

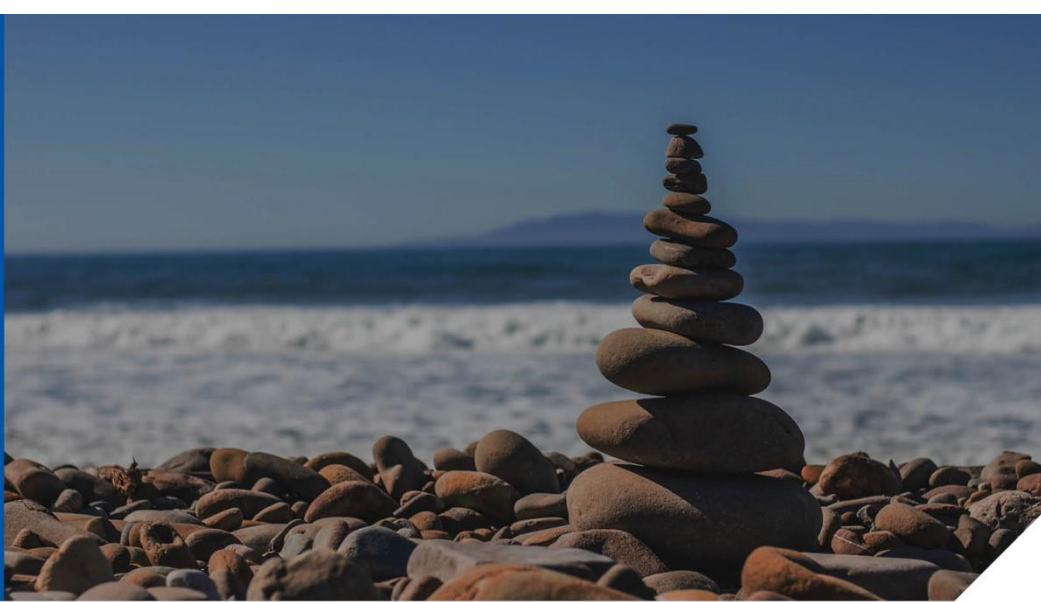


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Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally

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Name of Evaluation Manager: **Pablo Arellano**

Evaluation Office oversight: Pamornrat Pringsulaka, Regional Evaluation Officer, RO-Bangkok

Naomi Asukai, Senior Evaluation Specialist - ILO Evaluation Office

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



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**SAFETY
+ HEALTH
FOR ALL**



From
the People of Japan

Bringing Back Jobs Safely Under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally

**Final Independent Evaluation
May 2024**

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BBJS	Bringing Back Jobs Safely Project
BBMC	Bigay Buhay Multi-purpose Cooperative
BOSH SO1	Basic Occupational Safety and Health – Safety Officer Training 1
CO	Country Office
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CSC	Civil Service Commission
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
DOH	Department of Health
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DTC	Digital Transformation Center
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Technical Support Team
DYB	Digitalize Your Business
ECC	Employees Compensation Commission
ECOP	Employers Confederation of the Philippines
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Department
FFW	Federation of Free Workers
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GOJ	Government of Japan
GOP	Government of the Philippines
HQ	Headquarters
IA	Implementation Agreement
IATF	Inter-Agency Task Force
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labor Standards
JCCIPI	Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Phils. Inc.
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KMS	Knowledge Management System
LABADMIN/OSH	Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch
LGU	Local Government Unit
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise

M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCE	No Cost Extension
NCR	National Capital Region
NERS	National Employment Recovery Strategy
NSCB	National Statistical Coordination Board
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
OSHNet	Occupational Safety and Health Network
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PAOT	Participatory Action Oriented Training
PATAMABA	Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
UNPFSD	United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development
PMU	Project Management Unit
PRODOC	Project Document
PWD	Person/People with Disability
PYEA	Philippine Young Entrepreneurs Association
RSCA	Responsible Supply Chains in Asia Project
RO	Regional Office
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
SEPF	UN Socio Economic and Peacebuilding Framework
SfP - PH	Skills for Prosperity Programme - Philippines
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
TAV	Technical and Advisory Visit
TMN	Tatak ng Matatag na Negosyo
TOBs	Training of Beneficiaries
TOC	Theory of Change
TOEs	Training of Entrepreneurs/Enterprises
TOT	Training of Trainers
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Guidelines
UNJP	United Nations Joint Programme
WISE	Work Improvement in Small Enterprises

I. Executive Summary

Project Background

The COVID-19 crisis has brought unparalleled impacts on the people of the Philippines, particularly those in the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that form the backbone of the economy and employment. The pandemic not only reduced existing jobs and income for the workers, but prompted many to resort to alternative livelihood, often as informal activities, to survive the prolonged community quarantine measures with various restrictions imposed on businesses.

While tremendous efforts have been made to address the extreme vulnerability of MSMEs and informal businesses under the pandemic, there are two areas which would merit further support in the world of work at this stage – the occupational safety and health (OSH) including the prevention and mitigation of the COVID-19 risks (COVID OSH) and the digitalization of business operations for those currently left behind the big wave of digitalizing economy. The COVID-19 risks for MSMEs and the capacity gaps among them are deemed larger outside of Metro Manila.

The ILO and the Government of Japan partnered to help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operate safely under the prolonged community quarantine and adapt to the New Normal business environment with improved workplace safety and health practices and better equipped to take advantage of the available digital tools and the expanding digital economy opportunities. The project is part of the ILO's Flagship programme Safety+Health for All.

The original duration of the project covered from March 2021 until March 2022. The project has benefited from four no cost extensions, the first one until March 2023, the second one until December 2023 and the third one until March 2024. At the beginning of 2023, an internal mid-term evaluation was completed that identified a set of recommendations to improve the delivery and the management of the project. As of January 2024, the project is working towards completion of the remaining activities and ensuring the sustainability of the project-supported activities. A fourth NCE was approved to extend the project until April 2024 to cover the final turnover activities, particularly for the handover of the DTC – Innovation Hubs and equipment support such as the PC units and Starlink sets.

The Bringing Back Jobs Safely Project contributed to improving the safety and health of workers in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

About the Evaluation

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of technical and development cooperation activities. This evaluation applies the evaluation criteria established by the OECD / DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System including the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and ILO cross-cutting concerns. This evaluation complies with the United Nations Evaluation Guidelines (UNEG) Norms and Standards ILO policy guidelines (4th edition, 2020) and the ethical safeguards.

This final evaluation identifies what worked, what did not work at output, outcome and impact levels, what is sustainable, what is the legacy of the project and what are the recommendations for the future as well as the design stages and any mitigation measures that eventually were taken.

This evaluation, as a product of analysis of the implementation of the project in its entirety, examines the entire project intervention from 15 June 2021 to 31 March 2024. It considers all the documents linked to the project. This includes the project document, periodic reports, results of midterm evaluation and implementation of its recommendations as well as documents produced as outputs of the project (e.g. knowledge products, policy strategies).

This evaluation followed multiple methods, with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, in order to capture the intervention's contributions to the achievement of expected and unexpected outcomes, including triangulation to increase the validity and rigor of the evaluation findings, engaging with tripartite constituents, stakeholders and partners of the project, at all levels during the data collection and reporting phases. Secondary data was utilized particularly those that have been gathered during the internal midterm evaluation and progress reports formulated by the project team and those submitted by consultants.

Summary of Findings

Relevance

The project is well aligned with the interests of Japan in its long history of relationship with the Philippines as it is considered as one of its strategic partners that share fundamental values. More particularly, this project aligned on the first pillar of the "Four Initiatives" of Japanese diplomacy in the Philippines – that is on fostering together vibrant economy. The project was envisioned to be part of the ILO's Flagship programme Safety+Health for All. This flagship programme seeks to improve health and safety of workers worldwide. It plays a key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on decent work and economic growth. It also contributes to the SDGs on good health and well-being and on responsible consumption and production.

Moreover, this project is aligned with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022, which has been updated to reflect the priorities for the next two years, including the implementation of the Universal Health Care Act, upskilling the workforce, and institutionalizing the Social Protection Floor. The project has ensured that there is relevance in its implementation design. This is evident in the project's logical framework that captured the essence of its relevance to the pressing needs and issues of the MSMEs hard hit by the pandemic crisis. The project has been wise in targeting MSMEs outside Metro Manila who were not only affected by the pandemic but have been receiving less support and opportunities compared to those in metropolitan areas. Significantly, the project accommodated affected MSMEs in Metro Manila as part of its target beneficiaries during the second extension which was agreed to by the donor allowing completion of the implementation until March 31, 2023.

Utilization of digital platforms is one of the learnings catalyzed by the pandemic situation and as soon as the lifting of the state of public health emergency, the Philippine government has also pushed for digitalization of its vital services. Hence, BBS has timely introduced and prepared MSMEs through the SIYB and Financial Education, towards this pivotal shift to the call for transformative policy direction on digitalization (E-commerce roadmap). The BBS has also aligned with the DOH's promotion of healthy settings in workplaces under the Health Promotion Bureau program on *Healthy Pilipinas*, where OSH

components (SCORE and WISE) were both greatly emphasized, more importantly for MSMEs. Similarly, the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) component of the project has aligned with the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS) 2021-2022 or Executive Order No. 140 series of 2021 where it advanced the discussion on how to ensure safety workplaces at the enterprise level. The MOU signed between the DOLE and ILO helped boost the productivity and employability in MSMEs as well as the informal economy. It bolstered the Philippines' NERS in restoring business confidence through safe and healthy workplaces and upgrade the digital skills of workers. In 2022 after the transition of the Duterte administration to the Marcos Jr. administration, the MSME digitalization support of the BBS has remained relevant as it addressed two of the 10-point economic agenda of the Marcos Jr. administration such as on "Digital Philippines" and "Future-ready Filipinos."

Coherence

Most respondents of this evaluation have admitted that they are only familiar on the specific project component/s that engaged them. However, some have mentioned that they have been trained on 2 or 3 training modules such as either in SCORE and SIYB, WISE and SIYB and Financial Education or on both SCORE and WISE. This shows that synergy between project components was not fully explored except for the overlap of beneficiaries. The implementation of each project component was not observed to build up on each other, rather they run independently of one another save for those activities that are within the same target outcome. An example of this was the relation between those trained under SIYB and Financial Education and how they are supposed to utilize the Innovation Hubs constructed in the selected project sites.

As illustrated in the ToC and the logical framework, there is interrelation of each component particularly targeting an overall development objective of improving the safety and health of workers in MSMEs in the non-metropolitan regions and mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. The project has envisioned that the first order outcome 3 would strengthen awareness among non-beneficiary MSMEs on the advantages of outcomes 1 (OSH) and 2 (digitalization). Part of the assumption of the project was that the non-beneficiary MSMEs would find the success cases relevant to their own business operations, thus they will replicate the demonstrated good practices to make their workplace safer and more productive.

This project is part of the Safety + Health for All flagship programme of the ILO which notably collaborated with the Enterprise Department of ILO to develop an Action Checklist to prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 at work for MSMEs. Likewise, this project has tapped the reputation of ILO as a renowned international technical agency on MSME development and a global leader on the formalization of the informal economy. This project has built on the ILO's Financial Education Programme expertise and mandate. Its flagship programme Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) has reached 15 million entrepreneurs and MSMEs globally by 2015. With approximately more than 23.7 million entrepreneurs trained globally every year, ILO estimate that more than 5.4 million new businesses and 10.4 million new jobs were created because of the SIYB training.

Furthermore, the strategy adopted by this project reflected ILO's standard setting role and the tripartite identity. The most relevant standards often referred to guide the overall recovery from the COVID-19 crisis have been: the ILO Recommendation R205 – Employment and Decent work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, and the ILO Recommendation R204 – Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation. This project has likewise aligned with the Sustainable Enterprises Programme which was built to address 2007 Resolution on Sustainable Enterprises. More particularly, the SIYB, Global

Financial Education and SCORE are all part of the Sustainable Enterprises Programme of the ILO. Similarly, this project also adhered to the UN Global Development Initiative Digital Cooperation Forum where the concept of “Just Digital Transition” was promoted.

Effectiveness

Workplan revisions were made in view of the delays brought by the factors enumerated at *Efficiency* section of this report. Apart from the impacts of COVID-19, other contributing factors to the adjustments included implementing partner capacity gaps and a longer than originally envisaged time to develop some key relationships, and to build trust and partner buy-in for digitalization, construction of innovation hubs, knowledge management system and even on the roll out of ToE/ToBs. The evaluation interviews provided a good understanding of the stakeholders’ feedback on the quality of the technical advice and training, capacity development, project management and partnership aspects of the project. The results generally regarded the project team as committed, proactive and open to supporting the end beneficiaries – the coordinators and the trainers were extending their assistance even beyond the trainings. However, the project team was shorthanded during the first 2 years of implementation. The number of individual consultancy agreements attended for regular monitoring of outputs has consumed the team’s time and energy.

This evaluation learned that there are challenges in targeting the informal sector as a project beneficiary. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Resolutions Concerning Statistics of Employment in the Informal Sector Adopted by the 15th ICLS defined the informal sector as production units operating on a small scale and at a low level of organization with little or no division between labor and capital as factors of production and with the primary objective of generating income and employment for the persons concerned (ILO, 1993).

While the government partners such as DOLE and DTI both recognized that targeting the informal sector is both practical and strategic as they are marginalized, other implementing partners such as the FFW and ECOP have also voiced out that these enterprises are usually not actively represented in most of their programs. Hence, reaching out to them for trainings required more work and convincing so that they participate in the said trainings. The project has planned on outreach to the informal sector by engaging PATAMABA and direct linkage to LGUs so as to address the challenges in increasing participation of the informal sector. Through the PATAMABA and FFW, the project has distributed data access cards to the digitally-struggling entrepreneurs mostly operating in the informal sector.

Given the delays in the implementation brought by several factors elaborated in the *Efficiency* section of this report, the PMU had to adopt a catch-up plan in order to meet completion of target activities and outputs before March 2024.

Efficiency

The BBJS was conceived to be a year-long response program to the COVID-19 pandemic, a timeframe believed to enable signing of implementation agreements, design training modules, conduct trainings per project component, construct innovation hubs, establish a knowledge management system and produce results as enumerated in the target outcomes and outputs. This, however, proved to be unrealistic and ambitious in producing such results within this limited period.

Per ILO requirements, the type and timing of evaluations vary depending on the amount and duration of projects. Hence, duration of the project extended due to the several NCEs which prompted and added for a midterm evaluation.

The project has experienced delays in implementation particularly in the establishment of innovation hubs which would ideally provide internet support to the MSMEs trained under SIYB and Financial Education. The delay in the conduct of the ToTs and ToEs for WISE and SCORE was affected by the availability of the trainers on the target schedules and the capacity of the trainers to organize and mobilize the required number of participants for the ToEs. As illustrated in the *Effectiveness* section of this report, engaging the appropriate stakeholders also posed several challenges.

There was a delay in the development of case studies and/or success stories as supposedly part of the promotional/communication materials of the project.

Impact and Sustainability

Securing MOUs with the government partners is a measure of sustainability. The positioning of BBS in partnering with DOLE, DTI, DICT, OSH Center, DOH and even LGUs played a crucial role in ensuring that the project components will continue even after the end of project, recognizing the nature of BBS as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the realization during the implementation was that the issues being addressed by the project are also systemic problems such as safety in workplaces and digitalization which have been long there even before the pandemic. The most important contribution of the project to sustainability is its ecosystem-wide impact.

At the national level, the project intervention's objective in ensuring safety at workplaces, particularly looking into the informal sector for inclusion, had direct positive effects. It has provided the DOLE and the OSH Center the opportunity to revisit and agree on the revision of BOSH SO1 to incorporate the WISE for COVID training module using the PAOT approach. The PAOT-based WISE helped transform the OSH ecosystem from a very technical and limited cater to small number of medium and large enterprises to one that is practical and inclusive for more MSMEs.

The project has generated collaboration with the DTI, DOLE, DICT and LGUs to ensure local ownership of the interventions as well as the regional chapters of ECOP/PCCI, OSH and area-based projects such as the ECCP-Crescent in BARMM. All the three LGUs and local actors involved in this project have given positive feedback on how the interventions inspired them in putting together relevant policies to ensure safety at workplaces and support in providing the enabling environment to the beneficiary MSMEs.

As a response to COVID-19 pandemic, the project was seen as a timely intervention to support recovery of the affected MSMEs. The targeting of MSMEs outside Metro Manila was highly commended by the interview respondents. While the KMS did not materialize as originally planned, the decision to continue working on a database that's useful for MSMEs and business development service providers created a strong impact to partners and beneficiary MSMEs on the genuine intent of the project in extending support even post pandemic.

Cross-cutting themes

This project has given greater attention to gender parity as manifested in the number of women beneficiaries across all the four training modules. Under SIYB ToTs, there was 63% women participation. On the other hand, the Financial Education ToTs had 70% women participation.

Through the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), constituted in December 2021, the tradition of strong tripartite involvement in ILO projects including the BBS has been put forward. The PAC is chaired by the DOLE and co-chaired by the DICT, and with the following members: from government (DOLE, DICT, DTI, NWPC, NAPC, DOST), from employers' association (ECOP), from workers (FFW, KMU, NTUC, SENTRO, TUCP), from the Japanese Embassy, and from the CO-Manila. It was only in May 2022 that DOLE and ILO signed a Memorandum of Agreement concerning the project discussing the ToR for the PAC. The evaluation finds that the PAC has expressed interests in including NCR in the target project sites so that many national staff of key partners can benefit from the project. In effect, the project included NCR-based trainers in the ToTs. The PAC has been instrumental in maintaining relevance of the project to the changing situation through linkage of the BBS to NERS, the national OSH Act and Healthy Philippines initiative.

Conclusion

The evaluation finds that while the project design was found to be ambitious in some key areas, particularly in its target beneficiaries, it has proved to maintain its relevance even beyond the pandemic. Clearly, the project originally aimed at supporting the reboot of pandemic-affected MSMEs outside Metro Manila but it ended also equally addressing systemic issues on OSH and digitalization.

It is clearly recognized that this project has put greater attention on how its government partners are responding to the needs of MSMEs, more so those from the informal sector. The OSH component of the project aiming to support safer and productive workplaces and its digitalization component intending to create digital modalities for business operations have both served as eye openers in fostering further collaboration between government agencies including the DOLE, DTI, DOH, OSH Center, DICT, TESDA and the LGUs; as well as between employers, workers and informal economy organizations.

Lessons learned and good practices

The project has faced several challenges as enumerated in prior sections of this report. However, those challenges are also opportunities that test the integrity of decision making and creativity to find solutions. This pushed the PMU to keep itself abreast with the changing situation and spot areas that need improvement towards the achievement of the project objectives. This is why catch-up plans become very crucial in the success of the completion of the project outputs.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1
Conduct a follow-up survey on the behavioural change of the project beneficiaries and partners, particularly on SIYB, WISE and SCORE
Recommendation 2

Continue and strengthen partnership established by the project with the regional/local level partners either through other ILO projects or post-project collaboration efforts
Recommendation 3
Explore collaboration of the BBS project components in OSH and digitalization with STEM
Recommendation 4
Look into the possibility of partnership and collaboration between the DTI Negosyo Centre and the Innovation Hubs, TESDA training and DTI brand development for MSME beneficiaries under SIYB, urging digital and tech companies to adopt MSMEs in support of their digital transformation of their business operations, and possibility of enjoying tax incentives/holidays from BIR for participating MSMEs in SIYB, Financial Education, SCORE and WISE
Recommendation 5
Consider how to build on from the gains of this project on gender empowerment and disability inclusion that might be incorporated into future programme design in the country, region and globally
Recommendation 6
Ensure clear guidelines on cohesive ways of support system between administrative and finance operations within different the ILO project management teams

II. Context and Background of the Project

The COVID-19 crisis has brought unparalleled impacts on the people of the Philippines, particularly those in the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that form the backbone of the economy and employment. The pandemic not only reduced existing jobs and income for the workers, but prompted many to resort to alternative livelihood, often as informal activities, to survive the prolonged community quarantine measures with various restrictions imposed on businesses.

While tremendous efforts have been made to address the extreme vulnerability of MSMEs and informal businesses under the pandemic, there are two areas which would merit further support in the world of work at this stage – the occupational safety and health (OSH) including the prevention and mitigation of the COVID-19 risks (COVID OSH) and the digitalization of business operations for those currently left behind the big wave of digitalizing economy. The COVID-19 risks for MSMEs and the capacity gaps among them are deemed larger outside of Metro Manila.

The ILO and the Government of Japan have partnered to help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operate safely under the prolonged community quarantine and adapt to the New Normal business environment with improved workplace safety and health practices and better equipped to take advantage of the available digital tools and the expanding digital economy opportunities. The project is part of the [ILO's Flagship programme Safety+Health for All](#).

With this understanding, the project aims at contributing to improving the safety and health of workers in MSMEs in the non-metropolitan regions of the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis. To achieve this goal, the project has been working with the national network of training service providers to deliver COVID OSH-cum-productivity and digital entrepreneurship training. The ILO's training programmes in respective areas were translated into the specific local and sector context, and transmitted through training-of-trainers (ToT) seminars, mostly online. To win the mind of the massive MSMEs who may not directly participate in the training, the project was also to compile successful experiences into case studies and disseminate them in ways that would be attractive to the non-metropolitan MSMEs to emulate such experiences. To bridge the digital divide outside Metro Manila, the project was also to support the pilot implementation of the three Innovation Hubs, an upgraded version of the digital centres of the Department of ICT, aimed at providing internet connectivity, co-working spaces, and eventually, back-office services and linkage to the support programmes for the non-metropolitan MSMEs through these Hubs and the affiliated satellite centres.

To support agile learning to respond to the rapidly changing situation of the pandemic and to make the interventions sustained beyond the life of the project, an interdisciplinary knowledge management system was to be established, and the institutional capacity of key partner organizations be strengthened.

The project was officially approved by the donor in March 2021 and the implementation began in June 2021 for the duration of one year. With the change of the government in 2022 and with the delayed clearance by the government for the construction of the Innovation Hubs related to the rules on foreign donation, the project has been extended till March 2024. During the course of its implementation, the project adopted minor changes in the proposed activities and structure to remain relevant to the changing external environment including the end of the pandemic, priorities and initiatives of the new administration, and the rapid evolution of the digital economy including some disruptive technologies that address challenges in remote areas in the country.

The original duration of the project covered from March 2021 until March 2022. The project has benefited from four no cost extensions, the first one until March 2023, the second one until December 2023, the third one until March 2024 and fourth one until April 2024. At the beginning of 2023, an internal mid-term evaluation was completed that identified a set of recommendations to improve the delivery and the management of the project. As of January 2024, the project is working towards completion of the remaining activities and ensuring the sustainability of the project-supported activities. A fourth NCE was approved to extend the project until April 2024 to cover the final turnover activities, particularly for the handover of the DTC – Innovation Hubs and equipment support such as the PC units and Starlink sets.

Project objective

The Bringing Back Jobs Safely Project will contribute to improving the safety and health of workers in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

Project outcomes and key activities

Outcome 1: Workplace of regional MSMEs is made safer and more productive in the New Normal environment with the COVID-19 risks.

- Deliver the training on workplace safety and health practices that simultaneously enhance productivities of MSMEs through the training-of-trainer based replication model.
- Establish an inter-disciplinary knowledge management system between the public health data and the data on occupational safety and health inspection and social security coverage of COVID-19 related cases.

Outcome 2: MSMEs and alternative livelihoods have reduced the risk of COVID-19 infection and enhanced productivity with digital modalities for business operations.

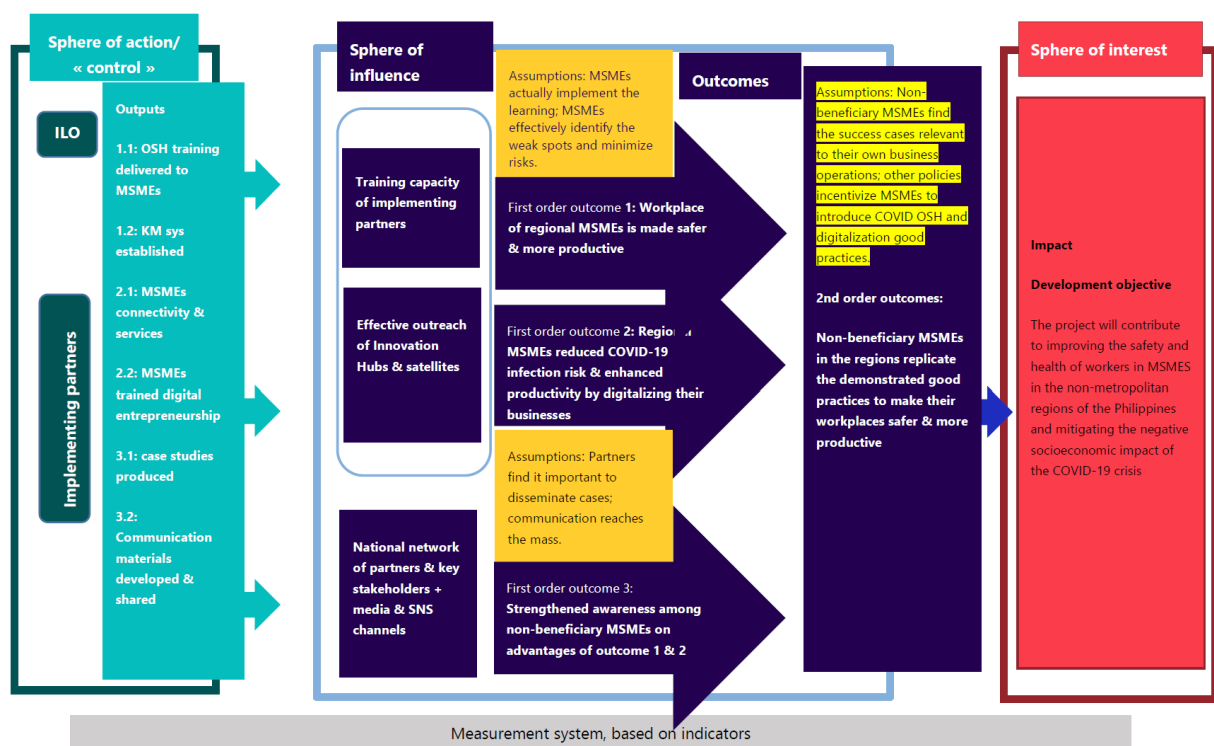
- Deliver the training that will support the digitalization of MSME business operations through the training-of-trainer based replication model.
- Support the first three two Innovation Hubs to be built in provincial cities and help them operation in collaboration with the local satellites in order to provide added internet connectivity and co-working spaces to the provincial MSMEs. To further support the same, procure Starlink sets for the remotely-located digital centres to be connected with the Satellite-linked internet.

Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and/or promoted knowledge exchange among non-beneficiary MSMEs on the advantages and modalities of safe workplace and digitalized business operation.

- Develop case studies of the best performing MSME beneficiaries to showcase the MSME success stories on maintaining safer and healthier work environment and digitalizing their business operations.
- Advocate the success stories beyond the direct beneficiaries of the project through the media, SNS and the institutional network of the partners.
- Support the leading partner agencies to enhance their institutional capacity to sustainably provide the support most useful for the MSMEs to cope with the current and future pandemics.

Theory of change

The diagram of the Theory of Change (ToC) visualization is illustrated below:



There are two Outputs under each of the three Outcomes, which fall within the sphere of action/control of the project. The first four outputs lead to the two of the first-order outcomes related to the reduction of the COVID-19 risk at the workplaces of the beneficiary MSMEs such as the following: *Outcome 1 – Workplace of the regional MSMEs is made safer and more productive in the New Normal environment with the COVID-19 risk*, and; *Outcome 2 – regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods reduced COVID-19 risk by digitalizing their business operations*. Two of the Outputs directly contribute to achieving these outcomes as “Advisory services and OSH training is delivered to MSMEs outside the metropolitan area” (Output 1.1) and “Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods are trained on digital entrepreneurship” (Output 2.2). These Outputs are achieved by the implementing partners of the training services whose trainers are capacitated through the training-of-trainer (ToT) seminars conducted under this project.

The key assumptions of these four Outputs producing the two first-order Outcomes are: i) the beneficiary MSMEs actually implement the learnings from the training and related support services, and ii) as a result, the beneficiary MSMEs effectively identify the weak spots in their workplaces and the business operating system bridging between online and offline operations in order to minimize COVID-19 risks. The key assumptions for the achievement of the second-order Outcome are that: a) the non-beneficiary MSMEs find the success cases relevant to their own business operations, and b) there are other policies which incentivize the MSMEs to introduce the good practices of the COVID OSH and the digitalization particularly for those disadvantaged and on the other side of the digital divide in the regions outside of Metro Manila.

There are important assumptions for these project outcomes to produce the systemic Impact. These assumptions are: 1) the workplace of the regional MSMEs is one of the key transmission channels of COVID-19, 2) the other channels of the epidemic transmission (e.g., schools, public transports and communal gathering) are effectively controlled, or 3) the promotion of the safety culture at workplace would contribute to changing the behavior of employees in other transmission channels under the holistic approach to workplace prevention and mitigation of the COVID-19 risks. The theory of change around Outcome 3 is critical to translate the impact in beneficiary MSMEs into the systemic impact to containing the spread of COVID-19 in the non-metropolitan regions.

Expected results

A summary of the expected results of the project is elaborated in the log frame attached as Annex 1.

Risk Analysis

Given the overall goal of the project being safer and healthier workplace with reduced COVID-19 risks at the systemic level, there are several key risks which must be periodically monitored and assessed. These risks are enumerated in the Risk Register attached as Annex 2.

Budget narrative

The total amount of the project budget is 2,227,272 US dollars. It was expected to be funded by the Supplementary Budget of the Government of Japan (GOJ) under the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

The component-wise budget breakdown is as follows.

Direct costs:

Component A: COVID OSH for MSMEs	516,500
Component B: Digitalization of MSMEs	876,500
Component C: Project Management	522,175

Indirect costs:

Programme Support Cost & Provision for Cost Increase	282,097
Total project costs:	2,227,272 USD

III. Evaluation background

Purpose

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of technical and development cooperation activities. The evaluation will be used for project accountability and institutional learning. This evaluation will follow guidelines on results-based evaluation of the ILO Evaluation Department (EVAL) contained in the “ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation (4th edition)” 1 and, more specifically, the checklist “CHECKLIST 4.2: PREPARING THE EVALUATION REPORT.”

This final evaluation recognizes that an internal midterm evaluation was conducted and completed on 15 February 2023. This final evaluation will help identify what worked, what did not work at output, outcome and impact levels, what is sustainable, what is the legacy of the project and what are the recommendations for the future as well as the design stages and any mitigation measures that eventually were taken. A copy of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this evaluation is attached as Annex 3.

Specific objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- To evaluate the extent to which the project has achieved its planned objectives, and whether there are any factors contributing or hindering the achievement of the project;
- To assess the extent to which the project has addressed the midterm evaluation’s recommendations;
- To assess the performance of the project as per OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) including ILO cross-cutting criteria (ILS, social dialogue, gender and non-discrimination, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability). In particular, the extent to which gender equality consideration has been considered in the design, M&E framework (indicators and data collection), and during the project implementation;
- To document lessons learned and good practices.

Scope

This evaluation, as a product of analysis of the implementation of the project in its entirety, will examine the entire project intervention from 15 June 2021 to 31 March 2024. It will consider all the documents linked to the project. This includes the project document, periodic reports, results of midterm evaluation and implementation of its recommendations as well as documents produced as outputs of the project (e.g. knowledge products, policy strategies).

The geographical analysis of the assessment should cover all the activities implemented for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and informal businesses in the Philippines, noting that the original focus of the project is to cover the regions outside Metro Manila. However, the project ended up covering Metro Manila (or the National Capital Region) on top of the rest of the country as the nation-wide response to the employment crisis caused by the pandemic, but it is expected that the evaluation will pick selected sub-national areas in examining the project-supported activities in such local areas. Given the ILO ecosystem approach, this evaluation is also expected to analyze how the project interventions affected the existing training ecosystem on the thematic areas covered by the project.

Clients of the Evaluation

Clients of the evaluation were ILO's constituents, workers' and employers' organizations, national, subnational and international partners, including among others the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) of the Philippines. Furthermore, the findings of this final evaluation was destined for ILO's management (the project team, CO Philippines, ENTERPRISES, LABADMIN/OSH, INWORK, and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific) overseeing the implementation of the project, as well as for the project's donor (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan). It will also include the members of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). Respondents during the data collection were identified through a list provided by the project team. They were interviewed based on availability during the 2-week data collection. The evaluation relied on the coordination and communication of the project team to the interview respondents with regard to the scheduling of the interviews. Selection project sites visited were based on availability of the target respondents in the area.

The knowledge generated by this evaluation will also benefit other stakeholders that may not be directly targeted by the project's intervention such as: key government institutions, civil society organizations, donors, UN agencies, international organizations that work in relevant fields, and other units within the ILO.

Evaluation Question and Criteria

Evaluation questions, grouped under the OECD/DAC are set out below:

On relevance

1. Were the project objectives consistent with the national key partners' needs, requirements, and the country needs? Do outputs causally link to the intended outcomes and objectives? In particular, of the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) targeted outside Metro Manila.
2. How did the project contribute to the relevant International Labour Organisation Programme & Budget Outcomes and development priorities in the Philippines and to the UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework 2020-23 and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024-28?
3. To what extent did the project build on previous experience of the ILO in the Philippines, and relevant experience of other local and international organizations in the Philippines?
4. To what extent did the project contribute to the ILO's response to COVID-19 crises in the Philippines?
5. To what extent the project strategy was in line with donor's expectation?
6. To what extent were the project stakeholders/social partners involved in the project design and implementation?
7. To what extent has the project intervention been adjusted in accordance with the findings and recommendations from the midterm evaluation?

On coherence

2. To what extent was the project design adequate and effective in the coherence and complementarity between the different project components?
2. To what extent did the project build on the comparative advantage of the ILO?
3. To what extent did the project build on synergies/collaboration with other initiatives (including government's and those of workers and employer's) in the area?

On effectiveness

1. Given the evolving political and socio-economic situation in the country after COVID 19 pandemic, has the project carried out timely needs assessments to address emerging relevant needs?
2. To what extent have the project objectives been achieved? In particular, regarding the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) targeted outside Metro Manila. Have all the outputs been produced?
3. Have any unexpected positive and negative results took place?
4. What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of results?
5. To what extent the team arrangement, including the support from DWT-Bangkok, RO and HQ, were sufficiently effective for the project to deliver?
6. How effective were the M&E system and indicators in measuring the project progress and achievement?
7. To what extent has the project identified and engaged with the right stakeholders at the country and regional levels?

On efficiency

1. Are the resources (financial, human, time) made available to the project used efficiently to obtain the outputs?
2. Have the project developed an M&E strategy that enhance accountability, learning and feed into management?
3. How have the roles and responsibilities between the project and key partners at the national and regions outside Metro Manila regarding planning M&E of the project worked?
4. To what extend the implementation strategy of the project was cost-effective?
5. Have the project activities been completed on time/according to logical phasing and sequencing anticipated by the project document? If not, what are the factors that have hindered timely delivery and what are the countermeasures that have been taken to date to try to address these issues?

On orientation towards Impact and Sustainability

1. What can be identified as project sustainable impacts in the target groups and other actors as relevant? Are the results integrated or likely to be integrated into national and subnational institutions, target populations, and will partners be able to sustain them beyond the project (institutionalization of project components)?
2. What measures and actions have been put in place to ensure ownership of the project's results at national level and within regions outside Metro Manila? What influence has the project had on the development of relevant policies and practices at national and regional levels?

3. Can the project's approach or parts of it, and results be replicated or amplified by national partners or other actors considering institutional and financial dimensions? To what extent have the stakeholders adopted/used the system(s)/tool(s)/product(s) produced by the project?
4. Have the project faced any unanticipated impact/results of intervention on gender equality? What have been impacts (intended or unintended, positive or negative) produced by the project in the areas of gender, disability inclusion, International Labour Standards (ILS), tripartism, social dialogue and climate change?
5. What can be identified as lessons learned for the design of future projects in similar fields of expertise, improving SMEs?
6. What are the lessons learned and best practices in terms of programme design and implementation that other programmes can replicate? What are the factors that influence improved change in practices or adoption of desired practices?
7. Does the project have a phase-out/exit strategy? Is the phase-out/ exit strategy and/or the project strategy itself designed in order to ensure sustainability of the project outcomes/results? What steps were taken to implement the phase-out/ exist strategy?

On cross-cutting issues

1. To what extent has the project identified and integrated into its actions the operational and strategic needs and priorities for men, women, and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities? To what extent did the project design take into account gender equality, disability inclusion, International Labour Standards (ILS), tripartism, social dialogue and climate change?
2. How has the project been able to meet the specific needs of men, women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities?
3. To what extent has the programme contributed to improving decent working conditions and the respect of social, human rights and environmental concerns in sectors where women are highly employed but also in sectors where women are underrepresented?

Evaluation Methodology

Approach

This evaluation followed multiple methods, with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, in order to capture the intervention's contributions to the achievement of expected and unexpected outcomes, including triangulation to increase the validity and rigor of the evaluation findings, engaging with tripartite constituents, stakeholders and partners of the project, at all levels during the data collection and reporting phases. Secondary data was utilized particularly those that have been gathered during the internal midterm evaluation and progress reports formulated by the project team and those submitted by consultants.

To counter interview fatigue, this evaluation avoided asking questions that had been previously asked in the prior reviews. However, similar questions were asked for triangulation and confirmation as necessary. This evaluation was conducted using a participatory, theory-based approach to answer the questions raised in the ToR (attached as Annex 4). The evaluator worked with ILO project team during the inception phase to examine the intervention's Theory of Change (ToC), with particular attention to the identification of assumptions (implicit and explicit) 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 were collected, presented and analyzed with appropriate gender disaggregation even if project design did not take gender into account. The data collection, analysis and presentation are made responsive to and include issues relating to ILO’s normative work, social dialogue, diversity and non-discrimination, including disability issues.

Data collection methods

Desk review of all relevant documents including the following: Project Document, Theory of Change, logical framework, results framework, work plans, budget; funding agreement and amendments; technical progress reports including the inception phase; internal midterm evaluation report; newspaper articles; implementation agreements under component 1 (OSH); guidelines (TORs) and tools (toolkits for WISE) developed throughout the project.

Initial meetings with the project staff and with backstopping units/officials in HQ, the regional office and the country office. This was relevant for a common understanding in relation to the technical and financial status of the project.

Field visits through interviews and direct observation with key partners and individuals at project locations in Davao and Zamboanga, and in those activities held in Metro Manila. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face, supplemented with some online via Teams and Zoom within March 12-23, 2024. Following the ToT-focused systemic approach of the project, the evaluator met with a number of project beneficiaries including the trainers and MSMEs. Some of their supervisors at the local, regional and national level were also interviewed. Interview respondents were selected from a list of potential key informants from the project team. Selection of the respondents was mainly based on their level of engagement in the project and on their availability during the data collection period. Key informants who are from the same agency or organization but were involved either in the planning or implementation stage were interviewed together in a Focus Group Discussion format. This was more logical to get a full picture of the agency/organization’s engagement with the project. Respondents were joined together by reason of their affiliation and geographic location. Focus group discussions were conducted to hold conversations with partner agencies including Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Health (DOH), Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Center, Department of Information, Communications and Technology (DICT), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Agriculture (DA) as well as Local government Units (LGUs) of Kapalong and Asuncion and Brgy. Lasang. People interviewed are from the following:

Key Informant Interviews (KII)	Focus Group Discussions (FGD)
Former BBJs Project CTA	Project Team
Innovation Hub Consultant	SIYB Trainers
ILO Backstopping on Enterprise	Financial Education/Social Finance
ILO Backstopping on SIYB	SCORE Trainers and Beneficiary Enterprises
DA AMAD CAR (Government)	Partners: PATAMABA, FFW
DICT Central Office (Government)	SIYB Beneficiaries: Igbaras farmers
DTI BSMED (Government)	DOLE XI and DTI XI, OSHNET 11 (Government)
DOLE Director (Government)	DTI 11 (Government)

ECCP (Partner)	Davao Chamber + Bouyancies; Brgy. Lasang + TAMFIAS Fisherfolks
DOLE-OSHC (Government)	WISE Trainers and Enterprise-Beneficiaries
DOLE-BWC (Government)	DOLE 9 Zampen OSHNet (Government)
DOH (Government)	SIYB ECCP supported BASULTA trainers
ILO CO-Manila (Country Director)	SIYB MSME beneficiaries from BASULTA

A detailed list of the persons interviewed is herein attached as Annex 4. In total, 100 people were interviewed where 60 are women (60%).

Evaluation norms, standards and ethical safeguards

In line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) standards, the evaluation applies the key criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact as per the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Criteria for international development assistance. Specifically, the evaluation assesses how well the BBS maintained relevance as it responded to changing country needs (including the post pandemic) and programme adjustments. It considers the effectiveness of programme activities implemented under each project component, including unexpected positive or negative results, and the efficiency of their delivery in terms of available time, funding, and personnel. It assesses the impact the programme has had (or is positioned to have) and the sustainability of these impacts.

In line with ILO evaluation policy, the evaluation addresses gender equality and non-discrimination as a cross-cutting concern, considers if and how tripartism, social dialogue and international labour standards have been advanced, and coherence with ILO, UN and national plans.

The evaluation adhered to confidentiality and other ethical considerations throughout, following the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and Norms and Standards in the UN System. Confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews (e.g., quotes in the report have been anonymized). To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure maximum freedom of expression of the implementing partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders, programme staff were in most cases not present during interviews.

Key stakeholders will have the opportunity to review this draft report and to participate in stakeholders’ workshop.

Limitation

The final evaluation took place while the programme was still completing its final key outputs such as the construction of the innovation hubs and some ToEs/ToBs, which means that some results and upstream policy impacts of the intervention cannot yet be fully verified. The evaluation considered the likelihood of these results and impacts being achieved but follow up may be required for confirmation.

The evaluation interviews relied to some extent on the list of stakeholders provided by the project team which entertain the possibility of “cherry picking” of informants who have positive perspective of the project. Due to time constraints during the data collection, the ILO Headquarters and the donor were not interviewed. To mitigate this, the evaluation ensured to review relevant project documents and reports

for triangulation of information. Prior to the data collection, there was a discussion with the project team to ensure that all stakeholder groups are included on the list and there is gender balance.

IV. Evaluation Findings

Relevance

Programme context and initial design

As stated in the PRODOC, the ILO and the Government of Japan partnered to help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operate safely under the prolonged community quarantine brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and adapt to the New Normal business environment with improved workplace safety and health practices and better equipped to take advantage of the available digital tools and the expanding digital economy opportunities. The project is part of the [ILO's Flagship programme Safety+Health for All](#). This flagship programme seeks to improve health and safety of workers worldwide. It plays a key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on decent work and economic growth. It also contributes to the SDGs on good health and well-being and on responsible consumption and production. The strategy is about building knowledge, capacities and conducive national frameworks, and shoring up demand for safety and health at work. The programme brings together the social partners and stakeholders in an inclusive, collaborative and coordinated approach at all stages. It supports and builds on ILO's ongoing work to promote occupational safety and health (OSH), tapping the ILO's multidisciplinary expertise.¹ It has a particular focus on the promotion of OSH in MSMEs and has notably developed several research products and tools to improve the delivery of OSH services to MSMEs.

The project is well aligned with the interests of Japan in its long history of relationship with the Philippines as it is considered as one of its strategic partners that share fundamental values. More particularly, this project aligned on the first pillar of the "Four Initiatives" of Japanese diplomacy in the Philippines – that is on fostering together vibrant economy.² Likewise, the Government of Japan, through its Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, is a major contributor to the Safety + Health for All Programme and is funding several projects across Asia (Myanmar, Japan, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and Cambodia). During the conceptualization of this project, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs is expected to support a "sister" project implemented by the ILO in Indonesia entitled "Enhancing COVID-19 Prevention at and through Workplaces Job creation through business re-opening and continuation."

The project "Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and digitally" (*Bringing Back Job Safely Project*) aimed at contributing to improving the safety and health of workers in MSMEs in the non-metropolitan regions of the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis.³ The BBS is also consistent with the intent of the Bayanihan Act of 2020 or Republic Act 11469, enacted as a response to the COVID-19 crisis in the Philippines, in mitigating the effect of the pandemic in the disruption of the economy and undertaking measures to ensure health and safety for all including the private sector. The project is a

¹ International Labour Organization. (n.d.). Bringing back jobs safely under the COVID-19 crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting small and informal businesses safely and digitally [PDF]. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---lab_admin/documents/publication/wcms_764208.pdf

² Embassy of Japan in the Philippines. (n.d.). Press announcement of Prime Minister Abe's visit to the Philippines [Press release]. https://www.ph.emb-japan.go.jp/PMAbe_Visit/PMAbe_pressannouncement.html

³ Midterm Evaluation Report

supplement to the response policies of the Philippine government on public health and economic recovery including policies packaged under Bayanihan 2 Act or Republic Act 11494, among others. This project aimed to pay close attention to the policy discussion of IATF as the coordination mechanism of the epidemiological policy response.

Moreover, this project is aligned with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022, which has been updated to reflect the priorities for the next two years, including the implementation of the Universal Health Care Act, upskilling the workforce, and institutionalizing the Social Protection Floor. The updated plan PDP focused on achieving a healthy and resilient Philippines alongside economic recovery, ecological integrity and social development. The BBS has likewise strong alignment with the objectives of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) E-commerce roadmap of 2022 wherein the national strategy for financial inclusion provides the citizenry a clear pathway on how our country can maximize the opportunity to harness the fast-growing e-commerce in the country to boost our economic growth. The same program also provides for a COVID-19 roadmap checkpoint that highlights how small businesses can utilize such checklist.⁴ Similarly, the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) component of the project has aligned with the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS) 2021-2022 or Executive Order No. 140 series of 2021 where it advanced the discussion on how to ensure safety workplaces at the enterprise level.⁵ The MOU signed between the DOLE and ILO helped boost the productivity and employability in MSMEs as well as the informal economy. It bolstered the Philippines' NERS in restoring business confidence through safe and healthy workplaces and upgrade the digital skills of workers.⁶ In 2022 after the transition of the Duterte administration to the Marcos Jr. administration, the MSME digitalization support of the BBS has remained relevant as it addressed two of the 10-point economic agenda of the Marcos Jr. administration such as on "Digital Philippines" and "Future-ready Filipinos."

The project was aimed at contributing to the targets under SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth. Its objectives are within the framework of the Decent Work Country Programme for the Philippines (DWCP) 2020-2024, particularly under Priority 1 on productive, remunerative, freely chosen, green and sustainable work opportunities available for all Filipinos willing to work. Contributing to the Country Programme Outcome (CPO) PHL104, the project outcomes were to support the global ILO Programme and Budget outcome (4) on sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and innovation and decent work. In addition, the project was envisioned to contribute to realization of ILO Programme and Budget outcome 7.2. (for both 2020-2021 and 2022-2023) on *increased capacity of member States to ensure safe and healthy working conditions*. Along the same lines, this project was in line with the newly adopted UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework for COVID-19 Recovery in the Philippines (SEPF) 2020-2023, which is considered an update to the Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (PFSD) 2019-2023. Under the SEPF, the Prosperity and Planet Pillar addresses economic response and recovery, focusing on protecting jobs, MSMEs and the informal sector workers.

⁴ Department of Trade and Industry. (2022). E-commerce Philippines Roadmap 2022 [PDF]. Retrieved from https://ecommerce.dti.gov.ph/madali/images/eCommerce_Philippines_Roadmap_2022.pdf

⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. (2021, June 25). Executive Order No. 140, s. 2021 [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2021/06jun/20210625-EO-140-RRD.pdf>

⁶ <https://journal.com.ph/ilo-dole-ink-agreement-to-help-workers-return-to-work-safely-and-digitally/>

Maximizing the relevance during the implementation stage

The project has ensured that there is relevance in its implementation design. This is evident in the project's logical framework that captured the essence of its relevance to the pressing needs and issues of the MSMEs hard hit by the pandemic crisis.⁷ The project has been wise in targeting MSMEs outside Metro Manila who were not only affected by the pandemic but have been receiving less support and opportunities compared to those in metropolitan areas. Significantly, the project accommodated affected MSMEs in Metro Manila as part of its target beneficiaries during the second extension which was agreed to by the donor allowing completion of the implementation until March 31, 2023.

The project was built around key strategies that are believed to be people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific, prevention-oriented, and delivering as one. The project activities were essentially targeted to contribute from within the world of work to flattening the epidemic curve within the healthcare system's capacity until the pandemic is eventually overcome. The capacity of the healthcare system was considered a given factor for this project in its target sites and aimed to collaborate on the surveillance side. The project intended that the supervision of workplace OSH practices as well as the analysis of the occupation-wise infection data would supplement the ongoing contact tracing efforts of the government in early 2021. The organization of employers and workers was supposed to play a role on the idea of an expanded surveillance. However, the project team struggled to convince the responsible agencies and/or task force on data sharing because they have already adopted their own system of surveillance. Thus, an adjustment was made to shift Outcome 3 Knowledge Management System to a database that's more useful to MSMEs and business development service providers.

The support for MSMEs on the OSH training-cum-advisory services integrating COVID-19 safety/mitigating measures (COVID OSH) and the digitalization of business operations were implemented to support the existing efforts of the various government programs as well as the private sector. WISE and SCORE are both clearly aligned with the DOLE's mandate in ensuring health and safety for workers at the enterprise level. While there were several discussions between the DOLE BWC and OSH Center on how to incorporate the COVID OSH to their existing programs including the Technical Advisory Visits (TAV), it is worthy of highlight that the training design for BOSH SO1 has integrated WISE.

The inclusion of the enterprises at the informal sector such as those home-based and itinerant has proven to be valuable to the objectives of the government's national strategy for financial inclusion which provides the citizenry a clear pathway on how our country can maximize the opportunity to harness the fast-growing e-commerce. The project has taught them, through the SIYB, on the use of online and digital services such as digital payments and accounting tools. Although there were some concerns raised on connectivity and adeptness to the online modality, the trainings brought beneficial results to the MSMEs as it contributed to providing ease in doing business and keeping them safe from the infection threats of the pandemic thereby preventing and mitigating the COVID-19 risks for MSMEs particularly those located outside of Metro Manila.

The practice of doing an environment scan through a mapping of the digital landscape led to better understanding the issues of digital divide particularly on access to connectivity and infrastructure in the project sites. The study conducted in July 2021 by the Philippine Young Entrepreneurs Association (PYEA)

⁷ ibid

for this project has provided a clear pathway for the roll out of Outcome 2 on enhanced productivity through digital modalities for business operations. This has further refined the objectives of the training components on SIYB and Financial Education and tailor-fitting them to the needs and gaps identified by the above-mentioned study. This initiative during the implementation has led to the precise identification of entry points and clear added value of the interventions for the MSME digitalization ecosystem and avoid duplications of already existing programs for MSMEs, given the already well-established national OSH ecosystem and the pre-existing public-private partnership between DTI and the platform economy players to promote e-commerce among MSMEs.

The driving assumption, as illustrated in the Theory of Change (ToC), is that the beneficiary MSMEs would effectively identify the weak spots in their workplaces and business operating systems bridging between offline and online operations as a result of the implementation of their learnings from the trainings and related support services provided. Thus, identification of the Training of Trainers (ToT) and ToE participants was crucial. In an effort to provide more clarity to the program concept and in finding support for the re-echo or conduct of ToEs, the project team conducted a series of measures to accelerate ToE implementation enumerated in the *Effectiveness* section. This has not only provided an opportunity for confirmation of the findings of the mapping study but also gave an opening to foster strong partnerships.

The pandemic crisis has challenged the existing context of program development and management, especially in the program design to shift in perspectives. It has required a new set of understanding and has caused paradigms to shift especially in designing responses to a crisis – particularly adopting an ecosystem approach that build on the existing ecosystems and help transform it towards a more inclusive and effective one. As such, it has required alignment of programs with the government responses and mechanisms. The call for concerted efforts attracted the facilitation of MOUs with this project and building on existing efforts including training modules and infrastructures. Aside from the congruence of this project to DTI and DOLE’s existing programs, it also aligned with the DICT’s initiatives under the capacity development bureau (ICT Literacy and Competency Development Bureau) which oversees training facility establishment such as on Digital Transformation Centers Project, the Tech4ED Project, and training provision on ICT Workforce Upskilling Projects. In fact, the project has supported the BARMM on the expansion of the DTC Innovation Hub in DICT Cotabato City. The MSME/eCommerce training under the BBS dovetailed with the training being provided under the *digitaljobsPH* Project of DICT. The establishment of three (3) Innovation Hubs augmented the number of DICT-managed centers which would support increased access to ICT skills training in addition to providing access to connectivity and eGovernment services. Due to the changes on the design of the third DTC in order to accommodate the request from DICT, the project had to drop it and reallocate the funds to purchase 20 Starlink sets and PCs which were distributed to remotely-located DTCs/Tech4ED Centers. The Hubs are also to be made part of the network of Tech4ED Centers and would facilitate the upskilling of Managers and associated trainers of partner-owned Centers through the provision of Training of Trainers, effectively cascading ICT skills training at the grassroots level. Moreover, there was a significant relevance of this project in supporting the OSHNet’s efforts in bridging occupational safety and health to environmental protection as elaboratively manifested in the SCORE modules.

The partner agencies highlighted the relevance of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) as it plays an important role in providing feedback, strategic guidance and ensuring coherence with relevant national policies and strategies. Thus, timely adjustments of the activities are done according to the progress in the context. As part of project governance, the PAC was formally set-up, with members including the tripartite constituents of the ILO, and a consented term of reference. The first two quarterly meetings of

the PAC addressed strategic issues, including the time extension request, endorsement of the proposed Work Plan for 2022, the project's contribution to Typhoon Rai (Odette) recovery efforts, and the acknowledgement of the project's contribution to the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS). This allowed more flexibility for the project to find more relevance during the implementation stage. There is also an acknowledgment on the importance of having dialogue and cooperation between governments, employers, and workers which was further encouraged by the SCORE and WISE trainings. Partners like DOLE, DICT and DTI viewed this arrangement as a big help to the concerned beneficiaries in arriving at mutually agreed decisions and concrete strategies in promoting balanced labor relations and decent working conditions within the beneficiary MSMEs.

Maintaining relevance after the lifting of pandemic

Given the unanticipated delay in the implementation of activities caused by factors discussed in the *Effectiveness and Efficiency* sections of this report, the first NCE that was anchored on the prolonged pandemic situation paved the understanding on the need for catch-up plan, speedy procurement in the case of the construction of the innovation hubs and the careful selection of delivery partners. In the interviews conducted for this evaluation, respondents have mentioned that the BBS was strained in maintaining its relevance as a COVID-19 response program when the pandemic was expected to end in the last quarter of 2022 and during the lifting of the public health emergency in July 2023. Moreover, it also surfaced that BBS served as an eye-opener and a testament to the continuing effort to address systemic issues on safety at workplace and digitalization which have both been given spotlight by the pandemic situation. Partner agencies attested that the project components are still very significant to the stakeholders even post pandemic as it still addressed the needed support for recovery, particularly for affected MSMEs.

Utilization of digital platforms is one of the learnings catalyzed by the pandemic situation and soon after the lifting of the state of public health emergency, the Philippine government has also pushed for digitalization of its vital services. Hence, BBS has timely introduced and prepared MSMEs through the SIYB and Financial Education, towards this pivotal shift to the call for transformative policy direction on digitalization (E-commerce roadmap). The BBS has also aligned with the DOH's promotion of healthy settings in workplaces under the Health Promotion Bureau program on *Healthy Pilipinas*, where OSH components (SCORE and WISE) were both greatly emphasized, more importantly for MSMEs. Development of *Healthy Pilipinas* toolkits on health promotion were also materialized through this synergy.

Coherence

Complementarity of project components

Most respondents of this evaluation have admitted that they are only familiar on the specific project component/s that engaged them. However, some have mentioned that they have been trained on 2 or 3 training modules such as either in SCORE and SIYB, WISE and SIYB and Financial Education or on both SCORE and WISE. This shows that synergy between project components was not fully explored except for the overlap of beneficiaries. The implementation of each project component was not observed to build up on each other, rather they run independently of one another save for those activities that are within the same target outcome. An example of this was the relation between those trained under SIYB and Financial Education and how they are supposed to utilize the Innovation Hubs constructed in the selected project sites.

As illustrated in the ToC and the logical framework, there is interrelation of each component particularly targeting an overall development objective of improving the safety and health of workers in MSMEs in the non-metropolitan regions and mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. The project has envisioned that the first order outcome 3 would strengthen awareness among non-beneficiary MSMEs on the basis of case studies and success stories of outcomes 1 (OSH) and 2 (digitalization). Part of the assumption of the project was that the non-beneficiary MSMEs would find the success cases relevant to their own business operations, thus they will replicate the demonstrated good practices to make their workplace safer and more productive.

It was deduced during the interviews for this evaluation that if small enterprises (informal sector) are trained on WISE, once they grow and become registered (formalize) they can then undergo SCORE as well.

Synergy with other ILO projects

The project built on the history of ILO in supporting countries to combat past epidemics. The ILO has adopted numerous International Labour Conventions and recommendations on OSH, including the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) and the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). The Philippines recently ratified ILO Convention No. 187 in 2019.

This project is part of the Safety + Health for All flagship programme of the ILO which notably collaborated with the Enterprise Department of ILO to develop an Action Checklist to prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 at work for MSMEs. Likewise, this project has tapped the reputation of ILO as a renowned international technical agency on MSME development and a global leader on the formalization of the informal economy. This project has built on the ILO's Financial Education Programme expertise and mandate. Since 2006, the ILO Global Programme on Financial Education has been involved in over 35 interventions worldwide, assisting disadvantaged and underserved populations in making informed financial choices and changing their financial behaviour for a better future.⁸ Its flagship programme Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) has reached 15 million entrepreneurs and MSMEs globally by 2015. With approximately more than 23.7 million entrepreneurs trained globally every year, ILO estimate that more than 5.4 million new businesses and 10.4 million new jobs were created because of the SIYB training.⁹ The ILO is the sole UN agency leading the global efforts of formalizing the vast informal economy on the basis of its seminal Recommendation 204 of 2015. BBS has utilized ILO guidelines, tools and studies developed in 2020 which include among others a guide on safe return to work, a checklist on OSH prevention in SMEs, the assessment guide of the COVID-19 impact on MSMEs and informal economy, the hands-on training on OSH for COVID-19 prevention, and the MSME development programmes adjusted for the COVID-19 context such as e-SIYB and SCORE. This project has aligned with the Sustainable Enterprises Programme which was built to address 2007 Resolution on Sustainable Enterprises. More particularly, the SIYB, Global Financial Education and SCORE are all part of the Sustainable Enterprises Programme of the ILO. Similarly, this project also adhered to the UN Global Development Initiative Digital Cooperation Forum where the concept of "Just Digital Transition" was promoted.

⁸ [Financial education | International Labour Organization \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/financial-education)

⁹ [Start and Improve Your Business \(SIYB\) programme | International Labour Organization \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/start-siyb)

In addition, BBS has generated synergy with the recently started implementation of a project entitled *Improving Labour Law Compliance in Rural Sectors of the Philippines and Indonesia with a Focus on Women Workers*. This project aimed, among others, to build the capacity of tripartite partners in selected rural communities on labour standards and OSH standards.

This project at its initial stage built linkage to the Responsible Supply Chain in Asia (RSCA) project and the action research programmes on fintech and financial inclusion. The former promotes the responsible business conduct of the lead firms in the agriculture supply chain in the Philippines and, also operate in five other countries of Southeast and East Asia including Japan. BBS tapped RSCA to discuss with the supply chain lead firms and the relevant business associations to reach out to their small suppliers and buyers. Although it did not generated collaboration with foreign chambers such as the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Phils. Inc. (JCCIPI) as well as the RSCA counterparts in Japan, this project has tapped the network of the Philippine Chambers of Commerce, particularly in Davao and other project sites. Likewise, this project collaborated with the Social Finance of ILO in maximizing the potential on continuing dialogue with the fintech innovators together with the digitalization component of the BBS. Synergies developed with the new initiative of the ILO Social Finance on the Global Centre on Digital Wages for Decent Work. The latter intends to support enterprises to transition in building digital payment ecosystems adapted to the needs of enterprises and workers as well as test solutions to enhance formalization and compliance. BBS has also collaborated with the Skills for Prosperity (SfP) programme Philippines which engaged priority sectors in agriculture, with a focus on food production/processing; construction, with a focus on skills for green building practices; and IT-BPM, with a focus on the emerging skills needed for e-commerce. The latter fit with the direction of SIYB, Financial Education and digitalization component of the project. BBS also built relationships with such projects as Women in STEM, Rebuilding Better, and Better Coconut Economy.

It is important to note that this project's delivering as one approach was guided by the integrated strategic policy framework of the ILO which has developed a four-pillar strategic policy framework for COVID-19 response at the early stage of the pandemic. As seen in the matrix below, the four pillars are: 1) stimulating the economy and employment; 2) supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes; 3) protecting workers in the workplace, and; 4) relying on social dialogue for solutions.



While the main component on the prevention of workers health and safety of this project were considered a project under Pillar 3 combined with Pillar 2 support for MSMEs, the above-mentioned two strategies were also interpreted as linkage to Pillars 1 and 4.

Furthermore, the strategy adopted by this project reflected ILO’s standard setting role and the tripartite identity. The most relevant standards often referred to guide the overall recovery from the COVID-19 crisis have been: the ILO Recommendation R205 – Employment and Decent work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, and the ILO Recommendation R204 – Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation.

Coherence of activities and collaboration with other agencies

The evaluation did not directly engage with other international development actors as part of its data collection and neither discussions with ILO programme staff nor activities documented in reports suggested any close cooperation with non-ILO projects to enhance mutual outcomes except from the collaboration with ECCP-CRESCENT Project funded by EU BAEP in the delivery SIYB, SCORE and WISE trainings in BARMM. Given the challenges and uncertainty the programme faced, perhaps there was little time to explore such cooperation fully or perhaps the opportunities to do so were limited.

However, respondents of the evaluation emphasized that BBS has inspired partner agencies to collaborate as manifested by an issuance of a Joint Administrative Order on Healthy workplaces between DOH, CSC and DOLE.

Effectiveness

The project management operated based on ILO standards which gave assurance for quality of its services and systems. Workplan revisions were made in view of the delays brought by the factors enumerated at

Efficiency section of this report. Apart from the impacts of COVID-19, other contributing factors to the adjustments included implementing partner capacity gaps and a longer than originally envisaged time to develop some key relationships, and to build trust and partner buy-in for digitalization, construction of innovation hubs, knowledge management system and even on the roll out of ToE/ToBs. The midterm evaluation provided a basis for developing catch-up plan in order to meet completion of target activities and outputs. As part of this strategy, other partners were onboarded so that the BBS can meet the numbers in its target outputs such as PATAMABA in November 2022, BBMC in August/September 2023 and FFW in November 2023, among others.

The evaluation interviews provided a good understanding of the stakeholders’ feedback on the quality of the technical advice and training, capacity development, project management and partnership aspects of the project. The results generally regarded the project team as committed, proactive and open to supporting the end beneficiaries – the coordinators and the trainers were extending their assistance even beyond the trainings. However, the project team was short-handed during the first 2 years of implementation. The number of individual consultancy agreements attended for regular monitoring of outputs has consumed the team’s time and energy. Hence, an additional staff was recruited as also recommended by the midterm evaluation report. Despite this, some stakeholders admitted delays in the processing of their payment tranches which pushed them to delay the conduct of the remaining trainings.

Achievement towards Outcomes and Outputs

Below is a summary of the achieved outputs as of February 2024. During the conduct of this evaluation, BBS has been simultaneously conducting the remaining trainings and the construction of the innovation hubs is ongoing – nearing completion and handover ceremony to partner before end of March 2024.

Achievement towards outcomes and outputs as of February 2024		
Outcome/Output	Indicator/Targets	Status of Achievement
<i>Outcome 1: Workplace of the Regional MSMEs is made safer and more productive in the New Normal environment with the COVID 19 risks</i>		
Output 1.1: Quality OSH cum-productivity training, including COVID 19 prevention and mitigation measures, is delivered to MSMEs outside the metropolitan area	Number of COVID-OSH training and advisory services delivered Targets: WISE ToT – 11 batches WISE Trainers – approximately 200 WISE ToEs – 667 to 1000 batches to cover around 10,000 MSMEs SCORE ToT – 2 batches SCORE Trainers – approximately 20 SCORE ToEs – 8 batches to cover around 40 MSMEs	WISE ToT – 5 batches WISE Trainers – 87 individuals where 56 are men and 31 are women 2,474 out of 2,829 MSMEs underwent ToEs WISE participants as of March 2024 is at 4,085 where 1,503 are men and 2,582 are women. WISE trainings had 1,720 MSME participants, 1,943 participants from the informal sector, 126 from the PWD sector, 78 are from the IPs and 2019 are from the workers union/associations As of March 2024, SCORE ToT – 2 batches

		SCORE Trainers – 23 individuals 40 MSMEs underwent ToEs
Output 1.2: Interdisciplinary knowledge management system is established and institutional capacity of 3 key partners strengthened for the sustainable delivery of COVID OSH expertise in the Philippines	Functional KMS and completion of institutional capacity building activities of 3 key partners	KMS now changed to database more useful to MSMEs and business development service providers
<i>Outcome 2: Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods have reduced the risk of COVID 19 infection and enhanced productivity with digital modalities for business operations</i>		
Output 2.1: Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods are provided with internet connectivity and related business support services via the first pilot of the Innovation Hubs and Satellite network	Number of MSMEs granted internet connectivity (1,000+) Number of MSMEs accessing business support services at the Hubs and/or online (1,000+)	2 Innovation hubs completed construction in Pampanga and Cotabato City in March 2024. Procured Starlink sets for at least 20 sites from GIDA areas prioritized by DICT
Output 2.2: Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods are trained on digital entrepreneurship	Number of digital entrepreneurship training delivered to the target beneficiaries (20,000+) Targets: SIYB ToT – 10 batches SIYB Trainers – approximately 200 individuals SIYB ToEs – 800 to 1000 batches to cover around 20,000 MSMEs Financial Education ToT – 5 batches Financial Education Trainers – approximately 75 to 80 individuals Financial Education ToBs – 225 to 240 batches covering around 3375 to 3600 MSMEs	SIYB ToT – 14 batches SIYB Trainers – 242 out of 200 where 153 are women and 89 are men SIYB ToEs – 67 out of 124 batches that trained 2,135 out of 3,760 MSMEs As of April 2024, a total of 3,197 MSMEs were trained on SIYB. Financial Education ToT – 3 batches Financial Education Trainers – 46 out of 45 individuals where 32 are women and 14 are men Financial Education ToBs – 3 out of 90 batches that trained 60 out of 1,350 MSMEs <i>*note that Financial Education training targets were reduced accordingly</i>
<i>Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and/or promoted knowledge exchange among non-beneficiary MSMEs on the advantages and modalities of safe workplace and digitalized business operations.</i>		
Output 3.1: Case studies produced of the MSMEs with improved safety and health and/or digital operations combined with contributing support services	Number of case studies produced (10+) Indicators of improved safety vis-à-vis COVID-19 risks covered in the case studies will be	Writing of case studies ongoing

	determined in conjunction with the KMS	
	Indicators of business success covered in the case studies	
3.2 Effective communication materials produced and shared with key stakeholders and media	1 communication strategy plan Communication materials produced for each component	3 promotional videos developed (SCORE, WISE and SIYB)

Unexpected results

The change of administration in government as a result of the 2022 national elections prompted the changes in the focal points for the DICT and DTI on the BBS project. This resulted to delays in responses in communication, thus stalled the signing of the MOUs that would have solidified the partnerships with the said agencies. It took also a while for each revision on the MOU to be cleared by the JUR at HQ. It must be noted that the training delivery by the government partners are dependent on the MOUs and instructions from their management. Thus, timely instructions are important so as to include this delivery of trainings in their annual programs. This also affected the construction of the innovation hubs. The design of the hubs, which entirely rests on the specifications of the DICT and with upgrade on OSH requirements from ILO, took a longer time to develop. Part of the challenge was to fit the expectation/specifications of the hubs with the relatively small budget allocation as specified in the PRODOC. The contracting modality for innovation hubs initially planned was via implementation agreement with the LGU, which, after discussion with DICT, was found unfavorable especially in 2022 being an election year. As such, ILO had to directly implement the construction of innovation hubs with the support of an External Collaborator to act as “innovation hub construction manager.”

On the other hand, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) awarded its partners from the public and private sector during the “Alab: Recognition of Partners in Advancing the Digital PH Agenda” last June 28, 2022 at the Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City and the BBS project team received an award on behalf of the ILO. This was in recognition of the partnership on digital transformation of MSMEs. Moreover, this evaluation found out that there was a 130% turn out having 14 out of 10 batches as a target for the SIYB training. Around 242 were trained out of the 200 target trainers where 153 were women. The overwhelming interest to join the SIYB proved that the promotional campaign conducted during the caravan visits to areas of the government partners was highly effective. Similarly, the SCORE training boosted strong interest in ensuring PWD participation and engagement. During the presentation of MSMEs on the application of SCORE in their own respective enterprises, it was highlighted that BBMC, as a PWD organization, has seen great value of the training to the safety and efficiency of their workplace. Along the same lines, WISE training for the fisherfolks in Barangay Lasang, Davao City has expanded to A.L. Navarro High School students enrolled in STEM. This was an unexpected turn out when these STEM students were looking for an enterprise for their exposure and found TAMFIAS fisherfolks who have been a beneficiary of WISE. The same case of interest in the academe was observed in Kapalong municipality where the Kapalong College of Agriculture, Science and Technology (KCAST) has also trained on WISE and implemented the checklist in their campus. This was a product of the strong partnership established with the LGU of Kapalong. Community-based WISE trainers were also developed

through this established good relation with the LGUs. In fact, Asuncion LGU will roll out WISE in each barangay in October 2024 as part of their MSMEs business licensing program.

Another worth highlighting was the Starlink set distribution to 20 GIDA-located DTCs across the country, which was highly appreciated by the DICT. It was also unexpected during the design stage of the project that the DOLE would re-engineer the national OSH system to target MSMEs and shift its approach from overly technical training to a simple and pragmatic training. It introduced the developmental approach to accommodate the MSEs that are having difficulty in their OSH compliance through mainstreaming the PAOT-based WISE into their BOSH curriculum and eventually linked it to their TAV.

Also, the fact that the DOLE fully re-engineered the national OSH system to target MSEs, shifting its focus from overly technical training to simple and pragmatic training as well as introducing the developmental approach to accommodate MSEs that may find OSH compliance difficult by mainstreaming the PAOT-based WISE into the BOSH curriculum and making good linkage to the newly introduced TAV.

Stakeholder engagement

This evaluation learned that there are challenges in targeting the informal sector as a project beneficiary. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Resolutions Concerning Statistics of Employment in the Informal Sector Adopted by the 15th ICLS defined the informal sector as production units operating on a small scale and at a low level of organization with little or no division between labor and capital as factors of production and with the primary objective of generating income and employment for the persons concerned (ILO, 1993). This concept which is based on the characteristics of enterprises and production units is linked to the framework of the System of National Accounts to include the contribution of the informal sector or informal enterprises in the calculation of the Gross Domestic Product.¹⁰ In the Philippines, the definition of the informal sector is operationalized in the National Coordination Statistical Board (NSCB) Resolution No. 16, Series of 2003 which specifies the criteria for identifying the informal sector. The NSCB Resolution No. 16-2003 excluded the following enterprises from the informal sector: (a) single proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations; (b) quasi-corporations; (c) units with 10 or more employees (unless they satisfy all the criteria for an informal sector); (d) units engaged in professional services (unless they satisfy all the criteria for an informal sector); (e) farms managed by cooperatives; (f) farms, regardless of size, keeping sets of accounts separate from the households.

While the government partners such as DOLE and DTI both recognized that targeting the informal sector is both practical and strategic as they are marginalized, other implementing partners such as the FFW and ECOP have also voiced out that these enterprises are usually not actively represented in most of their programs. Hence, reaching out to them for trainings required more work and convincing so that they participate in the said trainings. The project has planned on outreach to the informal sector by engaging PATAMABA and direct linkage to LGUs so as to address the challenges in increasing participation of the informal sector. Through the PATAMABA and FFW, the project has distributed data access cards to the digitally-struggling entrepreneurs mostly operating in the informal sector. It has likewise partnered with Alliance of Workers in the Informal Economy/Sector (ALLWEIS) and National Anti-Poverty Commission – Workers in the Informal Sector Council (NAPC-WISC) to support the outreach to the informal businesses.

¹⁰ The Informally Employed in the Philippines: Issues in Job Security of Tenure, Social Security Coverage and Measurement, Emily Christi A. Cabegin 2022

Among the identified factors that distract the training participants include the competing priority whether to join the training and lose day's income because they have to close their business on the duration of the training, seeing the training as an expense or would incur costs on them as digitalization is normally perceived to entail costs, internet connectivity issues, lack of equipment (cellular phone or laptop) to use during the online training and comprehension of the training modules which were originally in English but eventually translated in Filipino/Tagalog and local language (Bisaya in Davao). The Master Trainers have noticed that participant MSMEs do not complete full attendance in the duration of the training because they have to attend to their business operations. There was a sufficient consideration to utilize various training modality since participants from outside Metro Manila mostly lack digital maturity especially those within the age bracket of 40 to 60 years old. As a way forward, the project team agreed that they could bring or be represented by their adult children in the training instead.

As for the participants from the government partner agencies, the roll out of the ToBs has become a challenge. Among the reasons identified to cause the delay were (a) seeking authorization from the supervisor who may not always be familiar with the IA and the objectives of the training; (b) no clear funding stream to support the conduct of ToBs; (c) some trainees got promoted thus either no longer in the same division or has become busy with other government functions; and (d) some participants do not necessarily have strong interest in the training objectives and the roll out of ToBs. Given all these challenges met on stakeholder engagement, the PMU has adopted mitigating measures including the conduct of a caravan visit to other areas of its government partners in the campaign for appropriate training participants. The PMU conducted a series of measures to accelerate ToE implementation including the following: a) dialogue with responsible national and regional managers of the training programmes to supplement the communication with the trainers who participated in the ToT; b) development and circulation of additional implementation guidelines to the partners; c) field visits to deepen the understanding of the implementation bottlenecks on the ground; d) organization of the demonstration master class ToEs by the Master Trainers; e) continuous review and upgrading of training contents to meet the state-of-the-art in the digital economy (the latest being the use case of the generative AI to marketing); f) reinforcement of the Master Trainer teams to strengthen the technical guidance to the national trainers; and g) identification and engagement of new regional/local partners with demonstrated capacity and commitment to deliver ToEs.

PMU capacity

PMU capacity was put to test by the challenges met during the project life. Recognizing the delays in the recruitment of the project staff, they had to immediately embark on the demanding task of setting up the IAs with the government partners, finding the implementing partners and starting the recruitment of MSMEs as well as preparing the training team to start the module contextualization, if not development. Given all these pressures, there was a need for continuous staff learning/familiarization of ILO guidelines which in turn has to be ensured to be well-understood also by the implementing partners on its implications working with the informal sector. The responses during the evaluation interviews showed that while there was due and proper orientation made on the reporting guidelines for the partners, the procedural requirements could be really tasking on the part of the partners directly dealing with MSMEs in the informal sector. One particular example is on securing official receipts for meals or transport expenses which in most cases home-based MSMEs do not have. This prompts the idea of a continuous learning for the PMU to be adept in finding ways convenient to the target beneficiaries.

Given the delays in the implementation brought by several factors elaborated in the *Efficiency* section of this report, the PMU had to adopt a catch-up plan in order to meet completion of target activities and

outputs before March 2024. This required that cohesive ways of support system among the administrative staff of ILO should be encouraged. While the use of backstopping ILO colleagues was extremely useful for the project, the need to increase the local staff within the PMU became apparent as the demand to attend to multiple tasks has significantly amplified after the first NCE. It is worth highlighting that the SIYB backstopping officer on Enterprise served as a virtual project manager during the first few months of BBS as well as during the six-month gap period between the CTA and the National Programme Manager. An additional administrative staff was recruited to support in the catch-up plan. On another note, the onboarding of a National Programme Manager took some time after the crucial decision of the CTA to leave in 2023 due to implications on the project budget.

Overall, the BBS contributed to the goal of improving the safety and health of workers in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis. It has achieved results and generated good practices despite the challenges met.

Efficiency

Time and resource efficiency

The BBS was conceived to be a year-long response program to the COVID-19 pandemic, a timeframe believed to enable signing of implementation agreements, design training modules, conduct trainings per project component, construct innovation hubs, establish a knowledge management system and produce results as enumerated in the target outcomes and outputs. This, however, proved to be unrealistic and ambitious in producing such results within this limited period. Hence, this project has enjoyed four no cost extensions (NCE) until April 2024. In some cases, this meant that some key activities (i.e. construction of innovation hubs) were scheduled to be completed with just weeks remaining until the project closed. This left little time to document and present results and to work with stakeholders to support the broader application and utilization of such.

The project has experienced delays in implementation due to several reasons including the following:

1. Delay in the recruitment of project staff which took 3 months before completed in September 2021 and the OSH coordinator was only onboarded in February 2022;
2. Delays in the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement/s caused by the bureaucratic processes and competing priorities of government partner agencies which cascaded to both the vertical and horizontal government layers, particularly with DICT and DOLE; it was only in August 2022 when the MOU with DTI was signed in order to move forward with the training activities and on the same year, MOU with BSP did not materialize;
3. Contracting issues of consultant/s (i.e. SIYB Master Trainer and Financial Education master design) which caused delay in the conduct of trainings;
4. Occurrence of Typhoon Odette in December 2021 as well as the conduct of local barangay elections in May 2022 and the Presidential election which caused delays on the side of the government partners on such matters as the signing of MOU and other key decisions to work with the BBS during the prolonged election period;

5. Work from home setup brought by the pandemic has slowed down the operations and administrative work within the PMU, government partners and implementing partners;
6. Lack of funding support for the conduct of ToE/ToBs which were mostly relied on trainers' resource mobilization capacity;
7. Delay in the construction of the innovation hubs due to several revisions on the design and bureaucratic processes with partner agency - only in 2023 when the MOU with DICT was signed so as to start the construction of the innovation hubs; actual delay in construction was about 2-3 months as against the contract;
8. Project CTA left in 2022 and it took some time to onboard the National Programme Manager to lead on the completion of the project implementation;
9. Diversity of the target groups of MSMEs (informal sector) posed a challenge in developing training modules;

While there are outputs and activities that needed specialized expertise but not budgeted in the initial project design, savings from the budget line allocated for technical support of ILO's thematic experts originally anticipated to be hired as consultants have changed to staff cost of ILO technical units providing the backstopping support and of the project team directly providing support, augmented by free services rendered online by the in-house experts of the Country Office, Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) in Bangkok and relevant technical units at the Headquarters in Geneva. Further, the budget for construction of the innovation hubs did not anticipate the inflation brought by the global crisis on food and energy accelerated by the war in Ukraine, particularly increase in the engineering overhead expenses. In general, fund utilization had been efficient and there has been a judicious spending as evidenced by zero excessive expenditure. Clearly, funds were managed according to standardized ILO rates. In this evaluation, it was found out that there were significant delays in the payment of the consultants and fund transfer to implementing partners. Nonetheless, contract services were paid in the context of fair competition based on standard market rates.

M&E recalibration

Per ILO requirements, the type and timing of evaluations vary depending on the amount and duration of projects. Hence, upon the extension of the BBS project duration, there had been consequently an addition of a midterm evaluation. While the PRODOC only planned for a final evaluation, a midterm evaluation has to be carried out since the project has now been categorized as having a funding envelope between 1M-5M USD and implemented in a duration of between 18-30 months, thus requiring both a midterm and final evaluations. A midterm internal evaluation was planned to take place in August to October 2022, however, said evaluation was completed in February 2023. During the final evaluation interviews, it also surfaced that there was no functional M&E digital system that could aptly measure the impacts on digitalization among MSMEs. Hence, a recalibration of the M&E tools and success indicators was the result of the rationalization on the project component/s on their attribution of deliverables to target outcomes. Worthy to mention, there were monitoring tools including feedback survey for trainings and a digital monitoring tool for SIYB, particularly on database for improvement or feedback from workers, provided by the ILO Flagship Programme on Safety+Health for All. Perhaps due to limited PMU capacity, these were not given proper attention and due application during the implementation stage.

Project output/activity completion

The project has experienced delays in implementation particularly in the establishment of innovation hubs which were meant to strengthen the service of the DTC network for local MSMEs by functioning as the hub of training resources and back-office support for the rural-based MSMEs trained under SIYB and Financial Education. The delay in the conduct of the ToTs and ToEs for WISE and SCORE was affected by the availability of the trainers on the target schedules. For WISE, another factor for the delay can be attributed to the capacity of the trainers to organize and mobilize the required number of participants for the ToEs. For SCORE, the trainers had difficulty in recruiting the appropriate SMEs for the ToEs. As illustrated in the *Effectiveness* section of this report, engaging the appropriate stakeholders also posed several challenges.

Below is a summary of the status of each target output/s of this project.

Output Delivery as of March 2024		
Target Output/s	Output Status	Output Summary Target
Outcome 1: Workplace of regional MSMEs is made safer and more productive in the New Normal environment with the COVID-19 risks		
1.1 Quality OSH-cum productivity training, including COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures, is delivered to MSMEs outside the metropolitan area	Completed, however target ToEs are not fully met (for WISE)	Includes the following activities: 2 training courses (WISE for COVID and SCORE); production of training materials suitable for target beneficiaries in the country; promotion and conduct of training of trainers (ToTs); promotion and conduct of training of enterprises (ToEs)
1.2 Interdisciplinary knowledge management system is established and institutional capacity of 3 key partners is strengthened for the sustainable delivery of COVID OSH expertise in the Philippines	KMS was changed to a database more relevant to MSMEs and business development service providers	Includes the following activities: monitoring of OSH training activities (integrating with health and social protection information); making improvements to training program based on feedback from the knowledge management system; capacity strengthening of key institutions delivering OSH trainings
Outcome 2: Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods have reduced the risk of COVID-19 infection and enhanced productivity with digital modalities for business operations		
2.1 Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods are provided with internet connectivity and business support services via the first pilot of the Innovations Hubs and Satellites network	Reduced to 2 innovation hubs that are ongoing completion of their construction, plus the distribution of Starlink sets. Handover ceremonies scheduled in the later part of March 2024. Starlink sets with Personal	Includes the following activities: construction of 3 regional innovation hubs; operationalization of the hubs; extending internet connectivity support to small and informal businesses

	Computer were already purchased for GIDAs	
2.2 Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods are trained on digital entrepreneurship	Completed, however target ToE beneficiaries for SIYB and Financial Education are not met	Includes the following activities: 2 training courses (SIYB and Financial Education): production of training materials suitable for target beneficiaries in the country; promotion and conduct of training of trainers (ToTs); promotion and conduct of training of enterprises (ToEs and ToBs)
Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and/or promoted knowledge exchange among non-beneficiary MSMEs on the advantages and modalities of safe workplace and digitalized business operation		
3.1 Case studies produced of the MSMEs with improved safety and health and/or digital operations combined with contributing support services	Writing of case studies ongoing	Includes: structuring the case study format; interviewing beneficiary MSMEs; writing the case studies; peer review and publication of material
3.2 Effective communication materials produced and shared with key stakeholders and media	Promotional videos showcasing beneficiary MSMEs are developed. Social media posts published online	Includes: development of communications strategy; communications materials; sharing to stakeholders

Communication

Communication with partners came out as one of the challenges identified in the midterm evaluation report in early 2023. This pointed out that there was some lack of collective understanding of the project due to gaps in communication. It was suggested that the project team should take a pro-active stance in preparing partners and beneficiaries through providing regular updates. It was further suggested that a communication expert should be recruited to focus on such gaps. This evaluation found out that the project team, particularly the outcome coordinators are the ones burdened with the communication to partners and beneficiaries during the first 2 years of implementation. During the later part of 2022 onwards, communication lines have been gradually built. In the third NCE, the project team has ensured that proper orientation/re-orientation to implementing partners are conducted. During the data collection, however, the partners have raised that the clarity of information within the communication line was the challenge. Accordingly, there were instances when the information was given in piecemeal, thus they don't immediately understand the direction envisioned by the project.

Several progress reports from the consultants, backstopping staff and implementing partners were developed and submitted. Most of these are utilized in developing the donor report/s. However, it was not clear in the responses during the data collection if these reports are also circulated to the beneficiaries, trainers and implementing partners as a form of update on where the project stands at various time intervals. There was an assumption that these information in the reports are fed to the PAC. In the Progress Report in 2022, DOLE convened a mid-term strategic planning meeting with the project team in July 2022.

This led to partnerships among OSHNets for greater coverage of WISE for COVID Plus trainings and improved training workplans on SIYB by DOLE trainers.

There was a delay in the development of case studies and/or success stories as supposedly part of the promotional/communication materials of the project.

In summary, progress was made towards achieving the intended outcomes and most outputs were delivered despite the delays in some aspects of the project. Through adaptive management, the project's catch-up plan was materialized.

Impact and Sustainability

Securing MOUs with the government partners is a measure of sustainability. The positioning of BBS in partnering with DOLE, DTI, DICT, OSH Center, DOH and even LGUs played a crucial role in ensuring that the project components will continue even after the end of project, recognizing the nature of BBS as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the realization during the implementation was that the issues being addressed by the project are also systemic problems such as safety in workplaces and digitalization which have been long there even before the pandemic. Hence, it must be admitted as a fact that reform takes time and although each of the project components attempted to make a difference in these areas, there is still more work to be done but it has started something worth continuing as a legacy. The most important contribution of the project to sustainability is its ecosystem-wide impact.

At the national level, the project intervention's objective in ensuring safety at workplaces, particularly looking into the informal sector for inclusion, had direct positive effects. It has provided the DOLE and the OSH Center the opportunity to revisit and agree on the revision of BOSH SO1 to incorporate the WISE for COVID training module using the PAOT approach. The PAOT-based WISE helped transform the OSH ecosystem from a very technical and limited cater to small number of medium and large enterprises to one that is practical and inclusive for more MSMEs. At the same time, the TAV program has been reviewed to give particular attention to the informal sector. Clearly, there is a favorable policy environment for the sustainability of WISE and SCORE in as far as DOLE and DOH programming is concerned. The DOH has completed the toolkits on Priority Action 2 Environmental Health and Waste Management at the workplace and Priority Action 7 on Violence and Injury Prevention which are both useful in ensuring an effective health promotion at the workplace.

The project has generated collaboration with the national level partners such as the DTI, DOLE and DICT, and local level partners such as the LGUs to ensure local ownership of the interventions as well as the regional chapters of ECOP/PCCI, OSH and area-based projects such as the ECCP-Crescent in BARMM. All the three LGUs involved in this project have given positive feedback on how the interventions inspired them in putting together relevant policies to ensure safety at workplaces and support in providing the enabling environment to the beneficiary MSMEs. The DTI in Region 11 has conducted SIYB in synergy with their Regional Office's Tatak ng Matatag na Negosyo (TMN) program. Their approach in incorporating SIYB in their overall strategy was to train their business counselors at the community who are mostly stationed in the Negosyo Centers as a shared service facility. From there, a pay- it-forward system was employed where these business counselors are expected to extend the training to MSMEs in the area, with focus on the informal sector. SIYB introduced simple and free/low-cost measures of digitalization that works with the reality of micro, small and informal businesses as opposed to complex and costly solutions fit for larger

enterprises or digital-savvy competitive entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the construction of the Digital Transformation Centers or Innovation Hubs under this project is a big step forward for the DICT in its aim to create venues where digital skills, from basic, intermediate and advanced, will be developed and acquired, in order to ensure that Filipinos have the digital skills needed to participate in the digital economy. The BBS is clearly aligned with the DICT’s intent to create Level 4 DTCs that will provide necessary capacity development support for ICT innovation including training in techno-preneurship, emerging/transformational technologies, laboratories and co-working spaces that will have internet connection and video conferencing equipment to allow ICT skills/literacy training even remotely.¹¹ DICT has expressed strong commitment to maintain and make use of the innovation hubs as a convergence platform to support the digitalization of MSME business operations in line with the E-commerce roadmap. Clearly, the MSME digitalization component of the project has started transforming the MSME digitalization ecosystem that led to the training partners committing their regional MSMEs support ecosystem to replicate the ILO training so as to reach tens of thousands of beneficiaries annually. Most recently, the DICT has committed to re-echo the training experience to around 800,000 MSMEs in the next three years.

As a response to COVID-19 pandemic, the project was seen as a timely intervention to support recovery of the affected MSMEs. The targeting of MSMEs outside Metro Manila was highly commended by the interview respondents. While the KMS did not materialize as originally planned, the decision to continue working on a database that’s useful for MSMEs and business development service providers created a strong impact to partners and beneficiary MSMEs on the genuine intent of the project in extending support even post pandemic. An essential realization from the government partners was the fact that if there weren’t any delays in the signing of the MOU, BBS would have been more instrumental in shaping the guidelines decided by the IATF. The toolkits developed and launched as part of the Healthy Workplace initiative are envisioned by the DOH to be rolled out in the coming years.

At the regional level, the project has made significant contributions to the country’s Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) as it is manifestly aligned with the socio-economic programs of the UN and the SDG framework on SMEs and businesses. Health and safety are core elements important in the SDGs, thus OSH component of the project was making a direct impact to this objective. The digitalization component has also been contributing to the resilience strategy as a strategic response to widespread diseases. Overall, BBS brought a step closer to creating the enabling environment for supporting health and safety at workplaces and providing leverage to MSMEs by using available technology for their economic development.

Below is a table summarizing the envisioned impact orientation and potential sustainability measures for each of the program components also including those already achieved under the project or being achieved as of the time of evaluation.

Impact and Sustainability Measures		
Project component	Impact Orientation	Sustainability
SCORE	Consideration for a council of SCORE experts/advisors for MSMEs	Enterprises adopt the SCORE checklist in their business operations.

¹¹ <https://dict.gov.ph/programs-projects>

	Incorporate disability orientation in the SCORE modules	SCORE will be continued under the UNJP. DTI Region 11, PMAP and ECCP-CRESCENT have committed to internalize SCORE within their MSME support programs
WISE	More opportunities for participation from the home-based and itinerant informal sector, agricultural and fisherfolk sector, street vendors and public utility transport groups	Incorporate WISE for COVID to BOSH SO1 and in TAV LGU support to WISE especially for the informal sector through BDRRMO programs, PESO on skills training and Business Licensing and Permit Office
SIYB	Due attention be given to the agricultural sector, home-based and itinerant MSMEs Regional/local level partners that have demonstrated outreach capacity and commitment to mainstream ILO training into their MSME training programmes	Integrated SIYB in the DTI Negosyo Center curriculum in Region 11. SIYB to tap the DOLE's livelihood program and TESDA scholarship program. Include as a condition for business registration and renewal at the LGU level without compromising the principle of "ease of business." Partnership with Kapatid Mentor Me Program (KMME) for Micro-enterprises. Strengthen partnership with the LGU to bring closer the training to the community.
Financial Education	Establish friendly competition, if not collaboration, with existing financial literacy programs from the private sector, banking institutions and commercial establishments	While there are competitions in the private sector, Financial Education sits well with the BSP programs on financial literacy and utilization of financial tools for convenience.

		<p>Financial Education will also be continued under the UNJP.</p> <p>ILO sees that further expansion of the pool of the ILO-certified financial education trainers and anchoring them in key institutional partners of financial education is a key to sustainability.</p>
KMS	Continue to evolve the database to suit various needs of the public	Database of MSMEs are to be adopted in the DOH Healthy Pilipinas program
Innovation Hub/s	Address digital divide by providing easy access to connectivity and digital tools	<p>DICT to continue management of the innovation hubs as part of the E-commerce roadmap and digitalization priority program of the Marcos administration.</p> <p>The two hubs and the 20 DTCs that received the Starlinks and PCs will benefit the MSME digitalization capacity building support under the UNJP.</p>

Cross-cutting themes

Disability and women inclusion

This project has given greater attention to gender parity as manifested in the number women beneficiaries across all the four training modules. Under SIYB ToTs, there was 63% women participation. On the other hand, the Financial Education ToTs had 70% women participation. Women attendance in the SIYB trainings significantly increased when PATAMABA was engaged as one of the implementing partners. This was mainly due to the fact that most home-based informal enterprises are owned and operated by mothers and women at home. This result is consistent with the project assumption that more women would be found among the smaller end of MSMEs and informal livelihoods. In the project report as of March 2022, it highlighted that there is an assurance that targets on gender will be established to be at par if not higher than those adopted by the Philippine government in gender and development strategies.¹² In addition, the improved log frame also accounts for gender disaggregation of results in the technical progress reports. While access to training was ensured for interested women participants, the impact of the training program on them in comparison to men was not fully analyzed in this evaluation. Likewise, the youth was encouraged to take advantage of the trainings as manifested in the increased number of youth participants from the Igaras Farmers Federation.

¹² Midterm Evaluation Report

While the government partners have looked into and considered the target participants by reason of the enterprise they represent and not necessarily by the gender of the actual participant, they have acknowledged that there was a balanced gender distribution in the ToEs and ToBs conducted. On another note, disability inclusion was manifested in this project through the SCORE and SIYB trainings. Disability considerations are clearly an important factor for attention from a rights and inclusion perspective in any ILO engagement. The partners admitted that there were difficulties in reaching out to PWDs using online training because of the technological challenges and that there's no clear guideline on the use of sign language or any disability-sensitive training modality except for the usual special accommodation for face-to-face setup. Despite this, the SCORE training has materialized well enough to encourage the BBMC in securing their workplace for the safety of their PWD member-workers. This translated well in the running of their own coffee shop project and urban agriculture project.

Environmental sustainability

While environmental sustainability and climate change were not the prominent feature of this project, the SCORE training highlighted the importance of cleaner production and pollution prevention to ensure a safe and healthy workplace. Likewise, OSHNets efforts are into this convergence of occupational safety and health and environmental protection. If time and resources would have been favorable, the project could further bring emphasis on the balance between safe workplaces vis-à-vis effects of climate change and the impacts of digitalization.

Tri-partite and social partners

Through the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), constituted in December 2021, the tradition of strong tri-partite involvement in ILO projects including the BBS has been put forward. The PAC is chaired by the DOLE and co-chaired by the DICT, and with the following members: from government (DOLE, DICT, DTI, NWPC, NAPC, DOST), from employers' association (ECOP), from workers (FFW, KMU, NTUC, SENTRO, TUCP), from the Japanese Embassy (as observer), and from the CO-Manila (as secretariat). In one of its meetings in February 2022, three working groups were set up to look after work safety action plan monitoring activities by MSMEs, social protection systems in terms of insurance coverage by Philhealth and ECC for workers affected by COVID-19 and the actual development of the technical elements of the KMS dashboard and database linkages. Ideally, the result would inform the detailed design of the KMS in terms of form and functionality. However, that did not push through further after the decision to change the KMS into MSME database in conjunction of the shift of the KMS component to support the newly emerged initiative of DOLE-DOH-CSC, "Healthy Pilipinas." The PAC has been conducting quarterly meetings since its constitution. It was only in May 2022 that DOLE and ILO signed a Memorandum of Agreement concerning the project discussing the ToR for the PAC. The evaluation finds that the PAC has expressed interests in including NCR in the target project sites so that many national staff of key partners can benefit from the project. In effect, the project included NCR-based trainers in the ToTs. The PAC has been instrumental in maintaining relevance of the project to the changing situation through linkage of the BBS to NERS, the national OSH Act and Healthy Philippines initiative.

V. Conclusion, Lessons and Recommendations

Conclusion

The evaluation finds that while the project design was found to be ambitious in some key areas, particularly in its target beneficiaries, it has proved to maintain its relevance even beyond the pandemic. Clearly, the project originally aimed at supporting the reboot of pandemic-affected MSMEs outside Metro Manila but it ended also equally addressing systemic issues on OSH and digitalization. This implies that BBS transitioned from a response program which normally has a short timeline to a recovery program which would entail a longer duration, hence the necessary justification of its 3 NCEs. Moreover, this evaluation is convinced that while there were delays in the implementation due to several factors, the project has remained steadfast in its commitment to recalibrate and realign itself in the changing context. BBS proved to be an important initiative for the Philippines, the donor and the ILO as it corresponds to the interest of the Philippine government in the promotion and support to digital economy and decent work conditions, especially for MSMEs and informal businesses.

It is clearly recognized that this project has put greater attention on how its government partners are responding to the needs of MSMEs, more so those from the informal sector. The OSH component of the project aiming to support safer and productive workplaces and its digitalization component intending to support MSMEs to survive the pandemic through business process digitalization and e-commerce have both served as eye openers in fostering further collaboration between government agencies including the DOLE, DTI, DOH, OSH Center, DICT, TESDA and the regional/local level partners; as well as between employers, workers and informal economy organizations. The evaluation is convinced that the online training modality will remain an important element of future training provision for the partners and beneficiaries including those home-based and even in agricultural sector as it is along the direction of the country in light of the fast-paced digitalization of all economic sectors. However, there are limitations of the online platform and the eagerness for face-to-face learning sets in during post pandemic. This arrives to the ask to explore possibilities of hybrid training modality. Some interview respondents find that a hybrid modality will prevail in future trainings. Experiences harvested during the implementation can be of great value for all involved when developing new initiatives.

As to the effectiveness, the project has met and completed most of its target outputs. This was paralleled with a moderate budget spending and cost-effective roll out of ToEs and ToBs through collaboration with strategic partners ensuring sustainability of the interventions. Positive unexpected results led to expansion of the training to include beneficiaries from academic institutions and due attention given to disability inclusion. From an efficiency perspective, the project has leveraged and supplemented limited human and financial resources to good effect and has managed well to attract synergies with existing programs of its government partners. Similarly, it has engaged workers federation and employers' confederation aside from the constitution of the PAC. Despite the delays caused, the project managed to complete 94% of its targets as of February 2024 which induces a strong possibility of full completion of all its target activities and outputs in March 2024 including the construction of the innovation hubs.

BBS has essentially turned the wheel on OSH consciousness and digital literacy at the enterprise level. What is impressive is how its government partners are committed to sustaining the interventions primarily because they see the strong value of the project in addressing and mitigating systemic issues on safety in workplaces and combating the digital divide. It cannot be denied that there were some gaps and lapses in between during the implementation and NCEs, however, the project valuably taught lessons and inspired good practices that eventually weighed more than those lapses.

Overall, the project delivered and completed its implementation satisfactorily. The strength highlighted in this project is on ILO’s adoptive and absorptive capacity as an international organization in shaping a better future for MSMEs and giving due attention to the marginalized such as the informal sector. This attempt to reboot MSMEs affected by the pandemic is not only responsive to the impacts of COVID-19 but has laid a sufficient foundation to build further on workplace safety, utilizing the digital economy and even database management.

Lessons learned and good practices

The project has faced several challenges as enumerated in prior sections of this report. However, those challenges are also opportunities that test the integrity of decision making and creativity to find solutions. This pushed the PMU to keep itself abreast with the changing situation and spot areas that need improvement towards the achievement of the project objectives. This is why catch-up plans become very crucial in the success of the completion of the project outputs. Recalibration of M&E and to a certain extent, program interventions such as the design of the innovation hub and the timing of the conduct of each project component, have all been critical in ensuring relevance, coherence and effectiveness of the project. It is a realization of this project that working with government partners would require a more proactive approach in ensuring that MOUs are put in place ahead of time because they will serve as an impetus to the whole structure. Synergies must not only be sought but cultivated internally and externally. Support systems within the ILO structure would ease the PMU in the expectations of timely responding to the needs of partners, consultants and beneficiaries alike. While delays are not favored in any project implementation, it is also a measure of reality especially in a pandemic situation complicate it with the Philippine political environment and frequent typhoon visits, where many unforeseen events may take place. Since the project called for a whole system approach, it has required from the very start the assurances of alignment with government responses and mechanisms.

The project is sound in terms of ensuring that capacity building activities are demand-driven and carried out sustainably through market-based models. The challenges met at the onset of implementation and even towards the tail end of its completion taught valuable lessons on flexibility. See Annexes 6 and 7 for further reading.

Some of the relevant statements and testimonials from the interview respondents are listed below:

<p>“WISE is practical and the training is shorter compared to the regular OSH training. 7.5 hours is required instead of 10 hours minimum for OSH learning.” -OSH Center</p>
<p>“We have applied our learning from the SIYB in the recent Ramadhan Fair in Sulu. We think that SIYB is a good foundation for training in other business aspects.” -SIYB trainee from Sulu</p>
<p>“The method of WISE in visiting first the site before the practical lessons are discussed proved to be effective in stimulating the observations of the participants. There is comparison of before and after.” -DOLE Region 11</p>
<p>“WISE is a good reminder and a refresher to the LGUs because it has coaching approach. It’s best to partner with the LGU because community trust must also be established when it comes to safety and security.”</p>

-Asuncion LGU
“WISE learnings can be applied at the household level. It creates more consciousness on safety.” -Cacao Association of Kapalong
“We have realized that training venues should also be PWD-friendly since we have participants from MSMEs managed by PWDs.” -OSHNet Region 11
“Our communications with the ILO project team have always been good. So, we have relayed that digitalization remains challenging even post pandemic. The BBS should continue since there’s more to be done for digital economy.” -DOLE Region 11
“The finance procedure at the ILO level does not necessarily match with what’s applicable to micro-SMEs. There must be some flexibility in the procedural requirements in the roll out of ToBs especially for the informal sector.” -interview respondent
“The challenge on SCORE was how to attract the enterprises when there’s hesitation on the notion of being inspected and audited in the process.” -ECOP
“The SCORE training modules give emphasis on transformational psyche and culture change in the company. In fact, those trained in both SCORE or WISE and SIYB can also think of starting their own enterprise of a cooperative.” -SCORE Trainer/s
“If this intervention is continued in the next 3 to 5 years, we may be seeing significant behavior change already.” -SCORE Trainer
“The Philippines has many programs on financial education that are usually given by the private sector. Hence, there’s strong competition for attention and our Financial Education needs more traction.” -ILO Financial Education certified international trainer

Recommendations

This evaluation has the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1
Conduct a follow-up survey on the behavioural change of the project beneficiaries and partners, particularly on SIYB, WISE and SCORE
In order to gain more evidence to show holistic impact at both individual and ecosystem levels, a follow-up study would be useful and demonstrate a complete assessment on the essence of the project. Conducting this follow-up survey to collect these data would potentially fill any gap in the current evaluation. Through this, it can be established clearly the long-term benefits that have flowed from the training and engagement with the project. This will greatly support data on OSH and for Safety + Health Flagship Programme and on the use of AI in MSMEs. Some initial planning for this survey might be required in the short term to ensure that implementation partners are able to collect the data needed for responses down the track. Input from the donor should also be sought.

Addressed to	ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Evaluation Specialist) and Country Office
Priority	Medium
Time implications	Short term
Resource implications	Low/Medium

Recommendation 2	
Continue and strengthen partnership established by the project with the regional/local level partners either through other ILO projects or post-project collaboration efforts	
<p>The project has clearly established a good impression in the LGUs of Kapalong, Asuncion and Barangay Lasang in Davao City. During the data collection, it was revealed that these LGUs have the potential to institutionalize any of the project components such as WISE, SCORE or SIYB. There is a favourable policy environment and these LGUs can ensure that there is fund allocation for this on the succeeding fiscal year. In Asuncion, a Women Training and Development Centre budgeted at 15 million PHP was given through the DTI funding allocation. There is also an Agricultural Development Centre being constructed. These are among the few local initiatives that can adopt WISE and SCORE. It is recommended that in future training on WISE for homebased and other informal workers, the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) perspectives/principles should be included given that SSE is being promoted in social enterprises at the local areas.</p>	
Addressed to	ILO Country Office
Priority	Medium
Time implications	Long term
Resource implications	Low/Medium

Recommendation 3	
Explore collaboration of the BBS project components in OSH and digitalization with STEM	
<p>The experience of BBS, particularly WISE, at Barangay Lasang LGU has expanded to the A.L. Navarro High School students enrolled on STEM. ILO has a program on women in STEM which may support establishing linkage between productivity as a key source of living standard through use of STEM skills in relation to digitalization in MSMEs and ensuring safety at workplaces.</p>	
Addressed to	ILO Country Office
Priority	Medium
Time implications	Medium term
Resource implications	Medium

Recommendation 4	
Look into the possibility of partnership and collaboration between the DTI Negosyo Centre and the Innovation Hubs, TESDA training and DTI brand development for MSME beneficiaries under SIYB, urging digital and tech companies to adopt MSMEs in support of their digital transformation of their business operations, and possibility of enjoying tax incentives/holidays from BIR for participating MSMEs in SIYB, Financial Education, SCORE and WISE	
The project has made significant progress in partnering with government agencies that have similar programs for certain project component. The PAC has also been constituted but has only functioned for advisory on revision of the implementation design. Exploring inter-agency collaboration to provide an enabling environment can be useful in attracting more interest from MSMEs in the informal sector.	
Addressed to	ILO Country Office and Tripartite constituents
Priority	Medium
Time implications	Long term
Resource implications	Medium

Recommendation 5	
Consider how to build on from the gains of this project on gender empowerment and disability inclusion that might be incorporated into future programme design in the country, region and globally	
SCORE has opened the realization to incorporate disability orientation modules to OSH. Most often in workplaces, safety issues can lead to disability of the worker. The training toolkits utilized in this project has not given too much attention on disability-sensitivities in terms of training modality and gender impacts. However, it can be considered for future programmes on how to innovate the training modalities to be gender and disability-sensitive.	
Addressed to	ILO Country Office and Project Management
Priority	High
Time implications	Long term
Resource implications	Medium

Recommendation 6	
Ensure clear guidelines on cohesive ways of support system between administrative and finance operations within different the ILO project management teams	
Some of the delays incurred in this project have been attributed to being shorthanded at the PMU level. While it is a fact that PMU staff is dependent on the fund allocation allowed by the project, ILO can put in place a support system for operations aside from the technical backstops.	

Addressed to	ILO Country Office and Regional Office
Priority	Medium
Time implications	Long term
Resource implications	Medium

Suggested Case Studies

This evaluation recommends the following case studies that would represent success stories:

Case Study 1	
Bigay Buhay Multi-purpose Cooperative (BBMC)	
<p>BBMC is among the pioneer disability organization in the country, currently led by its founder Richard Arceno. They have advocated and lobbied for policy reform and programs for the disability sector. They see that SCORE is an opportunity to inspire and change mindsets of PWDs on safety at workplaces and a wake-up call to assess where to improve their business operations.</p> <p>BBMC has incorporated the SCORE checklist in their Urban Agriculture Project on improvement of access to cages and Coffee Shop Project on space planning enhancement. Initially, they perceived that the trainings are disability-insensitive. However, they realized later on that it can be an opportunity for them to highlight disability orientation to be made part of the modules. They have strong belief that the normalization of work and living must have disability-sensitive policies and that the inclusion of PWDs across ILO programs must have quantifiable and SMART measurements using functional disability inclusion indicators in the project components.</p>	
Project Component	WISE and SCORE

Case Study 2	
A.L. Navarro High School and KCAST	
<p>While the initial target of the WISE trainings are for MSMEs in the informal sector, it has also attracted significant interest from the academic institutions such as the A.L. Navarro High School for its STEM students and KCAST for its college students from business management and administration. 28 learners from A.L. Navarro High School received WISE trainer from TAMFIAS fisherfolks. The school is contemplating if they can extend the same training and exposure to their TVL learners.</p>	
Project Component	WISE

Case Study 3	
Igbaras Farmers Federation and Taripis Youth Organization	
<p>It is interesting to note that SIYB has become useful for farmers in Igbaras, Iloilo. The application of their learnings and the use of the free applications on their business operations have helped them on</p>	

their cash flow and accounting. They have manifested that they no longer have difficulties in their auditing after they have improved their financial tracking system for the federation and member associations. The SIYB training has also brought life to the creation of the Taripis Youth Organization as a new member of the federation.

Project Component	SIYB
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Case Study 4

Cagangohan Women Association

This is a group of wives and daughters of fisherfolks that organized themselves to start bottled Bangus selling. They have been referred by the DTI Davao and did the WISE training in December 2023. They have been applying their learning in their business site but they were promised by the LGU to be given a processing plant budgeted at 2 million PHP. They intend to grow their business operations to put their products in display at shopping malls and supermarkets, however, they need FDA certification.

Project Component	WISE
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Case Study 5

PATAMABA

The creation of this National Network of Informal Workers in the Philippines was inspired by another ILO project after the conduct of its study on home-based workers in 1989 to 1996. This is composed of 98% women and a member of Home Net Southeast Asia. It's national membership extends in various parts of the country and they have been instrumental in the roll out of ToEs for WISE and SIYB.

Project Component	WISE and SIYB
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Annexes

Annex 1 Logical Framework

Beneficiaries: Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and the unemployed/underemployed resorting to alternative livelihood with preference to those with higher needs of assistance (e.g., unemployed youth) outside Metro Manila			
Project title: Rebooting Small and informal business safely and digitally in the Philippines: Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis			Project duration: 1 year from March 2021
Results chain	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Impact (Development Objective) The project will contribute to improving the safety and health of workers in MSMEs in the non-metropolitan regions of the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis			
Outcome 1: Workplace of regional MSMEs is made safer and more productive in the New Normal environment with the COVID-19 risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nb of targeted economic units taking corrective and preventive actions to improve OSH (10,000+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected through the information management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the training beneficiaries actually implement the COVID OSH at their own workplaces. The COVID OSH training combined with the workplace risk assessment and solution development will help
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nb of enterprises conducting risk assessments Nb of workers that have benefitted from the adoption of the concrete and documented actions to improve OSH Various productivity indicators of MSMEs (e.g., sales, defect/return rate, timely delivery rate, absentee rate) – t.b.d. prior to the interventions 		MSMEs effectively identify the weak spots and minimize the COVID-19 risks.
Output 1.1: Quality OSH-cum-productivity training, including COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures, is delivered to MSMEs outside the metropolitan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of COVID OSH training and advisory services delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project monitoring document Operational records of the implementing partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing partners have sufficient budget and technical staff to deliver the agreed number of training of beneficiaries with limited support from the project. The total outreach capacity of the implementing partners and other collaborators (e.g., the supply chain lead firms) is large enough. The target MSMEs and their employees in the regions find the training attractive and beneficial to their business operations.

Activity 1.1.1: Sector-specific adjustments, adaptation for local MSMEs, and translation of the COVID-mainstreamed OSH-cum-productivity (COVID OSH) training materials of the ILO.			
Activity 1.1.2: Production of the online/video materials and the printed version of the COVID OSH training and its promotional materials.			
Activity 1.1.3: Promotion of the training-of-trainers (ToT) workshops on COVID OSH for MSMEs and inscription of the 200+ national OSH and productivity experts.			
Activity 1.1.4: Conduct of in person ToT workshops on COVID OSH including risk assessment and solutions development/remediation planning			
Activity 1.1.5: Conduct of online ToT workshops replicating the initial COVID OSH ToT in person to build the capacity of a total of 200+ national OSH and productivity experts.			
Activity 1.1.6: Support of the training delivery of the national OSH and productivity experts combined with risk assessment and solutions development/remediation planning to cover 10,000+ non-metropolitan MSMEs and alternative livelihood activities of unemployed and underemployed.			
Output 1.2: Interdisciplinary knowledge management system established and institutional capacity of 3 key partners strengthened for the sustainable delivery of COVID OSH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knowledge management system is functioning • Completion of the institutional capacity building activities of the 3 key partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project administrative records • Project monitoring and evaluation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public health authorities and relevant technical agencies are open and willing to collaborate for the interdisciplinary knowledge management system. The selected partners have the sufficient absorption capacity and self-sustainable basis.

expertise in the Philippines			
Activity 1.2.1: Monitor and analyse achievements of workplace training activities, integrating with other relevant data such as the epidemiological, surveillance, administrative data and other public health and social security interventions			
Activity 1.2.2: Provide feedback and adjustments to training programme and delivery mechanisms on the basis of the knowledge management system established through Activity 1.2.1			
Activity 1.2.3: Provide institutional strengthening support as discussed and agreed with the 3 key organizations for their sustainable delivery of the COVID OSH training.			
Outcome 2: Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods have reduced the risk of COVID-19 infection and enhanced productivity with digital modalities for business operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nb of targeted economic units taking actions to digitalize business operations (20,000+) • Sick leave of the employees of the beneficiary MSMEs due to COVID-19 • Incidence of health insurance cover of the COVID-19 treatment of the employees • Various productivity indicators of MSMEs (e.g., sales, defect/return rate, timely delivery rate, absentee rate) – t.b.d. prior to the interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace risk assessment reports before and after the interventions • Employee benefit record of the beneficiary MSMEs • Health insurance records • Project monitoring documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the training beneficiaries actually implement the digitalization of their own businesses. • The digital entrepreneurship in combination of the COVID OSH of Outcome 1 will eliminate the weak contact points to deal with the customers and business partners, hence effectively minimize the risk of COVID-19 at the workplace of MSMEs.

Output 2.1: Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods are provided with internet connectivity and business support services via the first pilot of the Innovation Hubs and Satellites network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of MSMEs granted internet connectivity (1,000+) ● Number of MSMEs accessing business support services at the Hubs and/or online (1,000+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrative records of the 3 Hubs and Satellites supported by the project ● Project monitoring and evaluation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 Innovation Hubs are constructed and operationalized in a timely manner with good collaboration of the local governments and the private sector partners. ● A sufficient number of Satellite partners agree to play the role and accommodate the agreed number of beneficiaries in a timely manner. ● The back-office services and other advisory and support services are provided by the public and private partners in a timely manner.
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Activity 2.1.1: Construction of 3 regional Innovation Hubs in collaboration with D-ICT and local governments outside of Metro Manila

Activity 2.1.1: Operationalization of the 3 Innovation Hubs to provide internet connectivity, co-working space and virtual office backstopping and advisory services.

Activity 2.1.1: Provide 6-month internet connectivity and business support services to 800 regional MSMEs in collaboration with local internet cafés, co-working spaces, TechED Centers or equivalents as satellite of the regional Innovation Hubs.

Output 2.2: Regional MSMEs and alternative livelihoods are trained on digital entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of digital entrepreneurship training delivered to the target beneficiaries (20,000+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project monitoring document ● Operational records of the implementing partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementing partners have sufficient budget and technical staff to deliver the agreed number of training of beneficiaries with limited support from the project.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The total outreach capacity of the implementing partners and other collaborators (e.g., the supply chain lead firms) is large enough. ● The target MSMEs and their employees in the regions find the training attractive and beneficial to their business operations.
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Activity 2.2.1: Adjustments and translation of the digital entrepreneurship training contents of ILO and key national entities for the Philippine New Normal context and for the viewing by mobile phones.

Activity 2.2.2: Production of the online/video materials and the printed version of the digital entrepreneurship training.

Activity 2.2.3: Promotion of the training-of-trainers (ToT) workshops on digital entrepreneurship and inscription of the 200+ national entrepreneurship/MSME experts.

Activity 2.2.4: Conduct of 2 ToT workshops on digital entrepreneurship including solutions development.

Activity 2.2.5: Conduct of 8+ online ToT workshops replicating the initial ToT in person to build the capacity of a total of 200+ national entrepreneurship/MSME experts.

Activity 2.2.6: Support of the classroom style delivery of the training of beneficiary MSMEs and unemployed/underemployed at 3 Innovation Hubs for 3 rounds.

Activity 2.2.7: Support of the training delivery of the national entrepreneurship/MSME experts to cover 20,000+ non-metropolitan MSMEs and alternative livelihood activities of unemployed and underemployed to go digital.

Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and/or promoted knowledge exchange among non-beneficiary MSMEs on the advantages and modalities of safe workplace and digitalized business operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of communications delivered by the implementing partners and other key stakeholders ● Number of page-viewing of the success case communication at the project web site and lined sites ● Number of media exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project administration documents ● Access analytics of the relevant web sites and SNS ● News clipping services such as Insentia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partners and other key stakeholders find it important and beneficial for their own organizations to disseminate the case study communications for replication among other MSMEs. ● The communication at the SNS and with media is properly managed by the project team and key stakeholders.
Output 3.1: Case studies produced of the MSMEs with improved safety and health and/or digital operations combined with contributing support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of case studies produced (10+) ● Indicators of improved safety vis-à-vis COVID-19 risks covered in the case studies will be determined in conjunction with the knowledge management system to be established under Output 1.2. ● Indicators of business success covered in the case studies (e.g., increase in sales/profit/income/employment, number of new sales channels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project deliverable archive ● Project monitoring documents ● Employee benefit record of the beneficiary MSMEs ● Health insurance records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The training of beneficiaries under Output 1 and 2 will produce successful cases with good evidences and narrative stories. ● The monitoring system will properly capture the relevant indicators.
Activity 3.1.1: Structuring of the common case study format			

Activity 3.1.2: Conduct interviews with selected beneficiary MSMEs			
Activity 3.1.3: Case writing by the ILO experts and project team			
Activity 3.1.4: Peer review and finalization of the case studies			
Output 3.2: Effective communication materials produced and shared with key stakeholders and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Availability of a communication strategy ● % of objectives of the strategy met ● Number of communication materials produced and shared with stakeholders and media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project deliverable archive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sufficient photo and video materials have been collected through the monitoring and relevant activities under Output 3.1 with consent of the MSMEs.
Activity 3.2.1: Activity 3.2.1: Develop a communication strategy			
Activity 3.2.2: Produce communication materials			
Activity 3.2.3: Share the communication materials with key stakeholders and media			

Annex 2 Risk Register

Ref	Risk statement. The event we do not want to see and its potential impact on objectives	Comment Explain how the risk might arise and the importance of the impact	Measures currently in place to address this risk	Impact	Likelihood	Total	Additional risk response for the attention of the implementation team and the Steering Committee.
1	Recruitment of project staff may be hampered due to the on-going pandemic and related visa/travel restrictions	Interested candidates, particularly international, might be discouraged due to the stringent visa/travel restrictions. The restrictions may be strengthened if the new strains of virus w/ larger R spread widely in the country.	(1) Allow telework from their home country till the visa/travel restrictions are eased. (2) Accelerated rollout of vaccines in select countries. (3) Preparation of the vaccine programme in the Philippines.	3	3	9	(1) Clarify in the advertisement communication that the staff may telework if and when the visa/travel restrictions prevent the new staff from flying in. (2) Secure ample time before application deadline. (3) Check the vaccine availability in both the originating country and the Philippines before staff deployment. (4) Communicate well with the selected candidates and share the safe operations of ILO in the country.
2	Difficulties in conducting face-to-face meetings and training due to COVID-19	While most of the training is currently delivered online, it is difficult to reach out to MSMEs on the other side of digital divide without face-to-face meetings.	(1) Limit number of face-to-face training. (2) Deliver more training online.	3	3	9	(1) Explore use of Innovation Hubs and provincial offices/centers of implementing partners for face-to-face training, and build their capacity to operate safely thru ToT.

Ref	Risk statement. The event we do not want to see and its potential impact on objectives	Comment Explain how the risk might arise and the importance of the impact	Measures currently in place to address this risk	Impact	Likelihood	Total	Additional risk response for the attention of the implementation team and the Steering Committee.
3	New strains of virus w/ substantially high R may lead to a surge of transmission via other channels than workplaces and prolong the business restrictive measures	If the new strains such as B.1.1.7 spread as much as UK through the transmission channels outside the world of work, leading to more and prolonged lockdowns and shut down businesses particularly the high-risk ones	(1) Stringent epidemiological screening at the airports (2) Longer period of quarantine upon return from the high-risk countries. (3) Focused contact tracing of those infected by B.1.1.7. (4) Selected lockdown of areas impacted by B.1.1.7.	3	3	9	(1) Continuously reassess the transmission via other channels and integrate the tips in the workplace-centered holistic approach. (2) Pay special attention to enhancing the effectiveness of the prevention and mitigation measures for the high-risk sectors and the sector-specific prevention and mitigation measures on the basis of the interdisciplinary knowledge management and the global learning of the good practice for the sectors.
4	Vaccines will end the pandemic before the project impact is produced	The rollout of the vaccine programme in the Philippines kicks in much faster than the project generating its intended impact.	(1) Metropolitan cities have their own vaccine programmes which may come faster than that of national government.	3	1	3	(1) Consider rebalancing to put more weight on digitalization component should the vaccines programme achieve earlier-than-expected success.
5	Training partners have too small budget to deliver the training for the intended number of MSMEs	Already budget-constraint government may allocate budget insufficiently or delay allocation for the training programmes of OSH and digitalization of MSMEs.	1) The approved Bayanihan 2 Act provides a comprehensive stimulus package. 2) Cost saving by delivering more online and staff working from home.	3	3	9	(1) Leverage Innovation Hubs and satellites as added delivery channels. (2) Explore partnership with social partners and other actors including supply chain lead firms and their CSR programmes. (3) Focus on communication of success cases early on to influence the mass rather than sticking to the numerical training target of direct training beneficiaries.

Ref	Risk statement. The event we do not want to see and its potential impact on objectives	Comment Explain how the risk might arise and the importance of the impact	Measures currently in place to address this risk	Impact	Likelihood	Total	Additional risk response for the attention of the implementation team and the Steering Committee.
6	Construction and operationalization of Innovation Hubs are delayed	Entering into IA w/ selected local governments may take more time than expected. Delay may also be caused by the slow and complex procurement process of government and ILO.	(1) D-ICT started preliminary discussion with some of the shortlisted local governments. (2) Procurement by local government via IA is preferred vis-à-vis procurement by national government or ILO.	2	3	6	(1) Begin shortlisting consultation, due diligence, drafting of IA and negotiation with local governments early on. (2) Monitor closely the progress of construction and procurement under each IA.
7	The calamities aggravate the infection risks	It is difficult for the people to exercise effective prevention of COVID-19 if they live in the areas hit by calamities such as typhoon, flood, fire and earthquake. Some of the MSMEs may be part of the root causes, e.g., the deforestation by illegal logging aggravates the flood risk.	(1) The official and charity support to the calamity-affected areas include some COVID-19 preventive equipment. (2) Repeated reminders to the illegal activities in the upstream watershed areas.	2	5	10	(1) Prepare a BCP for the calamity scenario. (2) Raise awareness among the unlawful business practices and promote green entrepreneurship instead.



Final independent evaluation

“Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines.”

The Evaluation Office of the International Labour Organization (ILO/ ILO-EVAL) is seeking expressions of interest from an independent qualified consultant (individual) to conduct a final evaluation of the above project.

The duration of the assignment is estimated total of **23 working days**. The evaluator is required to undertake missions to the project sites in the Philippines.

Deadline: 16 February 2024, at 18h00 of Eastern European Standard Time (GMT+2).

For more details see the ToRs below.

Interested candidates are required to supply the following information together:

1. A **technical proposal providing brief approach to be used to conduct this evaluation**, with a description of how the candidate’s skills, qualifications and experience are relevant to the required qualifications of this assignment (maximum 4 pages)
2. A list of **previous evaluations** that are relevant to the context and subject matter of this assignment, indicating the role played by the consultant applying (it can be highlighted in the CV)
3. A copy of the candidate’s **curriculum vitae**
4. A statement confirming their **availability** to conduct this assignment and that the candidates have no previous involvement in the implementation and delivery of the project to be evaluated, or a personal relationship with any ILO Officials who are engaged in the project (no specific template)
5. Adhere him/herself in writing to the attached code of conduct ([wcms_746806.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)) and comply with UN Norms and standards
6. The names of **two referees** (including phone and email) who can be contacted.
7. Copies of **two reports** in which the evaluator has been the sole evaluator/ team leader/ team member in the last five years
8. A **financial proposal** indicating a daily professional fee expressed in USD.

Note that fees must be commensurate with the consultants’ qualifications and experience.

NOTE: Applications submitted with a fee/rate in a currency other than USD will not be considered for evaluation.

1

The deadline for the submission of an expression of interest for this assignment is **16 February 2024, at 18h00 of Eastern European Standard Time (GMT+2)**. Prospective candidates should send their expression of interest by email to Evaluation Manager Pablo ARELLANO (arellano@ilo.org) copying to Pamornrat PRINGSULAKA (pamornrat@ilo.org), with a subject header “**Final evaluation of Bringing Back Jobs Philippines**”.

Terms of Reference

Final independent evaluation

1. Key facts

Title of project being evaluated	Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally.
Project DC Code	PHL/21/02/JPN
Type of evaluation (e.g. independent, internal)	Independent
Timing of evaluation (e.g. midterm, final)	Final evaluation
Donor	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	ILO Country Office for the Philippines
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	Flagship Programme: Safety + Health for All
P&B outcome (s) under evaluation	4 and 7
SDG(s) under evaluation	8 and 3
Budget	2,227,272 US dollars
Period of evaluation	February 2024 to April 2024
Evaluation Manager	Pablo Arellano

2. Introduction

The final evaluation will be conducted during February 2024 to March 2024 and will be managed by the Evaluation Manager, who has no prior involvement in the project and will be overseen by ILO Regional Evaluation Officer and with the final approval from ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL). The evaluation will be conducted by an external independent evaluator(s) to be recruited by the evaluation manager. Key stakeholders, including tripartite constituents, donors, key partners and the ILO officials will be consulted throughout the evaluation process. A mid-term evaluation was conducted in late 2022.

This evaluation complies with the ILO Policy Guideline for Evaluation which requires all projects with budget of more than 1 million US dollars to undergo at least one independent evaluation. The

evaluation will comply with the United National Evaluation Group (UNEG)'s Evaluation Norms and Standards. The evaluation will also need to address all relevant cross-cutting drivers for ILOs work which includes gender equality and non-discrimination, disability inclusion, promotion of international labour standards, tripartite processes and constituent capacity development and environmental issues.

Project Background

The ILO and the Government of Japan have partnered to help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operate safely under the prolonged community quarantine and adapt to the New Normal business environment with improved workplace safety and health practices and better equipped to take advantage of the available digital tools and the expanding digital economy opportunities. The project is part of the ILO's Flagship programme [Safety+Health for All](#).

The COVID-19 crisis has brought unparalleled impacts on the people of the Philippines, particularly those in the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as the backbone of the economy and employment. The pandemic not only reduced existing jobs and income of them, but prompted many to resort to alternative livelihood, often as informal activities, to survive the prolonged community quarantine measures with various restrictions imposed on businesses.

While tremendous efforts have been made to address the extreme vulnerability of MSMEs and informal businesses under the pandemic, there are two areas which would merit further support in the world of work at this stage – the occupational safety and health (OSH) including the prevention and mitigation of the COVID-19 risks (COVID OSH) and the digitalization of business operations for those currently left behind the big wave of digitalizing economy. The COVID-19 risks for MSMEs and the capacity gaps among them are deemed larger outside of Metro Manila.

With this understanding, the project aims at contributing to improving the safety and health of workers in MSMEs in the non-metropolitan regions of the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis. To achieve this goal, the project has been working with the national network of training service providers to deliver COVID OSH-cum-productivity and digital entrepreneurship training. The ILO's training programmes in respective areas were translated into the specific local and sector context, and transmitted through training-of-trainers (ToT) seminars, mostly online. To win the mind of the massive MSMEs who may not directly participate in the training, the project was also to compile successful experiences into case studies and disseminate them in ways that would be attractive to the non-metropolitan MSMEs to emulate such experiences. To bridge the digital divide outside Metro Manila, the project was also to support the pilot implementation of the three Innovation Hubs, an upgraded version of the digital centres of the Department of ICT, aimed at

providing internet connectivity, co-working spaces, and eventually, back-office services and linkage to the support programmes for the non-metropolitan MSMEs through these Hubs and the affiliated satellite centres.

To support agile learning to respond to the rapidly changing situation of the pandemic and to make the interventions sustained beyond the life of the project, an interdisciplinary knowledge management system was to be established, and the institutional capacity of key partner organizations be strengthened.

The project was officially approved by the donor in March 2021 and the implementation began in June 2021 for the duration of one year.

With the change of the government in 2022 and with the delayed clearance by the government for the construction of the Innovation Hubs related to the rules on foreign donation, the project has been extended till March 2024. During the course of its implementation, the project adopted minor changes in the proposed activities and structure to remain relevant to the changing external environment including the end of the pandemic, priorities and initiatives of the new administration, and the rapid evolution of the digital economy including some disruptive technologies that address challenges in remote areas in the country. The details of these changes will be provided to the evaluation consultant upon assignment.

Despite some changes, the original objective of the project and the three outcomes have been broadly maintained as described in the following. Note that the exception was the elimination of the geographic specification of the target beneficiaries as the MSMEs in the non-metropolitan regions since the metropolitan area such as the National Capital Region had been included in response to the demand from the constituents and through the official adoption at the project advisory committee and subsequent donor approval. The other changes affected some of the contents of the proposed activities as discussed and agreed with key stakeholders of the concerned activities, but did not lead to changes in Outcomes.

Throughout the process, the project maintained its ecosystem approach to support the Philippines' sustainable development of training delivery system while avoiding duplication of what the existing ecosystem cater to the target beneficiaries. This is in line with the growing interests among the international development community to make the official development assistance more relevant to the needs of the developing economy partners.

The following objectives and outcomes are the current ones that reflect the change in the geographical specification that originally limited the target MSMEs as those in the non-metropolitan areas. The original text eliminated is indicated by the overlaying line that cross out the text.

Project objective

The Bringing Back Jobs Safely Project will contribute to improving the safety and health of workers in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines and mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

Project outcomes and key activities

Outcome 1: Workplace of regional MSMEs is made safer and more productive in the New Normal environment with the COVID-19 risks.

- Deliver the training on workplace safety and health practices that simultaneously enhance productivities of MSMEs through the training-of-trainer based replication model.
- Establish an inter-disciplinary knowledge management system between the public health data and the data on occupational safety and health inspection and social security coverage of COVID-19 related cases.

Outcome 2: MSMEs and alternative livelihoods have reduced the risk of COVID-19 infection and enhanced productivity with digital modalities for business operations.

- Deliver the training that will support the digitalization of MSME business operations through the training-of-trainer based replication model.
- Support the first ~~three~~ two Innovation Hubs to be built in provincial cities and help them operation in collaboration with the local satellites in order to provide added internet connectivity and co-working spaces to the provincial MSMEs. To further support the same, procure Starlink sets for the remotely-located digital centres to be connected with the Satellite-linked internet.

Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and/or promoted knowledge exchange among non-beneficiary MSMEs on the advantages and modalities of safe workplace and digitalized business operation.

- Develop case studies of the best performing MSME beneficiaries to showcase the MSME success stories on maintaining safer and healthier work environment and digitalizing their business operations.
- Advocate the success stories beyond the direct beneficiaries of the project through the media, SNS and the institutional network of the partners.

- Support the leading partner agencies to enhance their institutional capacity to sustainably provide the support most useful for the MSMEs to cope with the current and future pandemics.

Current status of the project

The original duration of the project covered from March 2021 until March 2022. The project has benefited from three no cost extensions, the first one until March 2023, the second one until December 2023 and the third one until March 2024. At the beginning of 2023, an internal mid-term evaluation was completed that identified a set of recommendations to improve the delivery and the management of the project. As of January 2024, the project is working towards completion of the remaining activities and ensuring the sustainability of the project-supported activities.

It is also important to mention that the donor, the Government of Japan, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, already is a major contributor to the Safety + Health for All Programme and is funding several projects across Asia (Myanmar, Japan, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and Cambodia). In addition, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs was expected to support a “sister” project implemented by the ILO in Indonesia entitled “Enhancing COVID-19 Prevention at and through Workplaces Job creation through business re-opening and continuation”. In the Philippines, the incumbent project has been coordinating with other Japan-funded and other donor-funded projects to generate synergies. The examples of such projects include the Japan-funded “Rebuilding Better Coconut Economy” and the UK-funded “Skills for Prosperity.”

3. Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

Purpose

The evaluation will be used, for project accountability and institutional learning. The ILO considers that evaluation is an integral part of the implementation of development cooperation activities. The ILO applies the evaluation criteria established by the OECD / DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System. This evaluation will follow guidelines on results-based evaluation of the ILO Evaluation Department (EVAL) contained in the “ILO

policy guidelines for results-based evaluation (4th edition)”¹ and, more specifically, the checklist “CHECKLIST 4.2: PREPARING THE EVALUATION REPORT”.²

Among other points the evaluations identify what worked, what did not work at output, outcome and impact levels, what is sustainable, what is the legacy of the project and what are the recommendations for the future. As well as the design stages and any mitigation measures that eventually was taken.

Specific objectives of the evaluation are

- To evaluate the extent to which the project has achieved its planned objectives, and whether there are any factors contributing or hindering the achievement of the project;
- To assess the extent to which the project has addressed the midterm evaluation’s recommendations;
- To assess the performance of the project as per OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) including ILO cross-cutting criteria (ILS, social dialogue, gender and non-discrimination, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability). In particular, the extent to which gender equality consideration has been considered in the design, M&E framework (indicators and data collection), and during the project implementation.
- To document lessons learned and good practises

Scope

This evaluation, as a product of analysis of the implementation of the project in its entirety, will examine the entire project intervention from 15 June 2021 to 31 March 2024. It will consider all the documents linked to the project. This includes the project document, periodic reports, results of mid-term evaluation and implementation of its recommendations as well as documents produced as outputs of the project (e.g. knowledge products, policy strategies)

The geographical analysis of the assessment should cover all the activities implemented for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and informal businesses in the Philippines, noting that the original focus of the project is to cover the regions outside Metro Manila. As described above, the project ended up covering Metro Manila (or the National Capital Region) on top of the rest of the country as the nation-wide response to the employment crisis caused by the pandemic, but it is expected that the evaluation will pick selected sub-national areas to examine the project-supported activities in the local areas. Given its eco-system approach, the evaluation is also expected to analyze

¹ Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_571339.pdf

² Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf

how the project interventions affected the existing training ecosystem on the thematic areas covered by the project.

The evaluation will integrate also gender equality and non-discrimination as crosscutting policy areas throughout its methodology and all deliverables, including the final evaluation report.

Clients of the evaluation

Clients of the evaluation are ILO's constituents, workers' and employers' organizations, national, sub-national and international partners, including among others the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) of the Philippines. Furthermore, the findings of this final evaluation are destined for ILO's management (the project team, CO Philippines, ENTERPRISES, LABADMIN/OSH, INWORK, and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific) overseeing the implementation of the project, as well as for the project's donor (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan). It will also include the members of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC).

The knowledge generated by this evaluation will also benefit other stakeholders that may not be directly targeted by the project's intervention such as: key government institutions, civil society organizations, donors, UN agencies, international organizations that work in relevant fields, and other units within the ILO.

4. Evaluation criteria and questions (including Cross-cutting issues/ issues of special interest to the ILO)

The evaluation will be based on the following evaluation criteria: strategic relevance, coherence, validity of project design, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Relevant data should be sex-disaggregated and different needs of women and men should be considered throughout the evaluation process.

The evaluation will integrate gender equality and non-discrimination, international labour standards, social dialogue, and a just transition to environmental sustainability as crosscutting themes throughout its deliverables and process. It should be addressed in line with EVAL Guidance Note 3.1:

Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation³ and Guidance Note 4.5: Stakeholder engagement⁴

The following questions, while not an exhaustive list, are intended to guide and facilitate the evaluation. Other aspects can be added as identified by the evaluator in accordance with the given purpose and in consultation with the evaluation manager. Any fundamental changes to the evaluation criteria and questions should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluator, and reflected in the inception report.

Relevance.⁵

1. Were the project objectives consistent with the national key partners' needs, requirements, and the country needs? Do outputs causally link to the intended outcomes and objectives? In particular, of the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) targeted outside Metro Manila.
2. How did the project contribute to the relevant International Labour Organisation Programme & Budget Outcomes and development priorities in the Philippines and to the UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework 2020-23 and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024-28?
3. To what extent did the project build on previous experience of the ILO in the Philippines, and relevant experience of other local and international organizations in the Philippines?
- 4.- To what extent did the project contribute to the ILO's response to COVID-19 crises in the Philippines?
- 5.- To what extent the project strategy was in line with donor's expectation?

Coherence⁶.

1. To what extent was the project design adequate and effective in the coherence and complementarity between the different project components?
2. To what extent did the project build on the comparative advantage of the ILO?
3. To what extent did the project build on synergies/collaboration with other initiatives (including government's and those of workers and employer's) in the area?

Effectiveness⁷

³ Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746716.pdf

⁴ Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746724.pdf

⁵ The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

⁶ The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

⁷ The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

1. Given the evolving political and socio-economic situation in the country after COVID 19 pandemic, has the project carried out timely needs assessments to address emerging relevant needs?
2. To what extent have the project objectives been achieved? In particular, regarding the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) targeted outside Metro Manila. Have all the outputs been produced?
3. Have unexpected positive and negative results took place?
4. What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of results?
5. To what extend the team arrangement, including the support from DWT-Bangkok, RO and HQ, were sufficiently effective for the project to deliver?

Efficiency⁸

1. Are the resources (financial, human, time) made available to the project used efficiently regarding obtained outputs?
2. Have the project developed an M&E strategy that enhance accountability, learning and feed into management?
3. How have the roles and responsibilities between the project and key partners at the national and regions outside Metro Manila regarding planning M&E of the project worked?
4. To what extend the implementation strategy of the project was cost-effective?

Orientation towards Impact⁹ and Sustainability¹⁰.

1. What can be identified as project sustainable impacts in the target groups and other actors as relevant? Are the results integrated or likely to be integrated into national and sub-national institutions, target populations, and will partners be able to sustain them beyond the project (institutionalisation of project components)?
2. What measures and actions have been put in place to ensure ownership of the project's results at national level and within regions outside Metro Manila.?
3. Can the project's approach or parts of it, and results be replicated or amplified by national partners or other actors considering institutional and financial dimensions?
4. Have the project faced any unanticipated impact/results of intervention on gender equality?
5. What can be identified as lessons learned for the design of future projects in similar fields of expertise, improving SMEs?

⁸ The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

⁹ The extent to which the intervention is likely to generate or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

¹⁰ The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue

Cross-cutting issues:

1. To what extent has the project identified and integrated into its actions the operational and strategic needs and priorities for men, women, and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities?
2. How has the project been able to meet the specific needs of men, women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities?
3. To what extent the social partners have been involved in the design and implementation of the projects?

5. Methodology

The final independent 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. This evaluation is an independent evaluation, and the final methodology and evaluation questions will be determined by the consultant in consultation with the Evaluation Manager. The evaluation will apply methodology that should include multiple methods, with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, and should be able to capture the intervention's contributions to the achievement of expected and unexpected outcomes, 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. The data and information should be collected, presented and analyzed with appropriate gender disaggregation even if project design did not take gender into account. Also, to the extent possible, 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. The specific detailed elaboration of the evaluation method will be defined in consultation between the evaluation team and the evaluation manager and will be described in detail in the inception report to be submitted accordingly to the agreed schedule of deliverables. The evaluator may adapt the methodology, but any fundamental changes should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluator and reflected in the inception report. For required quality control of the whole process, the evaluator will follow the EVAL evaluation policy guidelines and the ILO/EVAL checklists available in the Annex I.

The methodology will ensure involvement of key stakeholders in the implementation as well as in the dissemination processes (e.g. stakeholder workshop, debriefing of project manager, etc.). The methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods, including those related to representation of specific group of stakeholders.

The methodology will include examining the intervention's Theory of Change, with 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 evaluation methodology will include:

- **Desk review:** desk review of all relevant documents: project document and its logical framework, funding agreement, relevant minute sheets, implementation plan, performance evaluation plan, progress reports, other relevant documents and studies.

Desk review, including the following information sources:

- Project Document;
- ToC, logframe, results framework, work plans, budget;
- List of key stakeholders (national and sub-national) to be interviewed with contact details;
- List of names and positions of current and former technical assistance project staff and contacts;
- All technical progress reports including the inception phase;
- Research, strategy documents and study reports (including baseline studies is existing) conducted by the Project;
- All key project finance documents and records;
- Newspaper articles;
- Mission reports; and
- Any other available relevant document on the project.

The desk review may suggest a number of preliminary findings that could be useful in reviewing or fine-tuning the evaluation questions. The desk review will include briefing interviews with the project team and the donor.

The evaluator / evaluation team will ensure that women's views and perceptions are also reflected in databases, interviews and that gender-specific questions are included in the questionnaires.

- **Initial meetings**, this will include at least:
 - with the project staff: the evaluator will meet the project staff to reach a common understanding for the evaluation process.
 - with backstopping units and the donor: the evaluator will meet with the technical backstopping officials in HQ, the regional office in Bangkok and the country office through face-to-face meetings, MS Teams or other online platform. These meetings aim to reach a common understanding in relation of the technical and financial status of the project.
- **Field visits for collection of primary data, through interviews with stakeholders, and direct observation:** the evaluator will meet with the national key partners of the project on the national and regional level. The evaluator will meet with number of project beneficiaries (MSMEs including informal businesses as the ultimate beneficiaries assisted by the local trainers trained by the project) and organize focus group discussions with them. Given the ToT-focused systemic approach of the project, the evaluator will also meet with number of trainers who directly benefited from the capacity building support of the project, and organize focus group discussions with them. Some of their supervisors at the local, regional and national level shall also be interviewed. Further, interviews will be conducted with the key stakeholders of the two specific subcomponents that have indirect impact on the ultimate beneficiaries – one on the connectivity (Innovation Hubs and Starlink), and the other on the knowledge management, again having in mind the ecosystem perspective of the project. During the data collection process, evaluator / evaluation team will compare and cross-validate data from different sources (constituents, project staff, project partners and beneficiaries) to verify their accuracy, and different methodologies (review documentary, field visits and interviews) that will complement each other.

The evaluator / evaluation team should develop the final evaluation methodology in consultation with the evaluation manager, once the evaluator submits the inception report. The methods should be selected for their rigor and their ability to produce empirical evidence to meet the evaluation criteria, answer the evaluation questions and meet the objectives of the evaluation.

An indicative list of persons to be interviewed will be prepared by the project in consultation with the Evaluation Manager. The project will provide logistical support in the organization of these interviews.

Main stakeholders to be consulted: will include key national and sub-national constituents; workers and employers organizations; the donor; ILO relevant staff and others actors involved in the project. A details list of contact will be determined with the evaluator.

6. Main deliverables

The following products will have to be produced and delivered by the evaluation team:

- **Inception report** (incl. methodological note) (refer to Checklist 4.8 “Writing the Inception Report”¹¹) the extension will be not more than 20 pages excluding the annexes, upon the review of available documents and an initial discussion with the project management and the donor (EVAL Guidelines –Checklist 4.8) will be developed. The inception report will:
 - Describe the conceptual framework that will be used to undertake the evaluation;
 - Elaborate the methodology proposed in the TOR with changes as required;
 - Set out in some detail the data required to answer the evaluation questions, data sources by specific evaluation questions (emphasizing triangulation as much as possible) data collection methods, and purposive sampling (can be part of evaluation matrix)
 - Selection criteria for individuals for interviews (as much as possible should include men youth and women);
 - Detail the work plan for the evaluation, indicating the phases in the evaluation, their key deliverables and milestones;
 - Set out the list of key stakeholders to be interviewed and the tools to be used for interviews and discussions;
 - Set out the agenda for the stakeholders workshop;
 - Set out outline for the final evaluation report;
 - Interview guides and other data collection tools

- **A first draft of the evaluation report** that will have to be written in English, answer the questions related to the evaluation criteria, including the recommendations, lessons learned, good practices, technical recommendations for the key stakeholders. The report will be sent to the evaluation manager (refer to “Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report”¹² and Checklist 4.9: Rating The Quality Of An Evaluation Report ¹³ The Evaluation Manger is

¹¹ Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746817.pdf

¹² Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf

¹³ Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746818.pdf

responsible for reviewing and approving this draft. The draft review report will be shared with all relevant stakeholders by the evaluation manager. They will be asked to provide comments to the within ten working days.

1. Cover page with key project and evaluation data
 2. Executive Summary
 3. Acronyms and abbreviations
 4. Context and description of the project including reported key reported results
 5. Methodology and limitations
 6. Findings (this section's content should be organized around evaluation criterion and questions), including a table showing output and outcome level results through indicators and targets planned and achieved and comments on each one.
 7. Conclusions
 8. Recommendations (i.e. for the different key stakeholders and project partners), indicating per each one priority, timeframe and level of resources required, using EVAL recommended format. Suggested: maximum 8-10 recommendations in total).
 9. Lessons learned and good practices in EVAL recommended template.
 10. Annexes:
 - TOR
 - List of persons consulted
 - Schedule of work (briefings, data collection, interviews, field visits, workshop/s)
 - Documents consulted
 - Evaluation matrix
 - Data collection tools
 - Logical framework analysis matrix
 - Lessons learned
 - Emerging good practices
- **The final evaluation report**, which must be written in English, must be about 30-40 pages maximum (excluding annexes and executive summary), follow the structure presented in appendix III and include a cover page. Appendices should include the questions matrix, the interview and focus groups guides, field work schedule, a list of interviewees, and a list of documents analysed, a PowerPoint summary in English. The quality of the report in English will be assessed based on the ILO checklist 6 (see above).

- **A summary of the final evaluation report** (ILO/EVAL template) will be sent, together with the final report, in English to the evaluation manager based on the executive summary of the evaluation report.
- **Lessons learnt and good practices** (template for lessons learned and good practices can be found in the “Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report”¹⁴ and Checklist 4.9: Rating The Quality Of An Evaluation Report ¹⁵
- **Dissemination:** the evaluation report will be submitted to the key stakeholders by the CO, a workshop will be organised to inform the main stakeholders, and also the report will be uploaded in the EVAL public repository of evaluation reports (e-discovery)

7. Management arrangements and work plan (including timeframe)

The organization and coordination of the evaluation assignment will be provided by Mr Pablo Arellano (arellano@ilo.org), the designated Evaluation Manager at ILO level. The evaluator will discuss with him all technical and methodological issues when needed. The consultant, with the support of the evaluation manager, will be able to coordinate with the project manager to provide the main documents and any information that they will need to carry out the evaluation. It will facilitate contacts with the different partners. Meetings will be organized on this occasion with the authorities, partners and beneficiaries concerned by the project. The evaluator / evaluation team will also receive technical, logistical, and administrative support from the project team.

The evaluation manager is responsible for completing the following specific tasks:

- Draft and finalize the evaluation TOR with inputs from key stakeholders;
- Develop the Call for expression of interest and select the independent evaluator in coordination with EVAL;
- Brief the evaluator on ILO evaluation policies and procedures;
- Initial coordination with the project team on the development of the data collection process and the preliminary results workshop;
- Review and provide comments on all evaluation deliverable

¹⁴ Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf

¹⁵ Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746818.pdf

- Circulate the first draft of the evaluation report to the key stakeholders requesting written comments within 10 working days;
- Consolidate the received written comments received into a master evaluation report to send the evaluator / evaluation team; and
- Ensure the final version of the evaluation report addresses the stakeholders' comments (or an explanation why any has not been addressed) and meets ILO requirement

Proposed work days for the evaluation

Task	Responsible	Number of work days	Date
Selection and Recruit evaluator	Evaluation Manager/Regional Evaluation Officer (REO)		16/02/2024
Inception phase: briefing with the evaluation manager, project manager, documents review and development and approval of the inception report	Evaluation Manager, Project Manager, Evaluator	3	
Data collection phase (fieldwork as per agreed itinerary, interviews)	Evaluator	10	TBD End of February 2024
Post-fieldwork debrief call	Evaluation Manager		
Report drafting: preparation of draft preliminary report (full draft with annexes) submitted to the evaluation manager for review	Evaluator	8	
Circulating the draft report for comments from stakeholders	Evaluation Manager		End of March 2024
Workshop with stakeholder	Evaluation Manager, Project Manager, Evaluator	1	Second half April 2024

Consolidate feedback from stakeholders and send feedback to the consultant.	Evaluation Manager		
Preparation of Final Evaluation Report and separate Evaluation Summary and submits to ILO	Evaluator	3	
Review and approval of the evaluation report by the evaluation manager and the Regional Focal Point	Evaluation Manager		
EVAL provides final approval	Evaluation Manager		
Total		23	

Timeline

The evaluation will be undertaken over 2 months from February 2024-April 2024 (field work in February 2024). A detailed timetable will be included in the inception report developed by the evaluator.

All logistics costs will be covered by the project.

Resources

Estimated resource requirements:

- Evaluator: 23 days of honorarium, travel to project target areas including transportation and DSA days according to ILO policy
- Logistic support for the field mission, local transportation in the project areas
- Stakeholders workshop (as needed)

Payment Schedule

The fees of the evaluator / evaluation team, corresponding to approximately 24 days of effective work, will be made once the products are received to the satisfaction of the ILO as follows:

- Payment 1: 30% (US\$ XXX) upon delivery and approval of the **Inception report**.

- Payment 2: 70% (US\$ XXX) against delivery and approval of the **Final Evaluation Report**, including the **summary of the final evaluation report** and the **lessons learnt and good practices**.

8. Profile of the evaluation team

The evaluation will be conducted by an experienced evaluator.

Main qualifications:

- Advanced university degree preferably in economics, business management or related qualifications,
- A minimum of 7 years of professional experience in evaluating international programmes and projects, development initiatives, logical framework and other strategic approaches, M&E methods and approaches, and information analysis and report writing,
- Recent experience with result-based management monitoring and evaluation methodologies and mainstreaming of gender equality in M&E
- Understanding of the development context in the Philippines
- Understanding of the key thematic areas of the project including OSH, productivity, digital entrepreneurship and financial literacy with focus on small and informal businesses
- Understanding on the ecosystem/systemic approach in development
- Previous involvement and understanding of ILO procedures is an advantage and extensive national / international experience in the fields of project formulation, execution, and evaluation is required.
- Work experience in the Philippines will be an asset
- Excellent communication and interview skills,
- Excellent report writing skills,
- Demonstrated ability to work in group and deliver quality results within strict deadlines,
- Excellent knowledge and excellent drafting skills in English.
- Excellent communication and interview skills,
- Knowledge of gender equality and disability inclusion within evaluations
- Demonstrated ability to work in group and deliver quality results within strict deadlines,

Main duties:

- Responsible for conducting the evaluation
-

- Coordinate with evaluation manager, project team and internal/external stakeholders to conduct the entire evaluation process
- Proceed to a desk review of all relevant documents and conduct a field mission to meet main stakeholders
- Elaborate the inception report (incl. methodological elaborations), the first draft and final report, executive summary and templates for lessons learned and good practices in deadlines and in conformity with ILO and international standards
- Conduct the field work and stakeholders workshop at the end of the mission, organization and logistics of the workshop will be supported by the ILO.
- Participate to debriefings with main stakeholders on the main results and recommendations of the evaluation

9. Legal and ethical matters

All data and information received from the ILO or other stakeholders for the purposes of this assignment shall be treated as confidential and shall be used only for the purpose of executing this mandate. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of this mandate are attributed to the ILO. The contents of the written documents obtained and used in connection with this assignment may not be disclosed to third parties without the prior written consent of the ILO or the relevant stakeholders.

This evaluation complies with the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation and will ensure that ethical safeguards regarding the independence of the evaluation are taken into account. Please see UNEG ethical guidelines [here](#).

Annex I. All relevant ILO evaluation guidelines and standard templates

1. Code of conduct form (To be signed by the evaluator) http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206205/lang-en/index.htm
 2. Checklist 4.8 Writing the inception report https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746817.pdf
 3. Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf
 4. Checklist 4.9: Rating The Quality Of An Evaluation Report https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746818.pdf
 5. Guidance Note 5.5: Dissemination of Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746730.pdf
 6. Guidance Note 3.1 Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring & Evaluation of Projects. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746716.pdf
 7. Guidance Note 4.5: Stakeholder engagement https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746724.pdf
 8. Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746717.pdf
 9. Checklist 4.3: Filling in the Evaluation Title Page https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746810.pdf
 10. Template for executive summary https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746822.pdf
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Annex 4 List of persons interviewed

Name	Gender	Organization	Designation	Mode of interview
1. Katherine Brimon	F	BBJS Project team	Senior Project Officer	Group via Zoom
2. Joy Bacal	F	BBJS Project team	OSH Coordinator	Personal in-person
3. Jayce Umaguig	M	BBJS Project team	Admin and Finance Officer	Group via Zoom
4. Gemuno Wijesena	M	SIYB	International Master Trainer	Group via Zoom
5. Robert Rodelas	M	SIYB	Master Trainer	Group via Zoom
6. Jess Macasil	M	SIYB	Master Trainer	Group via Zoom
7. Maybelle Frianeza	F	SIYB	SIYB Trainer	Group via Zoom
8. Oliver Barredo	M	SIYB	SIYB Trainer	Group via Zoom
9. Charm Co	F	PYEA/SIYB	SIYB Trainer	Group via Zoom
10. Jehan	F	SIYB	SIYB Trainer	Group via Zoom
11. Gustavo Propelitchi	M	Financial Education	Financial Education International Trainer	Group via Zoom
12. Yousra Hamed	F	ILO	Specialist	Group via Zoom
13. Ines Bentchikou	F	ILO	Technical Officer in Financial Inclusion and Education	Group via Zoom
14. Hideki Kagohashi	M	ILO	Backstopping officer on Enterprise	Personal in-person
15. Rhodora Snyder	F	ECOP	Head, OSH Academy and CSR	Group via Zoom
16. Shiela Ramos	F	ECOP	OSH Specialist	Group via Zoom
17. Rex del Rosario	M	ECOP	Trainer/OSH Consultant	Group via Zoom
18. Christy Donato	F	ECOP	SCORE Trainer	Group via Zoom
19. Cesar Cuyugan	M	SCORE	Trainer	Group in-person
20. Nelson Casiano	M	SCORE	Trainer	Group in-person
21. Juvy de Ungria	F	SCORE	Trainer	Group in-person
22. Mark Castro	M	SCORE	Trainer	Group in-person
23. Maria Teresa Molino	F	PATAMABA	Program Manager	Group in-person
24. Lourdes Gula	F	PATAMABA	National President	Group in-person
25. Divina Cesar	F	PATAMABA	National Treasurer	Group in-person
26. Julius Cainglet	M	FFW	VP on Research and Advocacy	Group in-person
27. Helen Simplina	F	FFW	OSH Coordinator	Group in-person
28. Richard Arceno	M	BBMC	Founder/Chairman of BOT	Personal in-person
29. Luisa Iachan	F	ILO	SIYB Backstopping Officer	Personal via Zoom

Name	Gender	Organization	Designation	Mode of interview
30. Tonilyn Lim	F	ILO	Former BBJs CTA	Personal via Zoom
31. Fatima Ebaren	F	Igbaras Farmers Federation	President	Group via Zoom
32. Karen Escleto	F	Igbaras Farmers Federation	Youth representative	Group via Zoom
33. Maria Joyce Escosa	F	Igbaras Farmers Federation	Youth representative	Group via Zoom
34. Roland Suico	M	PMAP Davao/ Davao Chamber of Commerce	VP on Advocacy and Training	Personal in-person
35. Paul Cruz	M	DOLE	TSSD Chief	Group in-person
36. May Bernal	F	OSHNet Davao	President	Group in-person
37. Anna Escaro	F	DOLE OSHC Region 11	Chief	Group in-person
38. Melanie Bonita	F	DOLE	Labor Standard Officer	Group in-person
39. Genesys Arcenio	M	DOLE	Technical Safety Officer	Group in-person
40. Lorraine Joy Tigas	F	SIYB/DTI Davao del Sur	Trainer	Personal in-person
41. Rachele Ann Tero	F	DTI Region 11	Trainer	Personal in-person
42. Rivera	F	AL Navarro High School	Teacher	Group in-person
43. Edmar Adlawan	M	AL Navarro High School	Teacher	Group in-person
44. Elgrace Pulgera	F	TAMFIAS	Fisherfolk	Group in-person
45. Procopio Legaspi	M	TAMFIAS	Chairman	Group in-person
46. Alberto Cagina Jr.	M	Brgy Lasang LGU	Brgy Secretary	Group in-person
47. Vanessa Cantoy	F	Cagangohan Woman Association	Secretary	Group in-person
48. Helen Elcomendras	F	Cagangohan Woman Association	Vice President	Group in-person
49. Cerila Borbon	F	Cagangohan Woman Association	President	Group in-person
50. Rubilyn Paco	F	Cacao Association in Kapitalong	Member	Group in-person
51. Sheena Gapura	F	Vendors Association in Kapitalong	President	Group in-person
52. Justin Dave Guzman	M	KCast	Teacher	Group in-person
53. Denisa Sofeu	F	KCast	Teacher	Group in-person
54. Ferdinand Neri	M	Vineyard Business / WISE	Worker/Trainee	Group in-person
55. Euphronia Mangle	F	DTI	PESO Manager	Group in-person
56. Aurea Alvaran	F	WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
57. Philip Mirasol	M	Agri Trading / WISE	Owner / Trainee	Group in-person
58. Aireen Borlado	F	WISE	Apartment owner	Group in-person
59. Mayor Dayaday Asuncion	M	Municipality of Asuncion	Mayor	Personal in-person
60. Mayor Tess Timbol Kapitalong	F	Municipality of Kapitalong	Mayor	Personal in-person

Name	Gender	Organization	Designation	Mode of interview
61. Eduardo Rivero Jr.	M	OSHNet Region 9	President	Group in-person
62. Albert Gutib	M	DOLE Region 9	Regional Director	Group in-person
63. Wesley Tan	M	DOLE Region 9	TSSD Chief	Group in-person
64. Gemma Bahani	F	ATIWA / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
65. Maria Christina Yungco	F	Zamboanga Women of Hope Association / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
66. Felicitas Elavasantos	F	Zamboanga Women of Hope Association / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
67. Tahira Asanji	F	Hugpong Women Association / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
68. Vince David	M	Freedom Commercial Printers / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
69. Al Vhiena Ciara Abao	F	Zamboanga Seafood House / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
70. Sitti Miriam Eisma	F	Village Restaurant / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
71. Sahlee Libetario	F	Unite General / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
72. Crisfe Tuballa	F	EL Camino Refreshment Stall / WISE	Trainee	Group in-person
73. Gwyneth Rence Banquiao	F	Gwenyth Rence Barbeque Stand/ WISE	Trainee	Group in-person
74. Jihan Muktadir	M	SIYB Sulu	Beneficiary	Group in-person
75. Timhar Timplahan	M	MTIT Sulu / SIYB	Beneficiary	Group in-person
76. Jomar Batino	M	OSHC	Executive Director	Group in-person
77. Magel	F	OSHC	Training Division Officer	Group in-person
78. Bong	M	OSHC	Training Division Officer	Group in-person
79. German Eser	M	OSHC	Deputy Director	Group in-person
80. Joan Bacbac	F	DA AMAD CAR	Director	Personal via Zoom
81. Alvin Curada	M	DOLE BWC	Director	Group in-person
82. Kristine Carol Ramos	F	DOLE BWC PMTSSD	Chief	Group in-person
83. Carlo Casabar	M	DOLE BWC PPDD	OIC Chief	Group in-person
84. Judaline Alde-Campo	F	DOLE LSRAD	Attorney	Group in-person
85. Khalid Hassan	M	ILO	Country Director	Personal in-person
86. Yuka Ujita	F	ILO	OSH Senior Specialist	Personal via Zoom
87. Jocelyn Soria	F	DOH	Division Chief	Group via Zoom
88. Rene Timbang	M	DOH	Division Chief	Group via Zoom
89. Aris Go	M	Innovation Hub ExCol	Architect	Personal via Zoom
90. Rosalyn Vianzon	F	DOH	Director	Group via Zoom
91. Minalyn Peralta	F	DICT	Director	Personal via Zoom

Name	Gender	Organization	Designation	Mode of interview
92. Nurjiya Kamdon	F	DTI Sulu	Officer	Group via Zoom
93. Gerry Constantino	M	ECCP	President	Personal via Zoom
94. Arvie Arrieta	F	BASULTA SIYB	Trainer	Group via Zoom
95. Aldin Isma	M	BASULTA SIYB	Trainer	Group via Zoom
96. Rufaisa Jalani	F	BASULTA SIYB	Trainer	Group via Zoom
97. Luderick Labadan	M	BASULTA SIYB	Trainer	Group via Zoom
98. Daisy Cellona	F	BASULTA SIYB	Trainer	Group via Zoom
99. Weng Albaran	F	Asuncion LGU / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
100. Analyn Dumagat	F	Asuncion LGU / WISE	Trainer	Group in-person
TOTAL				
Number of Interviewees:		100		
Female (Number):		60		
Female (%):		60%		

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally.

Project TC/SYMBOL: PHL/21/02/JPN

Name of Evaluator: Salic “Exan” Sharief, Jr.

Date: March 2024

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

LL Element	Text
<p>Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)</p>	<p>Following the nature of the pandemic, there is rapid change in the context and the volatility of the situation must be factored in on all aspects of the project. Exercising adaptive management in terms of finding more relevance during the implementation as well as in the procedural requirements is highly encouraged. Moreover, the flexibility to adopt a new design for the innovation hubs as prompted by the partner agency is a wise decision. The PMU has been supportive on how the trainers approached the roll out of the ToEs and ToBs – whether they utilize their own personal networks or do formal communication campaigns – is another manifestation of adaptive management. By mid-2023, the ToEs under SIYB did not move until there was a strategic shift to work with the regional/local partners with demonstrated capacity to replicate ToEs and reinforce the digitalization content of the training. Equally important is the need for flexibility to accommodate and support the informal sector in complying with the administrative and financial guidelines on reporting.</p>
<p>Context and any related preconditions</p>	<p>Adaptive management is a key factor for successful project implementation, especially in dynamic and uncertain environments. Pandemic is a good example of uncertainty. Most often, projects that allow flexibility in management processes are usually successful. It is necessary that the goals and objectives of the project is not detached from the realities of the problems it intends to resolve.</p>

Targeted users / Beneficiaries	<p>Many would be benefited by the adaptive management of the project. The PMU would have more opportunity to correct any of the shortcomings of the target outcomes and outputs in the design and re-direction of the project through working with partners with demonstrated capacity to deliver ToEs. This approach has been initially done on the SIYB and eventually adopted also for Financial Education and SCORE. WISE may have a different dynamics but throughout the four training programmes, the key was the continuous adaptive management in order to deliver the impact at the MSME beneficiary level, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Ultimately, end beneficiaries such as the target sector would feel more supported and prioritized if certain flexibilities on the procedural requirements are considered.</p>
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	<p>Flexibility in the project management can sometimes be abused and mistaken to be inefficiency and inadequacy of relevance. Sometimes, when program direction changes regularly, confusion sets in as to its targets, goals and objectives which in turn sends a different messaging to the donor with regard to frugality and fiscal accountability. Some of the specific challenges met by the project were 1) lack of root cause analysis on the slow implementation and weak drive to problem solving during the course of 2022; 2) lack of experience in managing the market system development or ecosystem approach projects among the project staff; and 3) the challenge of managing training center construction in the context of stringent government scrutiny on foreign-donor donation.</p>
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	<p>Flexibility in project management inspires more ownership of the process and of the results. It allows recalibration to align with the current circumstances and make interventions more responsive to the needs.</p>
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	<p>The rigidity of ILO guidelines and time-consuming internal approval process could run counter to the concept of flexibility in project management. There must be a good balance between being tied up in those guidelines as well as the donor preferences and the need or level of flexibility that can be exercised in a certain project. There must be an effort to find pragmatic ways to speed up the internal procedure and early identification and resolution of internal stagnation when it happens.</p>

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

Project Title: Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally.

Project TC/SYMBOL: PHL/21/02/JPN

Name of Evaluator: Salic “Exan” Sharief, Jr.

Date: March 2024

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

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The certification aspect of the trainings such as SIYB, SCORE and Financial Education, was an added value and another pulling factor for completion of the roll out of ToEs and ToBs. Although the project design did not commit to a specific target on certifications after the trainings, the evaluation finds it highly appreciated by the trainers. This ensures sustainability of the training module and the replicability to conduct such similar trainings even outside the project duration.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The inclusion of a certification in either online or in-person training is already a common practice. However, what makes this particularly unique is the recognition of such certificate and its applicability for either job promotion or further economic opportunity and productivity. This is highly to be replicated in other projects as ILO have also established partnership with TESDA which is a skills certification agency.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Providing a certification that’s globally recognized will generate more interest to the training. More importantly, this certification being a reward or recognition after the trainers have conducted their assigned ToEs or ToBs is a strategic step in ensuring the re-echo and roll out of the training to end beneficiaries.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The impact can be measured by the number of certifications given and on a long-term basis, it can also be measured if there are further related trainings participated.
Potential for replication and by whom	This practice can be replicated in other ILO projects as well as by the partner organizations for those who intend to sustain the intervention even after the project timeline.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	Ensuring a certification component in training modules can make the ILO interventions more efficient and effective and by that contribute positively to meeting DWCP, CPO and other strategic goals.
Other documents or relevant comments	Technical Progress Reports

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

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GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The training toolkits were designed and developed using English as a universal language. The SIYB toolkit was patterned after the SYB module. SCORE and WISE were also not solely developed for the Philippine context, hence, used English in its texts since they are training modules used across the globe where ILO interventions are relevant. Therefore, contextualizing the training modules is a good initiative observed in this project. Further, translation of the training toolkits was commendable as this project targeted the informal sector.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Translation of training modules and the localization of its delivery is not new, rather it has been done in most interventions. The difference is in this project, it was officially agreed and adopted to have the translations rather than just put the burden to the trainer to find his/her convenience in the roll out of ToEs and ToBs. This good practice can easily be done and replicated across other ILO training and publication materials.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	By providing translated versions of toolkits and training materials, it can be assured that there will be a significant impact on the effectiveness, relevance and even sustainability of the intervention.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The impact can be measured by the number of translations made, published and distributed.
Potential for replication and by whom	This practice can be replicated in other ILO projects as well as in other countries.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	Localization and contextualization such as translation to local language of training toolkits is aligned with the ILO’s overall orientation on inclusion and agile training orientation.
Other documents or relevant comments	Technical Progress Reports, Training toolkits

Annex 7 List of documents reviewed

All reviewed documents are as follows:

- Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Final Independent Evaluation of Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally
- Development Cooperation Project Document: Bringing Back Jobs Safely under the COVID-19 Crisis in the Philippines: Rebooting Small and Informal Businesses Safely and Digitally
- Theory of Change and Log frame
- Revised Midterm Evaluation (internal) and detailed guide questions, February 2023
- ToR Midterm Evaluation, February 2023
- Final Midterm Report Power Point Presentation
- Letter from Embassy of Japan re project extension
- Progress Report, November 2021
- Progress Report, June 2022
- BBS Presentation at ILO Japan Annual Review, February 2023
- BBS Annual Report
- Implementation Agreement/s
- ToR for consultants
- Technical Progress Report from Implementing Partners
- Toolkit/s

Relevant websites such as:

- ILO EVAL: Evaluation Policy Guidelines, including ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations 3rd edition 2017.
- ILO (2020) Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation (4th edition). ILO-EVAL, Geneva: November 2020. See:
- https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationpolicy/WCMS_571339/lang--en/index.htm
- EVAL (2020): Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO: An internal guide on adapting to the situation. Geneva: http://www.ilo.ch/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_741206.pdf, and:
- www.ilo.ch/eval/WCMS_744068/lang--en/index.htm
- ILO EVAL (2021): ILO's response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work: Evaluative lessons on how to build a better future of work after the pandemic (August 2021): <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787>
- United Nations Evaluation Guidelines (UNEG) Norms and Standards ILO policy guidelines (4th edition, 2020): https://www.ilo.org/eval/WCMS_817079/lang--en/index.htm
- OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation (2019): Better Criteria for Better Evaluation; Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use. December 2019.

Evaluation Questions	Indicator	Sources of Data	Method
Relevance			
1) Were the project objectives consistent with the national key partners' needs, requirements, and the country needs? Do outputs causally link to the intended outcomes and objectives? In particular, of the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) targeted outside Metro Manila.	Extent to which Outcomes and Objectives are aligned with priorities/programs of the GOP	Project documents and informants	Desk review and semi-structured interviews with key informants
2) How did the project contribute to the relevant International Labour Organisation Programme & Budget Outcomes and development priorities in the Philippines and to the UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework 2020-23 and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024-28?	Synergies and collaboration with other ILO programs and priorities aligned with the UNSDCF 2024-28	Project team, stakeholders and social partners statements	Desk review and interviews with project team, stakeholders and social partners
3) To what extent did the project build on previous experience of the ILO in the Philippines, and relevant experience of other local and international organizations in the Philippines?	Synergies and collaboration with other ILO programs in the Philippines	Project team, stakeholders and social partners statements	Desk review and semi-structured interviews and FGDs with key informants

4) To what extent did the project contribute to the ILO's response to COVID-19 crises in the Philippines?	Recognition of relevance of the project by GOP agencies responding to COVID-19 crises	Stakeholders and social partners statements	Semi-structured interviews with key informants
5) To what extent the project strategy was in line with donor's expectation?	Synergy with donor's other priorities/programs	Donor Reports, key informants	Desk review and semi-structured interviews
6) To what extent were the project stakeholders/social partners involved in the project design and implementation?	National stakeholders including beneficiaries report that their needs are met. Confirmation of their participation in the planning and implementation. National stakeholders report that they have contributed to design and implementation	Attendance sheets, stakeholders and social partners statements	Desk review and semi-structured interviews and FGDs
7) To what extent has the project intervention been adjusted in accordance with the findings and recommendations from the midterm evaluation?	Activities are recalibrated in response to the findings of the midterm evaluation	Progress Reports, key informants	Desk review and semi-structured interviews
Coherence			
1) To what extent was the project design adequate and effective in the coherence and complementarity between the different project components?	Synergies established with other components	Project documents, project team and key informants engaged with other project components	Desk review and interviews

2) To what extent did the project build on the comparative advantage of the ILO?	Synergies established with previous ILO interventions	Project documents, midterm evaluation report, project team and key informants engaged with other project components	Desk review and interview with stakeholders and key informants
3) To what extent did the project build on synergies/collaboration with other initiatives (including government's and those of workers and employer's) in the area?	Synergies established with other interventions and programs of GOP and employers' associations	Progress Reports, key informants from partners engaged in other interventions	Desk review and interview and FGDs
Project effectiveness			
1) Given the evolving political and socio-economic situation in the country after COVID 19 pandemic, has the project carried out timely needs assessments to address emerging relevant needs?	Recalibration of project design to address emerging needs	Progress Reports, key informants, midterm evaluation report	Desk review and interviews
2) To what extent have the project objectives been achieved? In particular, regarding the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) targeted outside Metro Manila. Have all the outputs been produced?	Level of achievement of Objectives Level of documented results and delivery of expected Outputs	Key informants and Progress Reports	Desk review and Interviews with key informants

3) Have any unexpected positive and negative results took place?	Level of which Outcomes are met	DCPRs, Project Document and key informants	Desk review and interviews
4) What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of results?	Factors identified to influence success rate of the results	Progress Reports and key informants	Desk review and interviews
5) To what extent the team arrangement, including the support from DWT-Bangkok, RO and HQ, were sufficiently effective for the project to deliver?	Support system established with project team	Project documents, Project team and other ILO officials	Desk review and interviews
6) How effective were the M&E system and indicators in measuring the project progress and achievement?	M&E used as a management tool Indicators proved to be able to meaningfully measure the project achievement based on reliable evidence/data	Project team and partners	FGD and interviews
7) To what extent has the project identified and engaged with the right stakeholders at the country and regional levels?	Level of synergy and formalised coordination	Project staff and management of other ILO interventions	Interviews
Efficiency			

<p>1) Are the resources (financial, human, time) made available to the project used efficiently to obtain the outputs?</p>	<p>Activities implemented in accordance with workplan and budget</p>	<p>Progress and financial reports, key informants</p>	<p>Desk review and interview</p>
<p>2) Have the project developed an M&E strategy that enhance accountability, learning and feed into management?</p>	<p>M&E used as a management tool</p>	<p>Progress Reports, Midterm Evaluation Report</p>	<p>Desk review</p>
<p>3) How have the roles and responsibilities between the project and key partners at the national and regions outside Metro Manila regarding planning M&E of the project worked?</p>	<p>M&E used as a management tool</p>	<p>Project document and key partners</p>	<p>Desk review, FGDs and interviews</p>
<p>4) To what extent the implementation strategy of the project was cost-effective?</p>	<p>Outputs are met according to budget Synergies with other budget from other interventions</p>	<p>Project document incl. budget, Progress and Financial reports</p>	<p>Desk review</p>

<p>5) Have the project activities been completed on time/according to logical phasing and sequencing anticipated by the project document? If not, what are the factors that have hindered timely delivery and what are the countermeasures that have been taken to date to try to address these issues?</p>	<p>Level of documented results and delivery of expected Outputs</p>	<p>Project Document, Progress Reports</p>	<p>Desk review</p>
<p>Impact and Sustainability</p>			
<p>1) What can be identified as project sustainable impacts in the target groups and other actors as relevant? Are the results integrated or likely to be integrated into national and subnational institutions, target populations, and will partners be able to sustain them beyond the project (institutionalization of project components)?</p>	<p>Adoption of project activities by partner agencies/institutions</p>	<p>MOUs, Progress Reports, key informants</p>	<p>Desk review and interviews with partners</p>

<p>2) What measures and actions have been put in place to ensure ownership of the project's results at national level and within regions outside Metro Manila? What influence has the project had on the development of relevant policies and practices at national and regional levels?</p>	<p>Outputs reflected in national and regional policies and practices</p>	<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>Interviews with stakeholders incl. beneficiaries</p>
<p>3) Can the project's approach or parts of it, and results be replicated or amplified by national partners or other actors considering institutional and financial dimensions? To what extent have the stakeholders adopted/used the system(s)/tool(s)/product(s) produced by the project?</p>	<p>Adoption of project activities by partner agencies/institutions</p>	<p>Stakeholders and project team</p>	<p>Interviews and desk review</p>
<p>4) Have the project faced any unanticipated impact/results of intervention on gender equality? What have been impacts (intended or unintended, positive or negative) produced by the project in the areas of gender, disability inclusion, International Labour Standards (ILS), tripartism, social dialogue and climate change?</p>	<p>Project achievements related to these cross-cutting issues</p>	<p>Progress Reports</p>	<p>Desk review</p>

<p>5) What can be identified as lessons learned for the design of future projects in similar fields of expertise, improving SMEs?</p>	<p>Outputs reflected in future development frameworks</p>	<p>Progress Reports, project team</p>	<p>Desk review and staff interviews</p>
<p>6) What are the lessons learned and best practices in terms of programme design and implementation that other programmes can replicate? What are the factors that influence improved change in practices or adoption of desired practices?</p>	<p>Level of commitment from stakeholders or other projects to adopt emerging good practices</p>	<p>Statements from stakeholders</p>	<p>Stakeholder's interviews and desk review</p>
<p>7) Does the project have a phase-out/exit strategy? Is the phase-out/ exit strategy and/or the project strategy itself designed in order to ensure sustainability of the project outcomes/results? What steps were taken to implement the phase-out/ exist strategy?</p>	<p>Level of implementation of phase out strategy</p>	<p>Policy documents</p>	<p>Desk review</p>
<p>Cross-cutting issues</p>			
<p>1) To what extent has the project identified and integrated into its actions the operational and strategic needs and priorities for men, women, and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities? To what extent did the project design take into account gender equality, disability inclusion, International Labour Standards (ILS), tripartism, social dialogue and climate change?</p>	<p>Crosscutting issues given priority and impact noted</p>	<p>Progress Reports, project team and key informants</p>	<p>Desk review and interviews</p>

<p>2) How has the project been able to meet the specific needs of men, women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities?</p>	<p>Crosscutting issues given priority and impact noted</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>	<p>Desk review</p>
<p>3) To what extent has the programme contributed to improving decent working conditions and the respect of social, human rights and environmental concerns in sectors where women are highly employed but also in sectors where women are underrepresented?</p>	<p>Cross cutting issues given priority in Progress Reports</p>	<p>Progress Reports</p>	<p>Desk review</p>