent of the intervention’s systemic change in Eswatini.

Cross-cutting issues

Both interventions advanced with implementing social protection policies, developed with ILO support in previous projects. Hence, a contribution to **ILO’s normative mandate** is given. Besides, the intervention in DRC advanced OHS coverage focusing on the mining sector.

Gender equality and non-discrimination: The implementation of social protection policies benefits both men and women, though for the time being the ones being employed in the formal sector in Eswatini. Given that 65% of business owners in the informal economy are women in Eswatini, the likely exclusion of the informal economy from the UBS due to funding issues would disproportionately affect women.

Both interventions were not designed for a direct contribution **to just transition to environmental sustainability**, given their social protection focus. As previously stated, both interventions were a direct response to **COVID-19 measures**, mitigating the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by strengthening the social protection system.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main recommendations

Coherence

R1: ILO: RBSA interventions targeting policy change should have a duration of at least 24 months, and RBSA guidelines should be amended accordingly. Priority: medium, next 18 to 24 months

Efficiency

R2: ILO: All RBSA-funded intervention proposals should contain a budget line for a intervention coordinator to ensure that a dedicated person undertakes intervention coordination. Secondments from government counterparts should be considered as one favoured coordination mechanism.

Priority: high, next 3 to 6 months.

R3: ILO: Intervention coordination using consultants should be discouraged, given the time required for recruitment and the need for a dedicated intervention coordinator.

Priority: high, next 3 to 6 months.

Effectiveness

R4: ILO: Facilitate the finalization of discussions about the Attorney General's Office on the UBS bill, for example, through the leadership of the ILO Country Director Eswatini with support from the Pretoria DWT Specialists as required.

Priority: very high, next 3 months.

R5: Country Director DRC: Assess to what extent the Belgium-funded social protection intervention can build on and incorporate the work on social protection results 2 and 3 of the RBSA intervention.

Priority: very high, next 3 months.

Progress towards impact and sustainability

R 6: Country Director Eswatini: It is recommended for the country director to keep engaging with the Labour Advisory Board and the TWG for light-touch monitoring and to assess any technical support needs. While no more RBSA funds are available for this purpose, the regular budget should be used for specific tasks.

Priority: very high, next 3 months.

Main lessons learned and good practices

Lessons learned:

While the secondment of a very motivated MOLSS staff as ILO intervention coordinator clearly contributed to the success of the intervention, the ILO committed two errors towards the imminent end of the secondment.

- i) The intervention coordinator was not informed that no more access to intervention data would be available once the secondment ends. This oversight resulted in an avoidable loss of intervention-related documentation. The ILO should have informed the intervention coordinator accordingly to trigger a process of copying all intervention-related deliverables on an external drive of the benefitting ministry.*
- ii) According to ILO rules and regulations, the intervention laptop had to be returned to the ILO after the end of the intervention. In the context of a resource-scarce operation environment, the previously seconded intervention coordinator reincorporated into the ministry, lacking essential work equipment. This also limited her participation*



in online meetings after the intervention, where she had to use her personal mobile phone, as witnessed during the evaluation.

Good practice:

Use of existing tripartite structures

The intervention in Eswatini used the existing Labour Advisor Committee as an entry point to set up a TWG comprised of tripartite+ constituents. This approach saved time and resources, allowing existing structures to prove their utility. The ongoing activities of the TWG on UBS matters, even after the end of the intervention, show the sustainability of such an approach.