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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANTUF	All Nepal Trade Union Federation
BLA	Bilateral Agreement
CESLAM	Center for the Study of Labour and Mobility
CNI	Confederation of Nepalese Industries
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoFE	Department of Foreign Employment
DCWP	Decent Work Country Program
EQ	Evaluation Question
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FEA	Foreign Employment Act
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FWEAN	Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations of Nepal
GCM	Global Compact on Migration
GEFONT	General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GoN	Government of Nepal
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Training Center
JTUCC	Joint Trade Union Coordination Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAPSOJ	Law and Policy Forum for Social Justice
MIRIDEW	Migrants Rights and Decent Work
MoICS	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies
MoLESS	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAFEA	Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies
NTUC	Nepal Trade Union Congress
NYEF	Nepalese Young Entrepreneurs Forum
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PLAC	Provincial Labour Advisory Council
PMEP	Prime Minister Employment Programme
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia Pacific
SEP	Skills for Employment Programme
SEP-TA	Skills for Employment Programme-Technical Assistance
SSF	Social Security Fund
TOC	Theory of Change
TAF	The Asia Foundation
VfM	Value for Money
YETI	Youth Employment Transformation Initiative

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Laurie Zivetz and Ishan Ghimire

Executive Summary

The Context

The Skills for Employment-Technical Assistance (SEP-TA) project launched in August 2017 at a time of significant change in Nepal. In the aftermath of a devastating earthquake and a decade of civil war and in the country, the new Nepalese constitution was enacted in late 2015. General elections for federal and provincial assemblies were held November-December 2017 and the new Government of Nepal (GoN) embarked on an ambitious administrative restructuring towards a federalist system with greater policy and management authority vested in the 7 provincial governments and 753 local bodies (municipalities and rural municipalities). A new Labour Law was enacted in September 2017, and the Ministry of Labour added Social Security to its name—with associated structural and priority foci on worker rights (119). Remittances from foreign employment represent an estimated 30% of Nepal's GDP—one of the highest in the world (101, 102). Periodic plans issued between 2016 and 2021 reflect a growing emphasis on domestic employment generation, noting systematic risks related with foreign employment. Federalization and multiple laws required each province and municipality to draft policies and protocols related to labour and labour migration. In February 2019, the Rs3.1b (\$26m) Prime Ministers' Employment Program (PMEP) was announced, and became a centerpiece of government efforts to position the domestic economy for the future. However, the PMEP and realization of the new Labour Law have been hampered by horizontal and vertical capacity deficits (211, 212). The COVID pandemic has had a devastating impact on the economy in Nepal, with an estimated 60% of formal and informal workers losing their job, micro and small enterprises teetering on collapse, and declines in remittance flows (301, 209, 210).

The Project

The Skills for Employment (SEP) project was funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK under its umbrella support to federalization in Nepal. SEP aimed to *support domestic employment creation and reduce long-term dependency on migration, whilst recognising the importance of migration as a source of work for Nepali workers*¹ (102). SEP included four components, with the ILO component (SEP-TA) described as:

4. Technical Assistance to labour market, employment and migration laws and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easing constraints to employment creation through technical assistance to all spheres of Government on employment planning. • Technical support to migration laws, policy and governance at all spheres of Government.
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SEP-TA had an overall budget of £2.9 million (approximately 10% of the overall SEP funding), and an implementation period of August 2017-July 2021.

The 9 outputs adopted in the 2019/20 annual report encapsulate the main foci of the project (102, 118, 119).²

Output	Definition
Output 4.1	Technical assistance to domestic employment policies

¹ Articulation of the SEP aim was reformulated over the course of inception and implementation. This citation from the ILO's proposal offers a useful summary (not a formal statement of purpose).

² The logframe outputs and some output indicators changed several times over the life of the project, in response to changes in government and government priorities, and requests from the FCDO. Prior to the 2020/21 quarterly report, Output 4.2 and Output 4.3 were identical (though with different indicators) in reports and logframes.

Output 4.2	Technical Assistance to Municipal Governments to develop and implement job creation strategies
Output 4.3	Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels
Output 4.4	Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law
Output 4.5	Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the Social Security Act.
Output 4.6	Technical Assistance to Federal and State Governments to revise, develop and implement laws and policies to support labour migrants
Output 4.7	Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal at all levels to improve the national legal and policy framework for labour migration governance.
Output 4.8	Technical Assistance to GoN to identify, scope and provide access to new labour markets
Output 4.9	Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal to develop new BLAs and MoUs according to international standards

The project invested more and got more traction in areas related domestic employment (Outputs 4.1-4.5) than labour migration (Outputs 4.6-4.9), though some knowledge products were generated in the first years of the project under Outputs 4.7 and 4.8. The project's main partners were the MoLESS and in the final years the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MOICS), as well as trade union and employers organizations at national level. In line with the geographic focus of the SEP, project activities were implemented in Provinces 2 and 5, and mostly in the municipalities of Birgunj and Butwal—commercial hubs in the south of Nepal.³

Evaluation background

The final evaluation (conducted June-August, 2021) took a retrospective look at key elements of the project per the OECD-DAC criteria to determine (i) the relevance of the project's interventions; (ii) the efficiency of the project's implementation and (iii) its effectiveness; (iv) the impact that the project has had on development progress in the areas of its operation; and (v) the degree of sustainability of the project's interventions. Terms of Reference (ToR) prioritized identifying gaps and limitations in project implementation and anticipated recommendations for improvement to support the design of future projects in the country as well as best practices and lessons learnt to be taken advantage of in future similar initiatives (101). Primary clients for the evaluation include: 1) the Skills for Employment Programme (SEP); 2) Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO); 3) the ILO SEP Project Team; 4) ILO Country Office for Nepal; 5) the DWT-New Delhi (ILO Decent Work Country Team); 5) ROAP (ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific). Secondary clients are other stakeholders, including national and provincial workers' and employers' organisations, and other government bodies (101). Most of these are also key beneficiaries of the evaluation.

The evaluation relied on review of some 128 documents and interviews with 28 key informants interviews which were scheduled by the ILO. Because of COVID restrictions, all interviews were virtual.

³ A number of other municipalities in the same Provinces received some technical assistance as well.

The evaluation faced a number of limitations. In the absence of an overall Theory of Change, outcome indicators, associated monitoring data, or detailed expenditure data, the scope for drawing evidence-based conclusions was significantly narrowed. COVID and other challenges delimited the availability of key informants at all levels of the programme.

Findings

National policy and vision.

Domestic employment. A high quality political economy analysis (PEA) was carried by two senior Nepali economists in the first year of the project. The PEA delved into policies and priorities in employment; strategic choices for industrial catch-up and job-creation; and employment oriented initiatives for municipalities (335, 336, 337, 338). The PEA served as a somewhat of a reference point for the project.

During the first two years of the project, the MOLESS launched two major government programs – the PMEP and the Social Security Fund (SSF). The ILO embedded long term advisors in MOLESS, and provided short term technical assistance, overseas training for staff, knowledge products, facilitation of bipartite consultations between employer organizations and government, infrastructure and equipment, and co-financing with GiZ of a communications strategy to explain the new Social Security Fund to employers and the public (108, 109, 110, 111, 116, 121). The cabinet was reshuffled four times over the life of the project, and turnover at ministerial and joint secretary levels contributed to revisions to project workplans in an effort to be responsive.

Labour migration. GoN amendments to the Foreign Employment Act (2007) and Foreign Employment Regulation were under discussion at the outset of the project (105). However, the sensitivity of the issue, changes in MOLESS leadership and priorities, and COVID hampered anticipated revisions during the project cycle (210). The Kathmandu-based Law and Policy Forum for Social Justice (LAPSOJ) contributed to discussions on migration governance between the ILO and the ministerial committee on migration. A draft of a foreign employment policy was prepared for Province 2. All of this was similarly curtailed because of COVID. The ILO took a leadership role in contributing to the national implementation strategy on the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) through a contract with Nepali Center for the Study of Labour and Mobility (CESLAM), though the plan has not been agreed or actioned yet (332). An expert ILO consultant produced two analyses of potential labour markets, including the cruise sector (330, 331). A contract with The Asia Foundation underwrote the finalization of the Shuvayatra app for labour migrants (including modules on financial literacy) (109, 111).

Assistance to municipalities. In the newly federalized structure, the Rights to Employment Act of 2018 makes municipalities responsible for developing strategies to boost local job creation. The ILO used the opportunity of working in the industrial centers of Butwal and Birgunj to trial and adapt a number of tools while building capacity through hands on application, coupled with technical assistance. A mapping of businesses, business potentials and constraints in both municipalities was undertaken, with briefings in an additional eight municipalities in the same Provinces (111, 309). A toolkit for Employment Friendly Budgeting was tested and rolled out in four municipalities including two in the Kathmandu valley (315).⁴ Both instruments helped municipalities leverage PMEP resources specifically, and to develop employment-generating strategies more broadly (118, 309). Policy briefs developed by youth research fellows were commissioned to provide municipalities insights into locality-specific issues related to employment and labour migration (including four in response to COVID 19) (Output 4.3, 111). LAPSOJ led a consultative process in Province 2 that resulted in a

⁴ The ILO team reports that the tool was tested in an additional six municipalities.

draft of a Provincial Foreign Employment Policy, which has been registered with the Provincial Assembly. It has not yet been approved (111,112).

Social partners. ILO supported employer and trade union efforts to help their members understand and comply with the new laws, and adjust their structures in the new federalized system. Technical experts helped prepare a model bylaw for industry, and an employers’ handbook covering the labour law, social security law and effective employer communications (116, 318, 319, 373). The project supported a strategic planning process with the Joint Trade Union Coordination Center (JTUCC) (116, see Output 4.5).

Social dialogue. A major achievement of the project was progress on formalizing social dialogue mechanisms particularly at provincial and municipality levels. ILO technical assistance and tripartite consultations contributed to the development of a legal framework for the first (mandated) Provincial Level Advisory Council (PLAC) in the country in Province 5. Launch of the PLAC in Province 2 was delayed because of COVID (351, 116, 112). At municipality level, the project supported guidelines for a labour desk: a dialogue mechanism for addressing local industrial relations and facilitating contribution-based social security schemes for informal and self-employed workers (320). Butwal municipality has reportedly included a labour desk in its 2021/22 annual plan. On the national level, bipartite negotiations on a minimum wage benefited from ILO DWT Regional and local expert technical assistance (349, 369).

Youth engagement. Youth voice is widely understood to be important, but so far marginalized in policy consultations about domestic employment and labour migration (316). Under the project, Daayitwa, a civil society organization devoted to youth, supported 15 local youth research fellows (53% women), as noted above (Refs under Output 4.2). Two youth dialogue mechanisms were established in Province 5 (118). Two national Youth Employment Summits offered platforms to Daayitwa (2019) and the National Youth Entrepreneur Forum (NYEF), an arm of the FNCCI (2020). The FNCCI and JTUCC had specific elements targeting youth in their project-supported plans (116; 112; 110; 118; 366).

Gender. Overall, the project fell short in terms of mainstreaming gender considerations in its policy and capacity building work. A gender lens on key conceptual areas of the program was weak despite the fact that women are a large part of the labour force and the informal business sector, and continue to face access and participation challenges, discrimination in the workplace, wage discrepancies, and labour migration restrictions,⁵ and notwithstanding optimistic commitments in the proposal (393, 105, 313, 102). Until the policy document produced by the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWEAN), offering recommendations for supporting women entrepreneurs post COVID, the project supported only one study, conducted by one of the Daayitwa youth fellows⁶ addressing gender and employment in any detail (313, 393). Investments in the Federation of Women’s Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWEAN), an affiliate of FNCCI, represented some progress on the employer and MSME side, but there is no evidence that the project invested in addressing gender issues on the employee side.

COVID. Project implementation slowed significantly in the early months of the pandemic. Attention pivoted to addressing immediate issues facing the tripartite partners, with a number of studies on the impacts of COVID on MSME’s and migrants. In response to COVID, the project prepared checklists for workplace safety, and contributed to negotiations for protective gear for health workers (323). A groundbreaking agreement on wages for workers affected by COVID closures was facilitated by the ILO through a series of on-line negotiations (349, 350, 352).

⁵ Nepal ranked 110 out of 144 countries in terms of economic participation in 2015 (105, footnote 25).

⁶ Study is undated but listed in the 2019/20 progress report from the ILO.

Management and coordination. Project delivery relied on a two-person team, a range of expert consultants and local research and civil society organizations, with tripartite partners as key recipients and implementers. The Nepali profile of expertise across the project almost certainly contributed to the credibility and confidence the ILO maintained with tripartite partners. The annual renewal of the contracting arrangement with the FCDO challenged consistency and contributed to missed implementation opportunities for the ILO and implementing partners (108, 109, 111, 112). The ILO provided entre to the main SEP contractor, but overall it appears they operated in parallel, with the main point of intersection through ILO-FCDO meetings.

Strategy and learning. The SEP-TA did not have an explicit Theory of Change, and reference to Outcomes does not appear in reporting documents after the first year. A risk and a stakeholder analysis were not carried out. The project worked to a series of by Outputs, which are, by definition more immediate, and not measurements of change. Outputs and milestones were adjusted annually, an indication of the largely reactive nature of the program. For a project that introduced so many previously untested tools and strategies, the absence of a learning framework is surprising. The project missed an opportunity to consider the downstream need for replication in the other 5 Provinces and 751 municipalities untouched by the project by gathering evidence about what worked in some of the most commercially active and progressive sites in the country (310).⁷

Value for Money. Collaboration with ILO's Migrants Rights and Decent Work (MIRIDEW) project and with the GiZ on support to the SSF, both represent contributions to VfM. Sourcing of Nepali consultants and firms and regional ILO experts represent good VfM as well (121). The lack of fiscal data by output or partner, and with limited M&E data make it difficult to draw summative conclusions about VfM.⁸

Conclusions

The SEP-TA project aimed to advance best practice policy and policy norms on issues central to Nepal's economy at a time of significant change. While the project design included a balanced emphasis on labour migration and domestic employment, the project ended up focusing largely on the latter, consistent with changes in government priorities over the course of the project period. The project provided a range of technical assistance to MOLESS in launching two major government initiatives: the PMEP and SSF. Employer and trade union peak bodies received capacity and strategy development support, which also enabled them to adjust their representative capacity to the new federalized structure in the two provinces where the project focused. A major achievement of the project was progress on social dialogue at all levels of the newly federalized system. Youth inclusion and voice was actioned through support to 15 municipality-based research fellows and two national youth summits. Gender was addressed largely through support to the FNCCI affiliate, FWEAN.

Although the project design was consistent with broader ILO country and international Decent Work and other agendas as well as relevant Sustainable Development Goals (8 and 10), the project lacked a strategic or learning framework and was largely reactive. Over the course of the project, the ILO responded to multiple changes in leadership at MOLESS, and annual, revised directives from the FCDO (based on annual re-contracting format which contributed to a number of missed opportunities in the dynamic implementation environment).

⁷ Many informants referred to activities in the SEP-TA as "pilots", and annual reports are similarly replete with this framing of activities—the word "pilot" appears 11 times in the progress report of 2021, Q3 for instance.

⁸ This analysis was also requested by the MTE.

Project implementation relied on regional and international in-house expertise, retained several senior Nepali consultants, and partnered with a number of research and civil society organizations. All of this was orchestrated by a two person professional team (sometimes the second slot vacant), arguably too small to manage the volume of activities. Project activities slowed during the early months of the pandemic, but picked up at the end of the project cycle.

Lessons Learned

6.1.1 Contractual arrangements can constrict project impacts when they restrict timely response due to regular re-contracting requirements.

6.1.2 A theory of change is essential for a complex policy project, even one seeking to be responsive to stakeholder needs. The ToC offers map which enables decision makers to test assumptions underpinning strategy choices, and promotes coherence amongst diverse activities.

6.1.3 In a project which is innovating, an M&E learning framework and expertise is essential to inform downstream adaptation and replication.

6.1.4 Policy projects take time and confidence building. Continuity beyond the project cycle is optimal.

Emerging good practice

6.2.1 Social dialogue and social dialogue mechanisms were successfully established because of legal requirements, high quality technical assistance from ILO experts, trust from tripartite partners, and compelling issues for all tripartite partners.

6.3.1 Flexibility and continuity of relationship with key partners encourages trust and results. The ILO enjoyed historically positive relationships with all of the tripartite agencies which contributed to results, even on a number of sensitive issues.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Project management. In a future project, the management team should be large enough to be able to manage the proportional number of contracts, partners and deliverables. In a future policy project, a senior ILO expert should be a part of the team (Ref: EQ13).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office, FCDO	Medium	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 2: M&E Expertise. In a future project supporting policy and coordination innovations M&E expertise would contribute to more rigorous evidence and learning advancing efficiencies for replication and future design (Ref: EQ4, EQ5, EQ13, EQ15, EQ16, EQ19).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	Medium	Medium term

Recommendation 3: Theoretical framework. Any future project requires a Theory of Change. The ToC should summarize key assumptions underlying the choice of project strategies. It should link planned activities with anticipated outputs and outcomes, and include assumptions about key contextual factors and articulate risks (Ref: EQ4, EQ9, EQ10, EQ11, EQ14, EQ15, EQ19).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
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ILO Country Office	High	Low	Short term
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Recommendation 4: Gender mainstreaming. Future programming related to employment and labour migration should include explicit, evidence based strategies, measurable gender sensitive indicators and targets, and associated expertise (EQ12).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office & all stakeholders	High	Medium	Medium term

Recommendation 5: Inclusion of marginalized groups. Future programming needs to address how people facing exclusion because of caste, age, economic status, disability, geography will benefit from project initiatives. (EQ14, cross cutting issues)

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	Medium	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 6: Labour migration policy framework. The ILO should leverage its trusted relationship with MOLESS to continue to play a technical, enabling role in promoting safe migration and migrant rights through the MIRIDEW project, implementation of the GMC in Nepal, finalizing amendments to the Foreign Employment Act, and capacity support at provincial and municipality levels (Output 4.7; EQ2, EQ10)

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 7: Labour migration and trade unions. The ILO support to trade unions should bolster inclusion and representation of returned labour migrants, with more visibility for migrants returning from India (EQ4).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	Medium	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 8: Knowledge products. In order to support replication of achievements from project sites in other parts of Nepal, the ILO should continue to publish and disseminate bylaws, toolkits, guidelines and other documents developed under the SEP-TA through tripartite partners. Gender inputs and feedback gathered from tripartite users should be integrated first (Outputs 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5; EQ3, EQ7, EQ10, EQ12, EQ15, EQ16, EQ18, EQ19).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office, municipality & provincial governments	Medium	Medium	Short term

Recommendation 9: Local government capacity building. The ILO should continue to support provincial and municipality governments to take forward their responsibilities under the Labour and Contribution- Based Social Security Laws, including establishment of effective social dialogue mechanisms and employment

policies at each level of government. This process should include learning loops (Outputs 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6; EQ3, EQ10, EQ11, EQ18, EQ19).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	High	Long term

1. The Context

The Skills for Employment-Technical Assistance (SEP-TA) project launched at a time of significant political and development change in Nepal. After a decade of civil war and in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in the country, the new Nepalese constitution was enacted in late 2015 which paved the way for federalization of political and governing structures. General elections for federal and provincial assemblies were held in November-December 2017 and the new Government of Nepal (GoN) embarked on an ambitious administrative restructuring towards a federalist system with greater policy and management authority vested in the 7 provincial governments and 753 local bodies (municipalities and rural municipalities). A new Labour Act was enacted in September 2017, and the Ministry of Labor added Social Security to its name--with associated structural and priority foci on worker rights (119).

The SEP proposal summarizes the context and the sector in terms of: *Political instability, poor infrastructure, persistence of structural inequalities and unattractive business environment. These are compounded by disproportionate dependency on remittances and high levels of informality.* Indeed in 2014 an estimated 30% of GDP was dependent on remittances--one of the highest in the world (101,102).⁹ The cabinet was reshuffled four times over the course of the project, with significant turnover amongst senior political appointees.

Between 2016 and 2021 two periodic plans of the government (14th and 15th) were issued. Both plans had similar goals: to increase domestic employment and make labour migration safe, dignified and systematic. However the 15th Periodic Plan (2019/20 -2023/24) places more emphasis on increasing productivity at home through an emphasis on domestic employment generation, noting systematic risks related with foreign employment. The Plan encourages an end to what is referred to as “compulsive” foreign employment.

In February 2019, the Rs3.1b (\$26m) Prime Ministers’ Employment Program (PMEP) was launched, and became a centerpiece of government efforts to position the domestic economy for the future. However, implementation of the PMEP and indeed realization of the new Labour Law were hampered by horizontal and vertical capacity deficits which were most pronounced at lower levels of the newly federated government.

The COVID pandemic has had a devastating impact on the economy in Nepal, with an estimated 60% of formal and informal workers losing their job, micro and small enterprises teetering on collapse, and declines in remittance flows (301, 209, 210).

⁹ At the time of the project design an estimated 1600 (largely male) workers were leaving for foreign employment each day.

2. The Project

The Skills for Employment (SEP) project was funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK under its umbrella support to federalization in Nepal. SEP aimed to *support domestic employment creation and reduce long-term dependency on migration, whilst recognising the importance of migration as a source of work for Nepali workers*¹⁰ (102). It included four components:

SEP Project Components	Activities
1. Skills innovation, delivery and systems strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of skills demand • Designing innovative, private sector driven models of training • Institutionalising learnings
2. Migration for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising migrant incomes • Reducing migration costs • Increasing savings and productive investment
3. Skills for Reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for house-building in earthquake resilient techniques • Supply chain materials • Reducing the gap between construction material demand and provision of quality materials through a market driven approach. • Supporting entrepreneurship and livelihoods in earthquake affected districts.
4. Technical Assistance to labour market, employment and migration laws and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easing constraints to employment creation through technical assistance to all spheres of Government on employment planning. • Technical support to migration laws, policy and governance at all spheres of Government.

(102)

Initially designed as a 5-year project (August, 2015-September, 2000), the SEP experienced delays in signing the MoU with GoN and because of the 2015 earthquake, and underwent some subsequent redesign. ILO was contracted in August 2017 to undertake Component 4 (SEP-TA), based on four outcomes:

- Outcome 1. Improved coordination and partnerships for job creation in Nepal
- Outcome 2. Improved implementation of the relevant laws and policies for better functioning of the labour market and for addressing barriers to decent work.
- Outcome 3. National Policies strengthened and implemented to enhance the governance of Labour migration in Nepal
- Outcome 4. Bilateral and regional mechanisms strengthened to improve Nepali migrant workers' access to better jobs (102).

Funding was reviewed on an annual basis, but anticipated to be for four years. The ILO component had an overall budget of £2.9 million (approx. 10% of the overall SEP funding).

¹⁰ Articulation of the SEP aim was reformulated over the course of inception and implementation. This citation from the ILO's proposal offers a useful summary (not a formal statement of purpose).

The project design was guided by three frameworks namely, the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP, 2013-17), Program and Budget for the Biennium (P&B Biennium) 2016-17, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The outcomes listed in the proposal aligned with the three priorities agreed in the DWCP between the GoN and the ILO: 1) to promote employment and inclusive growth; 2) to improve labour market and industrial relations; and 3) to promote fundamental principles and rights to growth (122). Similarly, the program design aligned with 5 out of the 10 outcomes in the ILO P&B Biennium 2016-17: Outcome 1 – More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects; Outcome 2 -Ratification and application of international labour standards; Outcome 3 - Creating and extending social protection floors; Outcome 9 - Fair and effective international labour migration policies; and Outcome 10 - Strong and representative employers' and workers' organization (125). Outcomes in the project proposal were also aimed to complement the SDG Goal 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all and SDG Goal 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries.

The transitions described above offered significant opportunities and inevitable challenges to the project. Laws and policies needed to be updated and provinces and local bodies - now responsible for a vast array of local development activities including employment and labour - needed plans, capacity and collaborative partnerships with business and employee associations to make those plans work and meet the challenges of the day. While the ILO remained focused on labor policy and coordination, specific elements of the ILO's remit underwent annual adjustments in response to changing circumstances and rebalancing of government and FCDO priorities. Overall changes reflect growing attention to domestic economic development and away from labour migration. Although the SEP program had a broad Theory of Change, the SEP-TA component did not, an issue discussed in more detail below in EQ4.

The 2017/18 annual report of the FCDO notes a delay in launching the ILO's component of the SEP program due to the need to “reposition” input to respond to the new federal structure of the country and emerging “mandates” at provincial and local government (108). This coincided with delays in staffing, with a team lead starting only in January, 2018. In March 2018 it was agreed that the ILO would focus on technical assistance concept notes that could inform consultations with different levels of government. In response, several chapters of a Political Economy Analysis were drafted by a prominent Nepali Economist.

By the 2018/19 period, FCDO directed the ILO to revise its workplan to focus on industrial relations; support to the private sector on the labor law and social security act; support to provincial and municipal employment planning and information system design; and research on diversification of new employment destinations for Nepali workers (109). By the end of this period, a provincial focus for the SEP had been initiated, with work in Province 2 and explorations in provinces 5 and 6 underway (ultimately the project would focus on just Provinces 2 and 5). Building on longstanding relationships with national tripartite partners, ILO forged relationships with tripartite partners at provincial levels, and underwrote a number of strategies, policy papers and toolkits to bolster this work.

Activities in the 2019/20 period were slowed because of restrictions related to the COVID pandemic, and significant turnover of senior leadership at the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS). Nonetheless, the ILO's investment in tripartite social dialogue mechanisms took root in two provinces, and paid off in national fora where agreements were reached on supporting workers affected by COVID business closures.

The ILO project was carried out by a team of two Kathmandu-based ILO staff¹¹ who relied on ILO and other consultants, and a number of contracts with tripartite, civil society and research partners to undertake specific activities.

Key partners in this project included:

- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS)
- Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)
- Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI)
- Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations of Nepal (FWEAN)
- Joint Trade Union Coordination Committee (JTUCC)
- General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)
- Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC)
- All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF)
- Nepalese Young Entrepreneurs' Forum (NYEF)
- Daayitwa – CSO
- The Asia Foundation (TAF)
- Law and Policy Forum for Social Justice (LAPSOJ) - CSO
- Center for Study of Labour and Mobility (CESLAM)

¹¹ Four staff members are mentioned on the ILO Nepal website, including an Admin/Finance team member https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.ilo.org/kathmandu/info/WCMS_378781/lang--en/index.htm&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1627134402154000&usg=AOvVaw1XZRz_A9wIvJwCw5VzMAiC

The evaluation team was told this person reported to multiple teams. This is discussed again in Section 5.2 EQ13.

3. Evaluation Purposes, Scope and Client

3.1 Stakeholder and geographic focus

The SEP-TA project was designed to focus on policy development and coordination. This ended up including supporting the capacity, convening dialogue, and mechanisms of tripartite partners to deliver on policy mandates. In the context of the recently promulgated labor law and federalization—which required each province and municipality to draft their own policies and protocols related to labor and labor migration—the SEP and the SEP-TA also focused on two provinces—Provinces 2 and Province 5 (the latter also named Lumbini Province)—and in each province, one municipality—Birgunj and Butwal.¹² The project's main partner was the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS) and inputs were largely but not exclusively provided to MoLESS, trade union organizations and business associations at national level as well as affiliates and chapters in the two provinces and two municipalities. Trade Unions, business associations and civil society and research organizations were contracted to develop and deliver knowledge products, and all partners received technical assistance and training. As such, some of the implementing partners were also key beneficiaries.

The evaluation covers the period of project implementation August 2017-June 2021.

3.2 Audience/client

Per the ToR, primary clients for the evaluation include: 1) the Skills for Employment Programme (SEP); 2) Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO); 3) the ILO SEP Project Team; 4) ILO Country Office for Nepal; 5) the DWT-New Delhi (ILO Decent Work Country Team); 5) ROAP (ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific). Secondary clients are other stakeholders, including national and provincial workers' and employers' organisations, and other government bodies (101). Several of the tripartite partners have considerable stake in the work and outcomes of this program, and may also be interested in what was learned in this evaluation.

In addition to this final report, the evaluation will generate standard ILO lessons learned and emerging good practice sheets, as well as suggested next steps (food for thought) for each of the social partners. These guidance documents will summarize the project and evaluations findings and provide next step reflections for employer and employee and partner agencies respectively, with particular attention to the different considerations of partners at national, provincial and municipality levels. They will be translated into Nepali.

¹² These provinces and municipalities are commercial centers and sending sites for labor migrants, making them a good fit with the objectives of the program. Site selection was done by the FCDO. Observers also note that site selection also aligned with the political parties in power at the time of the project design.

4. Criteria and questions

The purpose of this final, independent evaluation, as described in the Terms of Reference are to:

- Determine (i) the relevance of the project's interventions; (ii) the efficiency of the project's implementation and (iii) its effectiveness; (iv) the impact that the project has had on development progress in the areas of its operation; and (v) the degree of sustainability of the project's interventions.
- Identify gaps and limitations in project implementation and offer recommendations for improvement to support the design of future projects in the country.
- Identify better practices and lessons learnt to be taken advantage of in future similar initiatives (101).

Evaluation questions provided in the ToR were refined based on early document review and approved by the Evaluation Manager. They are:

Relevance and Validity of the Design

1. To what extent was the project design linked to ILOs' DWCP framework?
2. How does the project link with and align with GoN's larger framework on employment and labour migration?
3. To what extent were project objectives consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements?
4. To what extent were the project design (objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities) and its underlining theory of change logical and responsive to the development challenges identified?
5. How appropriate and useful were the indicators described in the project document in assessing the project's progress? If necessary, how may they have been reformulated to be more useful? To what extent were indicators gender sensitive?
6. Were risks assessed in an appropriate manner?

Coherence

7. To what extent did the project succeed in adapting to the socio-economic challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
8. In what ways did the Project align with or perhaps contradict other interventions carried out by ILO Nepal, the Government and/or the national social partners?
9. How effectively did the project support the broader goals of the SEP program?

Effectiveness (including effectiveness of management arrangement)

10. How responsive was the project to the needs of GoN?
11. How responsive was the project to the needs of the social partners?
12. To what extent was gender mainstreaming addressed in the design and implementation of the project?
13. To what extent did the capacity of project management and the management arrangements put in place support and/or hinder the achievement of the planned results?
14. To what extent has the project achieved its objectives? And are there any differences in the results obtained across social groups?

Efficiency

15. To what extent has the project delivered value for money?
16. How well were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) allocated or used strategically to achieve the planned results? Have they been delivered in a timely manner? According to proposed

budget lines? If not, what were the factors that hindered timely delivery of outputs? Where possible, intervention benefits and related costs of integrated gender equality is to be analysed.

17. To what extent have the project resources been leveraged with other related interventions to maximize impact, if any?

Sustainability

18. How effective was the project in establishing national ownership?

19. To what extent can the project results be maintained or even scaled up/replicated by other partners beyond project completion?

Impact

20. To what extent has the project contributed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to higher-level and/or systemic changes?

21. How have interventions made as part of the project affected the socio-economic and/or environmental state of the locations in which it operated?

These questions defined the scope of the evaluation. A number of these questions relate directly to the ILO's cross cutting themes, as noted in section 5.3.

To answer these questions, the evaluation considered activities undertaken between the design and when the evaluation commenced, insofar as information was available. An Evaluation Question Matrix is presented in Annex 8.5 in the Inception Report, which indicates how each question will be answered in terms of information sources and approaches.

The evaluation covers the period of project implementation August 2017-June, 2021.

5. Methodology

The evaluation was entirely qualitative and relied on two main sources of information: documents and stakeholder interviews. It was undertaken in the period June-August, 2021 by a two person team: an international and Nepali evaluator. No face to face interviews were possible because of COVID restrictions in Nepal. A virtual validation meeting was held to review the main findings.

5.1 Document review and referencing

The project generated a good deal of documentation, including annual and some quarterly reports, knowledge and research products, strategies generated by various partners, meeting minutes, and expert consultancy reports. The team reviewed 128 documents. Documents were numbered based on a loose numbering system (100s are project reports; 200s are agreements, studies or media reports that provide contextual insight; 300s are knowledge products and other reports contracted or generated by the project). These were numbered in the order received. The references in this report follow that numbering. See Annex 8.7 for the numbered list of documents reviewed.

5.2 Key Informant Interviews

During the inception period, the team generated a list of some 47 individuals or types of stakeholders to interview. In line with the focus of this project, stakeholders represented the tripartite agencies from national, participating provinces and municipalities, as well as consultants, and other participating civil society and research agencies, and the funder. The list was revised by the ILO team. The ILO team also reached out to stakeholders to set up meetings at the request of the evaluation team.¹³ In total, the team was able to interview 28 people (22 interviews) via Zoom and a few on the phone. As shown in the breakdown of respondents in Table 1, interviews were quite skewed. A list of people interviewed is provided in Annex 8.4.

Type of Stakeholder	Number of interviews	
	Male	Female
ILO staff and consultants	9	0
GoN	4	1
Social partners	4	3
Expert organization representatives	3	0
FCDO and other	3	1
Total (28)	23	5

5.3 Limitations

The evaluation faced a number of challenges.

1. The absence of a Theory of Change and outcome indicators or targets, and regular changes in logframe outputs, made it difficult to base the evaluation on a coherent design logic. These limitations also had bearing on the project itself, as discussed below.
2. It was not possible to interview a cross section of representative stakeholders. The stakeholders who were interviewed are primarily ILO consultants, contractors and national level trade union and employer social partners as noted above. Of the five government representatives who were interviewed, only one from MOLESS, and just two were from the national level. For this reason, the voice of the ILO's key project partner is somewhat limited in this evaluation. No stakeholders from employer or employee

¹³ This was agreed as a more effective approach given significant turnover in government, and the need for introductions from the ILO in any case.

organizations at provincial or municipality levels were interviewed. Delays in set up, also limited the extent to which snowballing to additional informants was not possible. These factors may have introduced a bias in the findings and recommendations put forward in this report.

The evaluation coincided with the end of the fiscal year, project close down and a COVID surge in the country, leading to continued lockdowns. These factors may have contributed to this limitation. Other recent evaluations experienced a similar challenges, however.

3. A mid-term evaluation (MTE) was carried out in March/April, 2021, just two months before this final evaluation was launched. While the findings from the MTE informed some of the findings in this report, the proximity of these two evaluations may have contributed respondent responsiveness and raises concerns about investment efficiencies.
4. COVID restrictions made international travel and face to face interviews impossible. This may have been less of a limitation at the point in time when the evaluation was carried out than had it occurred a year earlier, as many of the stakeholders had already been participating in the project virtually for some time. The extent to which the medium limited willingness to be interviewed is unknown.

5.4 Evaluation norms and safeguards

The team adhered to common social science norms in interviews, consistent with UNEG norms and standards. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and no one has been quoted by name in this report. Interview notes were stored in a shared drive that only the two evaluators had access to. No children or other vulnerable groups were interviewed in this evaluation. The evaluation manager was from ILO Headquarters and had no prior involvement in the project.

6. Findings

As noted in Section 2., the project was initially designed around four Outcomes: 1. Improved coordination and partnerships for job creation in Nepal; 2. Improved implementation of the relevant laws and policies for better functioning of the labour market and for addressing barriers to decent work; 3. National Policies strengthened and implemented to enhance the governance of labour migration in Nepal; and 4. Bilateral and regional mechanisms strengthened to improve Nepali migrant workers’ access to better jobs (102). Findings presented in this Section suggest that the project addressed all of these elements to a greater or lesser degree, although these outcomes were not referenced or measured in the course of implementation. The project saw itself as demand driven, so that the emphasis and weight given to these Outcome elements was largely dictated by prevailing government priorities and FCDO requirements. Based on this responsive posture, the aspirations of Outcomes 1. and 2. received greater emphasis than the aspirations of Outcomes 3. and 4. (although the ILO was implementing another project on labour migration at the same time).

This section begins with an overview of what was achieved by project output. This is followed by an analysis of these accomplishments, structured around the 21 Evaluation Questions (EQs). ILO’s cross cutting issues are largely covered in discussions of the EQ’s but additional insights are offered in the final part of this chapter, which ends with some overarching conclusions.

6.1 Project accomplishments by output

The logframe outputs and some output indicators changed several times over the life of the project, a topic discussed in more detail under EQ5 below. By 2019/2020 the project had adopted 9 outputs which situated the focus of the project for the final two years (119).¹⁴ The numbering of outputs reflects the fact that the ILO project was the fourth component in the overall SEP project (118).

► Outputs for SEP-TA in Q3 of 2021

Output	Definition
Output 4.1	Technical assistance to domestic employment policies
Output 4.2	Technical Assistance to Municipal Governments to develop and implement job creation strategies
Output 4.3	Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels
Output 4.4	Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law
Output 4.5	Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the Social Security Act.
Output 4.6	Technical Assistance to Federal and State Governments to revise, develop and implement laws and policies to support labour migrants
Output 4.7	Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal at all levels to improve the national legal and policy framework for labour migration governance.
Output 4.8	Technical Assistance to GoN to identify, scope and provide access to new labour markets
Output 4.9	Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal to develop new BLAs and MoUs according to international standards

Output 4.1 Technical assistance to domestic employment policies.

¹⁴ Prior to the 2020/21 quarterly report, Output 4.2 and Output 4.3 were identical (though with different indicators) in reports and logframes.

Technical assistance to domestic employment policies were provided to two federal ministries, the Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Securities (MOLESS) and to a more limited extent, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MOICS), through SEP team participation in ministerial meetings, deploying experts and producing knowledge products.

The SEP TA team was strategic in the first year of implementation to bring onboard two highly reputed economists, both members of the outgoing National Planning Commission (NPC) team, who were professionally acquainted with the new Minister. Dr. Swarnim Wagle, former Vice-chair of the NPC, was hired to carry out the political economic analysis to provide a macro framework for the SEP TA and a reference for the government's purpose. Four political economic analyses were produced between July-December 2018. They delved into policies and priorities in employment; strategic choices for industrial catch-up and job-creation; and employment oriented initiatives for municipalities (335, 336, 337, 338).

When the newly elected government took the helm in February 2018, it prioritized youth centered domestic job creation. At the 107th Session of the International Labor Conference and the then minister, Gokarna Bista, announced the government's intention to take forward a novel Prime Minister's Employment Program (PMEP). The SEP TA and ILO consultants were instrumental in getting the PMEP off the ground. Dr. Wagle presented PEA findings at a high level policy dialogue organized by the SEP TA on December 2018, two months before the launch of PMEP in February 2019. The MOLESS invited ILO consultant, Dr. Biswo Paudel (formerly NPC Senior Economist) to help finalize the Rights to Employment Bill which was later approved by the parliament and enacted in September 2018 (357). The Rights to Employment Act provided the legal foundations for the PMEP. The SEP TA provided other policy and programmatic inputs at different stages of PMEP implementation including examples of national employment schemes from other countries; finalizing the directives on hiring local employment coordinators; training for two PMEP officials from the MOLESS in large scale employment programs at the ILO International Training Center (ITC) in Turin; and generating knowledge products. The latter included a report on the Future of Work in Nepal (306), Policy Monograph (Doc not received, referenced in 111), Large Scale Employment Guaranteeing Schemes (Doc not received, referenced in 112).

The cabinet reshuffle in November 2019 and the outbreak of COVID in early 2020 proved to be the biggest challenge for this output as many planned activities were stalled, postponed or cancelled, e.g. exposure visits, social audit on public employment programs in Provinces 2 and 5 etc. In response to the challenges brought by COVID, the SEP TA supported a virtual dialogue conducted by MOLESS with a number of employer representative agencies which pointed to a number of responsive activities (353). These included studies conducted by ILO and implementing partners that sought to understand the impacts on MSMEs (303) and enterprises (302) and pathways to recovery (301 and 305). The findings of these studies formed the basis for social dialogues with stakeholders (384-385, 386, 364).

In the fourth year of implementation, the program also increased its presence with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS), participating in internal dialogues on various themes such as MSME development pre- and post- COVID, intellectual property, industrial prosperity, and collaborated to conduct a national dialogue and advocacy on business recovery (355 and 356, 364, 383). ILO consultant, Dr. Poudel, also produced recommendations for the National Industrial Policy 2010 revision which was submitted to the MoICS (377).

Efforts in the final year of the project to facilitate employers and workers to better link with PMEP led to hiring a public employment expert to provide technical guidance to municipality-based Employment Service Centers (ESCs), consultations with municipalities and their association and link provincial public works

programs to the PMEP (118). The SEP TA team was included in the PMEP Skills Committee to provide technical inputs for the ‘On-the-Job Training’ component and also contributed to a ‘Dignity of Labour’ campaign.

Output 4.2 Technical Assistance to Municipal Governments to develop and implement job creation strategies

In the newly federalized structure, the Rights to Employment Act of 2018 makes municipalities responsible for developing strategies to boost local job creation. The capacity of municipalities across Nepal to meet this challenge are reportedly uneven. The ILO used the opportunity of working in the commercial centers of Butwal and Birgunj to trial and adapt a number of tools while building capacity through hands on application of the tools coupled with technical assistance. MOUs were signed in April 2019 with both municipalities. A toolkit for Employment Friendly Budgeting was tested and rolled out in the two sites at the end of that year (315). At the same time, a mapping of businesses, business potentials and constraints in both municipalities was undertaken in the target municipalities. Another 8 municipalities in the same provinces were briefed in 2019. Both instruments helped municipalities leverage PMEP resources specifically and more broadly to develop employment-generating strategies (309; 118).

Policy briefs developed by youth research fellows were commissioned to provide municipalities and provinces insights into locality-specific issues related to employment and labour migration during 2019/20 (including four in response to COVID 19) (see 4.3 below, 111). In 2021, in consultation with MoLESS, the ILO prepared a framework for a model employment strategy designed to be adapted by municipalities in compliance with the National Employment Policy of 2014 (379, 116).

Output 4.3 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels

The Employment Policy of 2015, a precursor of the Labour Act of 2017 emphasized the importance of a policy and regulatory environment that was responsive to the needs of youth--both domestically and those who chose to migrate.¹⁵ While earlier initiatives encouraged youth migration, by 2019/20 efforts to retain youth in Nepal, and capture skills and savvy of returning migrants for the domestic labour market had gained traction. Services, incentives, campaigns were launched including but not exclusively under the PMEP (332). Youth voice was widely understood to be important, but so far marginalized in policy consultations (316).

One of the first contracts under the SEP-TA was with Daayitwa, a civil society organization devoted to youth entrepreneurship, civic action and advocacy. Daayitwa identified 15 youth fellows, mentioned in Output 4.2 (53% women) from their own localities in municipalities across the two Provinces. Each fellow carried out research relevant to employment generation in the municipality--for instance on the PMEP; cross border supply chains returnee options for employment; women’s entrepreneurship; the youth council role in promoting entrepreneurship. ToRs were reviewed by the ILO. Research was designed to inform municipality policy and planning. As a result of this initiative, two municipalities (Butwal and Tilottama--both in Lumbini Province) formalized dialogue mechanisms for youth input into youth employment strategies and programming. In the last quarter of the project, steps towards the design of a model social dialogue mechanism between youth and local governments was reported, drawing on lessons learned throughout the SEP-TA (118).

¹⁵ The Tenth National plan (2002-2007) had set a target of 550,000 youth for foreign employment, double what was anticipated in the prior plan (203).

At the national level, the project also promoted greater youth engagement through social partners. The JTUCC prioritized youth engagement as part of its strategic plan supported under SEP-TA, reportedly in part because it is losing membership because of migration and youth are the bulk of the current and future domestic workforce (346). FNCCI's youth affiliate the National Youth Entrepreneur Forum (NYEF) was provided a national platform. Youth Employment Summits were held in 2019 and 2021. Work by Daayitwa on the dignity of labour as well as topics related to education-to-employment, and women's entrepreneurship were featured in the 2019 summit, while the summit held virtually in 2020 was organized by NYEF and focused on women's employment (116; 112; 110; 118; 366). Senior GoN officials attended both.

Output 4.4 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law

The ILO's historically strong relationships with tripartite partners contributed to multiple types of activity under this output. In the 2018/19 period, the project supported awareness workshops for FNCCI and trade union organizations to update tripartite partners on the new Labor Law and Social Security Law. This was reportedly carried out in all Provinces with a focus on Provinces 2 and 5 (112).

Social dialogue--with a primary focus on the Provinces--was a cornerstone of the project. An early assessment of industrial relations and collective bargaining was commissioned by the project and provided recommendations about partner requirements (339). The establishment of a tripartite mechanism for dialogue and dispute resolution is required by the Labor Law. The ILO supported an expert on social dialogue from the regional DWT Delhi office who facilitated consultations with employer and employee entities, shared best practice from other countries, and helped draft bylaws and guidelines for the first the Provincial Labour Advisory Council (PLAC) in the country in Lumbini Province. The PLAC held its first official meeting in 2021 (351, 116, 112). The launch of the PLAC was delayed in Province 2 because of COVID (112). The ILO also kept the Central Labor Advisory Council apprised of formation of the PLACs in the two provinces (322). At municipality level, the project supported guidelines for a municipality-based labour desk, a dialogue mechanism for addressing local "industrial" relations and facilitating contribution-based social security schemes for informal and self-employed workers (320). Butwal municipality has reportedly included a labor desk in its 2021/22 annual plan.

Social partners also credited the ILO with enabling additional tripartite and bipartite fora to explain and hammer out other elements of the Labor Law. Bipartite negotiations on a minimum wage benefited from ILO international technical assistance (349, 369). A groundbreaking agreement on wages for workers affected by COVID closures was facilitated by the ILO (349, 350).

In 2019, the project supported an action planning process with the Joint Trade Union Coordination Center (JTUCC) to enable worker groups to comply with and understand the Labor Law and Social Security Fund (SSF), (116, see Output 4.5). During the same period, the project supported the preparation of an employers' handbook covering the labor law, social security law and effective employer communications (319, 318, 373). The ILO also helped the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) set up provincial help desks to support members on labour-related concerns (116). In response to COVID, the project prepared checklists for workplace safety, and contributed to negotiations for PPE for health workers (323).

Project attention to gender issues and the particular needs and contributions of women workers and entrepreneurs focused on the Federation of Women's Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWEAN) which achieved a more prominent role within FNCCI during the project life. FWEAN also benefited from training of trainers and training for 50 of its members in an ILO business diagnostics tool (ENCOMPASS) (387). The ILO helped forge an MOU with the Nepali Global IME Bank to provide special concessions to participating women-owned businesses going forward.

The project also facilitated an agreement between Tribhuvan University and the ITC/ILO to develop a Diploma on Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations (321, 343-345).

Output 4.5 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the contribution-based Social Security Act.

The 2017 Social Security Act provides for social security benefits to all workers regardless of contract type, including medical and maternity benefits, accident and disability, family dependents and old age benefits, and prioritized outreach to informal and self-employed workers (105). Over the life of the project, the ILO offered significant technical assistance to an ambitious government launch in 2019 of the country's first Social Security Fund (324, 325, 326, 341). Project inputs to Social Security Fund (SSF) under MOLESS included staff training, advice on international models and norms, drafting of guidelines, facilitation of bipartite consultations between employer organizations and government, infrastructure and equipment, and a communications strategy and roll out (in coordination with GiZ) (111, 116). An expert ILO advisor based in the SSF supported these initiatives (121).

Output 4.6 Technical Assistance to Federal and State Governments to revise, develop and implement laws and policies to support labour migrants

The major focus of activities on this output was the drafting of the model foreign employment policy for the provincial government. A political economic analysis on labour migration and governance (Doc not received, referenced in 119) was completed. The 2017/18 progress report notes that a concept note for technical assistance for provincial and local governments was drawn based on the political and economic analysis (119). In 2019 the Law and Policy Forum for Social Justice (LAPSOJ) was retained to support consultations with stakeholders in Provinces 2 and 5. In Province 2 a Provincial Foreign Employment Policy was drafted and subsequently shared for consultation and then registered with the provincial assembly in 2019/20 (111, 112). The policy has not yet been approved and the project team and technical partner noted that COVID issues took precedence over the agenda. Similarly, in 2018/19 LAPSOJ organized a stakeholder meeting in Lumbini Province led by the Ministry of Social Development to discuss the need to develop a provincial level policy on labour migration. Significant consultations at national level were also reported. The SEP TA team noted that though Lumbini Province was interested in developing the framework, its priority shifted with the COVID outbreak, and the ILO was discussing the development of an overall employment framework with migration as one of the subsections (111 and 118).

Output 4.7 Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal at all levels to improve the national legal and policy framework for labour migration governance.

GoN amendments to the Foreign Employment Act (2007) and Foreign Employment Regulation were under discussion at the outset of the project (105). However, the sensitivity of the issue, changes in government and government priorities and then COVID did not see these Acts revised during the project cycle.

In the first year of the project, the ILO produced a report outlining priority areas for amending the Foreign Employment Act of 2007 (Doc not received mentioned in 108). In addition to carrying out the activities under 4.6, LAPSOJ also provided technical assistance under this output. In 2019, LAPSOJ provided technical inputs to a consultation workshop organized to discuss migration governance in Nepal in federal context (Doc not received, referenced in 112). This led to further consultations between the ILO and ministerial committee on migration, which were curtailed when COVID hit and the cabinet was reshuffled. The most recent progress report notes that consultations with the ministry are on-going however changes in the law and policy were unlikely to happen during the project period (118). The ILO provided inputs to the Nepal Migration Report 2020, however (203).

Other activities under this output were carried out in response to the issues arising from the pandemic. Informal discussions with migrant networks and organizing webinars in collaboration with partners to discuss the impacts on returnee migrants were conducted (111). In 2021, the ILO presented some recommendations on a COVID response for returnee migrant workers to the MOLESS (329).

The ILO and FCDO progress reports document the activities carried out by The Asia Foundation (TAF), especially progress on the development of the *Shuvayatra* app for migrants (including modules on financial literacy) (109, 111). However, the management arrangements between the ILO and TAF did not include reporting and the evaluation team could not speak with the TAF team about their activities.

Output 4.8 Technical Assistance to GoN to identify, scope and provide access to new labour markets

The ILO provided an expert consultant who produced three analyses of labour markets: 1) an analysis of the cruise sector, which Nepal laborers were already working in but had not been formalized (331); 2) an undated Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA) of 10 potential new migration destination countries (330) followed by; 3) Labour Market Assessment of Six Destinations in December 2020 (380). MoUs were signed with Malaysia in 2018 and Mauritius in 2019 though these were largely with support from the ILO's Migrants Rights and Decent Work (MIRIDEW) project. The ILO also supported a delegation to Geneva to be able to dialogue with potential new destination countries about opening new corridors, though this likely came from MIRIDEW as well, as neither are included in annual reports.

Output 4.9 Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal to develop new BLAs and MoUs according to international standards

Not many activities were undertaken in the first two years of implementation under this output. In the first year, a technical assistance plan highlighting the support to MOLESS Committee for Labor Migration was completed (Doc not received, referenced in 111) and technical inputs to the government were provided on draft MoU/BLAs between Nepal and Oman, UAE, Mauritius and Malaysia. The Government of Nepal could not pursue agreements in light of the challenges faced by the destination countries.

A major output was the national implementation strategy on Global Compact on Migration. The Center for the Study of Labour and Mobility (CESLAM) was retained to provide technical support (332). A steering committee was formed, led by the Secretary at MOLESS, to prepare the document. However consultations were constrained by the pandemic and CESLAM's report was based on a desk review. The draft strategy was submitted to the Ministry for review, but the process hasn't moved forward. The budget allocated to the implementing partner was redirected towards completing a study on the impacts of COVID to labour migrants (333).

6.2 Findings pertaining to Evaluation Questions

This section presents the main evaluation findings within the EQ framework.

Relevance and Validity of the Design

EQ1. To what extent was the project design linked to ILOs' DWCP framework?

The design of the SEP-TA project aligns with the first two Priorities of the 2013-2017 DWCP framework which was prevailing during the design and inception period of SEP-TA:

1. *Promotion of employment-centric and inclusive growth;*
2. *Improved labour market governance and industrial relations.*

The project particularly addressed DWCP outcomes: 1.1 focused on policies and the regulatory framework; 1.3 focused on institutional capacity and the policy framework for extending social protection coverage; 2.1

promoting a labor law consistent with international best practices; and 2.2 on tripartite and bipartite capacity and dialogue. Notably, neither the formulation of outputs in the original SEP-TA proposal nor the associated indicators mirror the language in the 2013-2017 DWCP (105, 122).

Two of the SEP-TA objectives in the proposal are related to labour migration (102). The 2013-17 DWCP is silent on this issue, though labour migration is addressed in the following 2018-2022 DWCP (105, 122).

The 2018-2022 DWCP, released early in the SEP-TA project cycle, particularly resonates with the projects' focus on the dual demands of domestic employment for economic development (Priority 1.) and capacity development for all of the tripartite actors in light of the federalized restructuring (Priority 2.) (105). Notably, objectives in the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) 2020-21 Strategic Plan, which was supported by the project, are explicitly aligned with specific outcomes in the most recent DWCP framework for Nepal (346).

EQ2. How does the project link with and align with GoN's larger framework on employment and labour migration?

The SEP-TA proposal highlighted major issues in three areas of Nepalese economy a) domestic job creation; b) labour migration; c) Informal sector. The proposal laid out four outcomes to ease constraints to job creation and effective labour migration governance including creating politically smart and inclusive partnerships, thorough understanding of the changing political context, use of evidence and analysis in Year 1, with regional and global expertise brought in where appropriate (102).

Since the project started in an unpredictable political environment (general elections, new government, political and administrative restructuring), it relied on the political economic analysis (PEA) carried out in the first year of the project to make sense of the context and identify areas needing technical assistance. The political economic analysis on the state goals and optimal plans on employment (338) reviewed five documents – 1) the Constitution of Nepal; 2) the 14th Periodic Plan (2017-2019); 3) the annual budget (2018); 4) envisioning Nepal (2030); and 5) the Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030) – to describe the GON's larger framework on employment and labour migration. In 2019/20 the then government issued a subsequent periodic plan, 15th periodic plan 2019/20 – 2023/24, that reiterated the need to create productive and dignified domestic jobs, strengthen governance of national and labour migration, improve industrial relationship and end all forms of labour exploitation. The flexibility and responsiveness of the program to align with government priorities are evident in the log-frame that was changed in the second year of the project after the political economic analysis was completed and the relationship with the MOLESS was fortified.

The Labour Law (2017) and the Contribution-based Social Security Law (2017), stemming from the Constitutional provisions, became the basis for the government's plans on labour and employment. During the first two years of the project, the GON launched two major programs - Social Security Fund Scheme (2018) and Prime Minister Employment Program (2019) to achieve the goals stated in the larger frameworks. As described in Section 5.1, the ILO provided a range of inputs to both programs.

Domestic employment. Of the nine project outputs, Output 4.1 – 4.4 focus on provision of technical assistance to the government at federal, provincial and local level to create job opportunities; Output 4.5 and 4.6 were geared towards supporting effective implementation of the Labour Law 2017, Contribution-based Social Security Law 2017, Rights to Employment Law 2018, thereby improving industrial relationships and addressing the needs of the social partners and informal sector; and Output 4.7 – 4.9 were aimed at improving labour migration governance. The technical assistance plan with the government was agreed annually and the major thrust of assistance ended up being on the implementation of the PMEP and SSF. Social dialogue was the key instrument deployed in implementing activities under Output 4.5 and 4.6 and the

process matches with the strategy in the 15th periodic plan. The SEP TA hasn't been involved in other priorities suggested by the 15th Periodic Plan, namely the establishment of a National Employment Authority (209) .

Labour migration. While the program was responsive towards GON's domestic employment program and implementation of the relevant laws, Output 4.7 – 4.9 apparently suffered because labour migration governance was not the key issue taken forward by the government. Observers note that SEP institutional ownership at the MOLESS is low and the issue sensitive. There were four changes in the ministerial positions at the MOLESS between 2018 and 2021, and the issues of labour migration seemed to have gained traction only in the period of Gokarna Bista's ministry between March, 2018 – November, 2019. A newspaper article reports that the sacking of Gorkarna Bista was much in the interest of the Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFEA) and detrimental to the labour migration governance (210).¹⁶ During Bista's time in office the GON had signed a bilateral agreement with the government of Malaysia – one of the most preferred destination for Nepali labour migrants – but the labour migration issues seems to have been shelved since his departure. The project supported the development of a draft migration policy in Province 2. Overall provincial and local level work on issues of labour migration also did not get as much attention. The jurisdiction on the matter rests with the federal government and to date provincial and local governments have been viewed in largely administrative terms. Although SEP TA's push to bring forth provincial labour migration policies was gaining some momentum, the project did not see things coming through.

EQ3. To what extent were project objectives consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements?

In the initial formulation of this question, beneficiaries were defined as workers, migrants and those looking for work. While these are beneficiaries of the overall SEP program, they are downstream beneficiaries of SEP-TA. The direct recipients of SEP-TA are institutional—representative employer and trade union organizations, government ministries and departments, and secondarily several civil society organizations. Each of these entities has its constituents who the SEP-TA project aimed to benefit through improvements in policy realization, accountability, and social dialogue amongst and capacity of representative agencies.

Project response can be broadly divided into two phases. An initial focus was on helping partners meet the needs of federalization and the requirements of the Labor Law and start up the Social Security Fund. A more muted attention to migration did still meet government interest in safe labour migration through studies on potential new destinations. These foci carried across to the latter half of the project but attention also pivoted to helping partners respond to challenges their constituents were facing from COVID--work closures, layoffs, health risks at work, migration restrictions etc.

Interviews with stakeholder representatives of the project (although quite limited, particularly in the case of government and beyond the national level) would suggest a good level of satisfaction with project inputs and support for their individual organizational needs in both phases of the project. Social partners appreciated capacity building and new tools, particularly as they adjusted to the new legal and structure demands of the times.

The convening power of the ILO also helped promote social dialogue amongst the tripartite partners on specific issues and social dialogue mechanisms, particularly in target provinces. This resulted in some softening of historical logjams particularly between employer and employee sectors and led to some important agreements. Contracts with Daayitwa and LAPSOJ, offered national expertise that was particularly valuable at local levels (though again, satisfaction has been inferred rather than gathered directly).

¹⁶ <https://www.nepalitimes.com/editorial/blood-sweat-and-tears/>

EQ4. To what extent were the project design (objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities) and its underlying theory of change logical and responsive to the development challenges identified?

As noted in Section 2, the SEP-TA did not have an explicit Theory of Change. A ToC developed in 2016 for the business case for the SEP depicts the ILO’s policy component as co-equal with other elements of the project. Linkages between ILO outputs and final outcomes are shown to contribute to overall impacts of the SEP by “easing” policy constraints in order to enable the project to develop models for domestic and migrant labor promotion (108). The ToC was revised in 2018 by Louis Berger (now WSP, the key implementing contractor for the SEP). Policy-related inputs and explicit policy-related outcomes are not pictured in this ToC (113). ILO inputs to “regulations” are not part of the graphic, but rather listed as assumptions—suggesting they are more prerequisite. No other ToC was prepared.

A well-reasoned proposal and early Political Economic Analysis (PEA) go some ways towards a logic model for the SEP-TA--with the former more immediate and project-relevant, while the latter suggesting a longer term vision for employment and economic development in Nepal-- though as FCDO notes *with little assessment of entry points* (102, 335, 336, 337, 338, 381, 108). (The PEA also didn’t explicitly consider risks). The ILO refers to the PEA once as underpinning its toolkit for employment mapping, a first step in the pro-growth strategies for the future of work described in the PEA documents (335, 337, 338, 309, 310). PEA authors participated in the roll out of the mapping toolkit in Butwal and were invited to advise MOLESS and other senior policy makers at various points (119).¹⁷ Nonetheless, the PEAs and municipality employment mapping appear in the project reports as deliverables, without consideration of whether and how they contributed to overarching outcomes.

In its 2018/19 Progress Report, FCDO notes: *The ILO programme requires a strategic stocktake and to ensure the labour and migration constraints identified in the first-year political economic analysis are being eased through annual refresh and workplans so activities are more clearly linked to outcomes* (109). This directive does not appear to have been directly taken up and seems to be overshadowed by COVID priorities in subsequent FCDO reports (110). The project delivered on a number of the activities anticipated in both the proposal documents and the PEA--which was also an important reference point in national-level discussions early in the project--but in the end reports and interviews do not link these activities back to a larger vision for SEP-TA (see also EQ19).

Without a guiding framework, the project relied on a series of logframes, outcomes and milestones that were adjusted over the course of the project. Reference to outcomes was abandoned after the first year, and replaced by outputs--by definition more immediate, and not measurements of change. Adjustments were made in response to changing requirements of the FCDO, changing priorities of the GoN, and the COVID context. Without outcomes and associated indicators, the logframe became a management tool rather than a strategic document, providing an inventory of agreed activities and deliverables, without articulated links to anticipated project results. By and large the objectives lacked numerical or time targets. The result is that it is possible to inventory activities and an impressive volume of knowledge products. But assessing whether these contributed to measurable, intended change is more problematic (see EQ5 for more on this).

¹⁷ The authors of the PEA were invited to present their perspectives to multiple administrations in the MOLESS and other parts of government, but the extent to which these meetings threaded into other elements of the program or informed technical assistance or follow up advocacy on policy is not known. Few other stakeholders who were interviewed had read the PEA documents, and annual reports from the ILO make little reference to them aside from as a deliverable in year two of the project.

It would also be easy to conclude that the project tried to do too much with the time and resources available. Taken together, the nine outputs represent an ambitious scope which required multiple, simultaneous streams of technical inputs at multiple levels of the system. As noted elsewhere, this stretched the management team quite thin. Without a guiding overall strategy project initiatives were largely responsive to prevailing partner (and particularly national government and FCDO) demands.

One example of an omission in the design and strategy of the project is worth noting here. While labour migration to the gulf countries and Malaysia has been the major focus of development programs, reciprocal labour mobility between India and Nepal has a long history and the issues, albeit highlighted in reports, do not get sufficient programmatic attention. Recent surveys suggest that 26% of Nepali returnees come from India, about the same as the number returning from Malaysia (203, 205). An estimated 86% of returnees from India then find work in the informal sector (compared to 31% from other countries). The SEP-TA tended to homogenize returnees, and the particular strata of migrants to India was invisible (329). The program missed an opportunity to pioneer programmatic solutions on the issue whether it be on data generation, support systems, or reintegration strategies. Moreover, as returnee migrants are a stated priority for all trade unions the issue generally, and returnees from India in particular may have offered a useful area for project collaboration (213, 214, 215).

Further, in a project which is innovating as this was, more granular ToC and clear objectives can help to anticipate learning opportunities that would inform adaptability and replication. A number of initiatives under the SEP are described as a “models” for scale, suggesting they were tested and then replicated or adapted. Several of the SEP-TA bylaws crafted for employers, PLAC etc. were similarly characterised as “models”. It is not known to what extent a learning framework was applied in the broader SEP initiative, but at the end of the SEP-TA learning remains almost entirely anecdotal and reconstructing what worked in what context and how project investments might be scaled is challenging. Taking for example one of the major achievements of the project: the tripartite PLAC, various informants have conjectured variously that the successful establishment of the PLAC in Butwal was due to i) the fact that Butwal is a commercial hub; ii) a shared, felt need amongst tripartite partners; iii) strong local government leadership and capacity; iv) ILO’s convening power with the tripartite partners; v) the nature and quality of technical assistance provided by the ILO; vi) the proximity of the provincial capital to industrial sites; vii) the requirement of the Labor Law. A theory of change that offered testable assumptions about formation of the PLAC, and the collection of evidence over the course of the project could have provided valuable insights about which (or which combination) of factors were more or less important. At very least, they could have teased out key criteria to consider and weight these factors when replicating the PLAC elsewhere. The lack of a learning approach was in part a result of the absence of M&E expertise on the team (see also EQ13).

EQ 5 How appropriate and useful were the indicators described in the project document in assessing the project’s progress? If necessary, how may they have been formulated to be more useful? To what extent were the indicators gender sensitive?

Significant changes in the quantity and quality of indicators are found between the original project document and subsequent logframes utilized by the ILO to track project progress. The project document includes 15 indicators measuring four outcomes, and 25 indicators measuring outputs. The results framework went through multiple changes over the course of the project. Reference to project *outcomes* is not included in any of the logframe documents which served to contract the scope of these documents to a list of deliverables and activities. Further, it is difficult to establish a progression as logframes are undated. In one of the logframes for the SEP programme, Output 4 (which references work under the ILO) focuses exclusively on labor employment (*Technical assistance provided to Government of Nepal to strengthen domestic employment promotion programs according to best practice*), though sub-outputs do reference initiatives

related to labour migration and social partners (102, 114, 115, 116). The definition of outputs in the SEP logframe and ILO logframes differ.

Further, while some of the outputs and sub-output indicators are measurable, some of the outputs haven't been measured at all and there are no targets to measure it against. For instance in the undated logframe for the SEP-TA output indicator 4.5.1 “% reduction in number of labour disputes in selected project locations” is never measured and although the log-frame plans to carry out the baseline assessment to determine the number of labour disputes in project locations, the activity is not carried out (114). Furthermore, even when targets were set, the activities changed. Since the log-frame and milestones were revised multiple times, it seems like the program was not reaching the milestones set but bringing the milestones towards it to justify achievements.

A review of FCDO and ILO reporting suggests that the annual reflection process was rigorous and constructive. In the absence of an M&E system for the SEP-TA the reports generated by FCDO about the overall SEP under output 4.0 (the ILO component) and the annual reports generated by the ILO about SEP-TA offer the best chronology of the project's initiatives.

Without explicit outcomes or indicators to measure change, the approach fell far short of being able to measure even short or medium term change. There is not a single mention of gender in any of the log-frames, and the program has made not attempts to collect gender disaggregated data and set relevant targets.

EQ 6 Were risks assessed in an appropriate manner?

No documentation of consultations on risk assessment at the design stage were available to the evaluators. In light of the risks and challenges that the proposal identified, the absence of a risk assessment plan is surprising. Recent events, for instance, would suggest the project could have anticipated the frequent changes in government (and government priorities) and integrated mitigation strategies. Complex and politicized obstacles to policy traction on labour migration were also well known and could have been considered in the design. Instead, the proposal suggests that the political economic analysis and consultations would be relied upon to understand, test and respond to the assumptions and risks as the project progressed. The project assessed risks, as it faced challenges in implementation, as documented in ILO SEP TA annual reports (111, 112,117,118,119) and FCDO's annual reports (108, 109, 110). Further, it is surprising that no stakeholder analysis was undertaken.

EQ 7 To what extent did the project succeed in adapting to the socio-economic challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The project succeeded well in adapting to the socio-economic challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, given that planned activities could not be delivered due to countrywide lockdown and travel restrictions (110). The flexibility by the donors and prompt changes in activities and milestones helped to keep the program running. The modality for delivery was changed to virtual mediums immediately as the lockdowns by the government restricted in-person meetings. The project gradually adapted to lockdown technologies in its interactions with the stakeholders, appreciated by the stakeholders, though technology and connectivity issues could be problematic. The meetings and social dialogues as well as the training for Social Security Fund officials and employer's organizations were continued through online platforms.

The project also diverted its resources to carry out studies and hold social dialogues on challenges emerging due to the pandemic and respond appropriately. The major focus of the program since COVID has been to understand the status of the enterprises and business recovery for MSMEs (310, 302,303, 305). An important bipartite agreement between the employers and the workers was reached regarding wage payments in the pandemic scenario, as shared by the key informants (342, 347). A useful knowledge product for the

employer’s organization was the checklist for prevention and mitigation of COVID at workplaces (323). The donors mentioned that they were impressed by COVID recovery work that the ILO undertook especially to bring competing employer’s organizations together and advocate policy to support all organizations. Daayitwa fellows produced policy briefs at provincial level that factored issues brought about by COVID in agriculture sector (311) and youth employment (314). Additionally, in July 2020, Daayitwa also carried out a study in project implementation areas on Dignity of Labour – an issue held in importance by the federal government – and held a multi-stakeholder including the government which also looked at impacts on labour (391).

The project also redirected its resources on labour migration to a rapid assessments on impacts of COVID on labour migrants and presented plans and ideas to the MOLESS on COVID response to migrant workers and returnee migrants (333, 329). The social dialogues held during the pandemic were also found helpful by the JTUCC although respondents from the three major trade unions shared that the communication and work with the ILO had thinned out during the pandemic. Overall, a major challenge for the SEP TA team during the pandemic was not having people on the ground at the provincial and local level that made it difficult to actively engage with the government.

EQ 8. In what ways did the Project align with or perhaps contradict other interventions carried out by ILO Nepal, the Government and/or the national social partners?

The original project document mentions seven ILO projects that are related to the objectives of the SEP TA program (102). During implementation, the project aligned with Swiss Development Corporation funded MiRIDEW project to create synergies and leverage expertise and resources to work on the issues of labour migration (See EQ17). No alignment with other ILO activities were mentioned in the reports. Since the SEP TA was demand driven, it was able to align with the needs, priorities and interventions carried out by the government and social partners. Technical assistance to the national government on PMEP and SSF (see Outputs 4.1 and 4.5) and support to employer organizations and trade unions to restructure in the provincial and local levels were the main areas of alignment. No contradiction with other interventions was found in the documents reviewed or mentioned by key informants.

EQ9. How effectively did the project support the broader goals of the SEP program?

In the context of the SEP, the ILO’s role was to address issues in the enabling environment for domestic employment and labour migration, easing the way for achievement of the SEP skilling and employment goals. ILO initiatives that contributed technical advice on policy and implementation frameworks, built capacity, enhanced social dialogue and prioritized youth and women contributed to the SEP priorities by providing inputs into the context in which the program was delivered.

A MoU drafted in the first year of the project outlines specific areas of cooperation between the broader program and the ILO. Most of the areas of cooperation relate to labour migration, however, and there were no revisions to the original document (123). As noted under EQ4, the revised Theory of Change graphic drafted in 2018 by Louis Berger (now WSP) moves the policy initiatives from co-equal components in a complex project (as conceived in the 2016 ToC) to underpinning Assumptions, including

- Under “Skills” (domestic employment): *Cooperation with MOLESS/ILO leads to GoN regulations that incentivizes employment opportunities for Nepali workers first*
- Under “Migration”: i) *Cooperation with ILO leads to GoN regulations that facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration; ii) Monopoly power exercised by recruitment agencies is addressed in cooperation with ILO and GoN* (108, 113).

While the substance may have changed less than the position in the graphic, it does suggest a level of disengagement. Nonetheless, the ILO was reportedly instrumental in helping provide entre for the project's main contractor, WSP, to the MoLESS. FCDO reports include repeated directives for greater coordination particularly in the early years of the project, and recognized opportunities for joint collaboration at both national and provincial levels (108, 109).

Coordination at provincial and municipality levels appear weak, possibly because the ILO's presence was intermittent. It is not clear to what extent that inhibited synergies amongst programmatic achievements. The WSP representatives on the ground had attended several events hosted by the ILO in Provinces 2 and 5 but appeared unaware of key knowledge products for employers--their primary clients. They were, however, aware of the PLAC and the issues before it.

The evaluators did not meet with the implementing agency for Component 3 of the project (Helvetas).

Based on the evidence available, the SEP-TA seems somewhat disconnected from the main SEP, and to have operated in parallel with the main point of intersection through ILO-FCDO meetings.

Effectiveness (including effectiveness of management arrangement)

EQ10. How responsive was the project to the needs of GoN?

The ILO has a longstanding history with ministries of labor in Nepal, and as noted in EQ9 brought considerable social capital to this project (see EQ9). Over the life of the SEP-TA, the ILO responded to the priorities of three ministers and four or more secretaries, through annual formal consultations and interim requests for a variety of types of support (see 361, 388). According to many observers, the ILO remains the most trusted international partner for the MOLESS, for some of the most high profile and politically sensitive programs of the day.

Observers cite the period when Hon. Gokarana Bista was Minister for MoLESS (March 2018-November 2019) as particularly productive. During this period, the SSF and PMEP were launched, and the ILO was asked for specific inputs to support both. Throughout the project the MOLESS turned to the ILO for technical inputs and other types of assistance.¹⁸ The ILO provided strategic advice, knowledge products, and training to promote employment generation in the federalized context. The project funded construction of an auditorium in the MoLESS, and supported a number of national and local level conferences, workshops and training on topics related to labour, youth employment, women's entrepreneurship, MSMEs, minimum wage etc. The ILO also reportedly facilitated productive linkages between government and the private sector including in relation to the PMEP and controversial elements of the SSF.

Nonetheless, the PMEP has not been without its challenges. It has been criticized for poor planning and management at all levels, falling short of its targets, and missing key target groups (unemployed, traditionally marginalized) (211, 212). It has also experienced a good deal of internal mission confusion particularly, as some saw it as an employment generation initiative, while the design appeared to be focused on welfare (offering 100 days of work in mostly public works, day labor jobs). SEP-TA advisors note that they put forward a range of suggestions to try to nudge the PMEP towards a longer term focus on employment generation, but faced competing political priorities and bureaucratic inertia at national level. More impact was reportedly *possible* at municipality level where funding decision making was vested, but capacity and accountability weak. This

¹⁸ The PMEP, for instance, was modeled on similar national programs from India, Africa and Europe, shared by ILO experts.

evaluation was unable to triangulate the extent to which the SEP-TA influenced some or all of these issues in the technical assistance it provided, as interviews with PMEP staff were not held at any level. From the information to hand, it appears a more employment-focused approach has gained traction as the World Bank's \$120 Youth Employment Transformation Initiative (YETI) project comes on stream.

There is some evidence that on other issues political and other considerations sometimes prevailed over ILO recommendations. For instance, the ILO's recommendation to *pilot* the SSF before rolling it out nationally was not adopted, arguably a costly decision for the GON, as adjustments were made on the fly.¹⁹ The SEP-TA could not get as much traction on labour migration, particularly at the national level, as noted in EQ2. The GCM has been ratified, but the implementation strategy is still pending. A study about current visa restrictions for foreign employees—restrictions that have reportedly cost Nepal foreign investment opportunities--opened more difficult issues and although the Prime Minister of the time asked for it to be translated, resolution has not been reported (Document not received; information only anecdotal).

FCDO's annual report in the first year of the project (2017/18) foreshadows a number of the findings of this evaluation:

Finally for component 4 through ILO, during the first year of the programme, the team reported that there could be a tension between delivering at pace and building relationships to get more government buy in and ownership in activities (which requires time in Nepal). Their operating model favours the latter for more systemic change and ILO welcomes the adaptive programming that DFID is championing. However there need to be more rigorous reporting to DFID on the changes in context and the decisions made by the team. There is also a learning that progress particularly on relationship building can get lost in rigid reporting tools, so additional reporting on stories of change or political updates may supplement the reporting going forward. (108)

Much of the ILO's work with the government could be seen as reactive, including to new priorities of changing leadership. The ILO often needed to reintroduce the program, and recalibrate its approach. Nonetheless, it is clear in hindsight that a strong shared strategy and leadership were needed to be able to impact on the startup of two major initiatives by the MoLESS, and the needs of provinces and municipalities. In retrospect it appears the PMEP affected the trajectory of the SEP-TA more than the other way around.²⁰ The ILO has certainly helped build the scaffolding at national and provincial level for the in focus towards employment generation, for instance in its support to Employment Service Centers and employment mapping at municipality level, and advancing social dialogue mechanisms. But whether the quantum of ILO inputs contributed to this shift in government focus, or simply responded to the urgencies of the day, will remain an open question, particularly in the absence of a project Theory of Change that offered an outcome-focused roadmap for deciding about project inputs to national government.

EQ11. How responsive was the project to the needs of the social partners?

See EQ 3

¹⁹ The system has fallen short of targets as misunderstandings about how the system works and what it offers still hamper enrollment.

²⁰ These observations are based on reports documenting project outputs, interviews with ILO and partner advisers, but only two government respondents—and only one at national level who was no longer in the MoLESS.

EQ12. To what extent was gender mainstreaming addressed in the design and implementation of the project?

The Government of Nepal has been applying an innovative system of gender responsive budgeting in Nepal since 2007.²¹ The approach scores budgeted programs in terms of whether women i) participate in project formulation and implementation, ii) benefit in terms of capacity built; iii) make up a majority of beneficiaries; iv) benefit in terms of employment or income; v) benefit in terms of time and care responsibilities (335). Using this metric, the SEP-TA would score rather low on i), ii) and iii), in the medium range for iv) at least for the FWEAN breakthrough for women entrepreneurs (which has the potential to add to the score for v).

Overall, the project fell short in terms of planning and mainstreaming gender considerations in its policy and capacity building work. A gender lens on key conceptual areas of the program was weak despite the fact that women are a large part of the labor force and the informal business sector, and continue to face access and participation challenges, discrimination in the workplace, wage discrepancies, and labour migration restrictions,²² and despite optimistic commitments in the proposal (393, 105, 313, 102). Most of the project documents and most of the informants for this evaluation seem to equate female presence in meetings with gender mainstreaming and struggled to describe gender strategies beyond that. Until the policy document produced by the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWEAN)--which offers recommendations for supporting women entrepreneurs post COVID--the project supported only one study, conducted by one of the Daayitwa youth fellows²³--that addressed gender and employment in any detail (313, 393). All but one of the ILO consultants were male, as were almost all participants in program activities (with the exception of Daayitwa which had a good gender balance amongst its fellows). GESI experts were not called in to provide input, although the ILO has experts in the region and internationally, and there are GESI consultants in Nepal. As noted in EQ5, no indicators or targets included gender disaggregated data.

The ILO has been supporting FWEAN since 2014. FWEAN is an affiliate of the FNCCI. The ILO's investment in FWEAN included strengthening governance structures for the organization, developing a membership development strategy, development of an e-portal for members to market their products, and a dialogue session in Province 5 between women entrepreneurs and provincial government representatives (386). Fifty small business owners in the target provinces and FWEAN staff were trained in use of the ENCOMPASS, enterprise competitive assessment tool, which led to a ground breaking agreement with one of Nepal's prominent commercial bank to provide concessional financing for female entrepreneurs who had participated in ENCOMPASS²⁴ (116). Following the roll out of ENCOMPASS, FWEAN also developed a number of tools to help members improve their business and comply with the Labor Law.

On the labour side, JTUCC has a gender committee, and the Executive Director is a woman. Surprisingly, gender priorities are not mentioned in the JTUCC strategic plan—though there is a strategy for youth outreach (346). It is not known whether other trade union organizations that participated in the project have a

²¹ In one chapter of his Political Economic Analysis, Dr. Wagle puts forward an analogous system of scoring that he suggests could be applied to job creation programs (393).

²² Nepal ranked 110 out of 144 countries in terms of economic participation in 2015 (105, footnote 25).

²³ Study is undated but listed in the 2019/20 progress report from the ILO.

²⁴ Per FWEAN: lending has not yet commenced. In a project designed to address policy and coordination amongst tripartite representational bodies, this is one of the only examples of direct support to individual beneficiaries.

focal structure for gender, and it does not appear that there was any other gender-specific support under SEP-TA.

EQ13. To what extent did the capacity of project management and the management arrangements put in place support and/or hinder the achievement of the planned results?

The ILO Country Director took a leadership role in the project in the early days and remained involved throughout the project. For the first few months of the project, the project was managed by an ILO staff, a labour migration specialist. From January 2018 a shared leadership model included two Nepali National Project Coordinators (NPC), who were responsible for labour migration and domestic employment respectively. In October 2018 the ILO launched the MIRIDEW project, and the NPC for labour migration moved across to lead this project. The current project director then assumed sole management responsibility. Another ILO staff was added to the team in December 2019. The team was supported by a full time admin/finance person.

The project relied heavily on short term technical consultants, and in particular ILO experts based in the DWT New Delhi office. A long term senior Nepali consultant based in Kathmandu provided intermittent strategic and technical advice to MOLESS and provincial governments on behalf of the project. Another Nepali expert was initially embedded with the PMEP and was then moved to support the SSF. A number of Nepali research and civil society agencies were also engaged for specific types of technical and capacity building support, as noted elsewhere.

Given the number of stakeholders, consultants, advisors and activities over the life of this project, and the volume of related contracting and reporting it required, the management team seems too small and indeed appeared understandably overwhelmed at the time of this evaluation. The project would have benefited from an M&E expert throughout its life, and gender expertise at key milestones, including in the review of consultant ToRs and key strategy and training products. In addition, since many of the initiatives of the project ended up being at provincial level, a long term presence may have been a cost and program effective addition to the team--offering additional interface with the broader SEP. Finally, given the changing and complex demands of this project, more senior technical leadership on the management team would have contributed to the team's ability to navigate the complex political and technical elements of the project, as suggested by at least one observer.

FCDO's team overseeing the SEP also changed early in the project. The original team requested inclusion of two contractors---the Asia Foundation and Daayitwa---under the SEP-TA as they wanted these agencies in the mix, and the contracts were more easily administered by the ILO under the SEP-TA. The contracting agreement with TAF did not require reporting to the ILO, however, and the grant seems to have been technically disengaged from the project (though it was a sizable budget). Daayitwa added considerable value, though there were reported differences in vision for their component of the project. Contracting challenges based on the FCDO annual review cycle were experienced by all local agencies, and impeded implementation continuities are discussed in EQ16.

EQ 14. To what extent has the project achieved its objectives? And are there any differences in the results obtained across social groups?

Because neither measurable objectives nor indicators were included or associated monitoring data collected, it is not possible to fully answer this question (see EQ4 and EQ5). This makes it difficult to provide evidence-based assessment of the rate, scope and impact of SEP-TA interventions, particularly relative to a benchmark or plan. Based on the available information it appears that the technical assistance provided to the government on PMEP and SSF were instrumental in getting the government's program off the ground. The

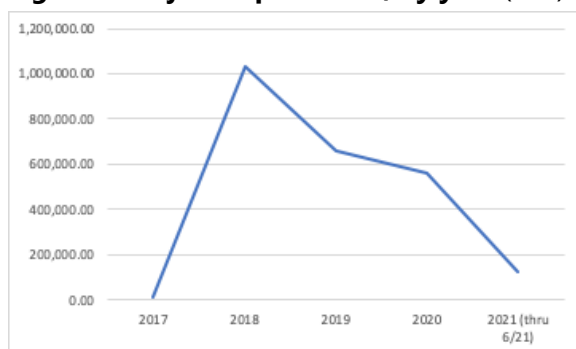
project was also moderately successful in improving the implementation of relevant laws in the target provinces. The program’s activities at the federal and provincial level, especially with the employer’s organization and trade unions was helpful and much appreciated by the beneficiaries in contributing to improved implementation of the Labour Law 2017 and maintaining/improving industrial relationships. However, labour migration has been an area of support where the project wasn’t able to contribute as much as planned because of the various reasons outside of the project’s control, as highlighted in other sections of this report (See EQ2, Section 5.1 Output 4.7-4.9).

Efficiency

EQ 15. To what extent has the project delivered value for money?

The project got off to a slow start because of delays in hiring decisions. This, and the decision to hire local over international experts to manage the project contributed to budget savings in year 1 (108). As shown in Figure 1, expenditures were highest in 2018/19 which was arguably the most productive period in the project. Implementation slowed considerably with COVID, picking up slightly towards the end of the project as stakeholders began engaging more virtually.

Figure 1 Project expenditure, by year (120)



Overall, about half of the budget has gone to subcontracts, while another 40% has gone to consultants and staff. The project relied extensively on national consultants and staff (75% of consultants and staff in £ amount) offering good value for money (108). FCDO notes good VfM based on use of internal ILO consultants (some of whom also came for other programs), and local implementing partners (including some that worked on multiple outputs). Efficiencies in contract management processes is also appreciated by FCDO (110).

In its first year’s progress report FCDO notes: *VfM could potentially be supported further by the ILO through active use of quality evidence to inform choices (108)*. As noted throughout this report, the lack of evidence remained an omission throughout the project’s life, and this early observation remains part of the challenge of this evaluation²⁵. A costing analysis would help confirm how investments were distributed across the major partners and outputs, and at what administrative level. **Without this and more outcome data, it is challenging to draw summative conclusions about VfM in this evaluation.**

Based on anecdotal evidence the example of support provided to FNCCI offers something of an insight into VfM amongst grantees. A \$100,000 grant over a three year period covered:

- Strategic plan.

²⁵ A budget analysis presenting expenditures by output was delayed. As a result, this analysis relies solely on an itemized year-by-year expenditure breakdown, with targets.

- Preparation of a handbook for employers on the Labor Law and Contribution-based Social Security Law. Dissemination included seminars and trainings in Provinces 2 and 5.
- Roll out of a competitiveness assessment tool for small and medium scale businesses.
- Translation of a guidebook from the ITC/ILO on managing employees, also rolled out as part of capacity building for local FNCCI chapters.
- Seminar about safe return to work during COVID.
- Support to chapters in Provinces 2 and 5 to participate in social dialogue.

This appears to be good value for money.

EQ16. How well were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) allocated or used strategically to achieve the planned results? Have they been delivered in a timely manner? According to proposed budget lines? If not, what were the factors that hindered timely delivery of outputs? Where possible, intervention benefits and related costs of integrated gender equality is to be analysed.

It is difficult to draw summative conclusions about scheduling and expenditure against a plan, given the largely responsive nature of the project, significant disruptions including political and leadership changes in MOLESS, and COVID, and in the absence of timebound monitoring indicators or a stable logframe.

Nonetheless, considering these not insignificant externalities and the small size of the team, the project must be credited for generating an impressive number of knowledge products, managing multiple contracts, and working at three levels of government in a relatively abbreviated project cycle. Importantly, consultations before and after dissemination of key knowledge products—including the PEA, model laws and bylaws, and key studies—helped ensure they were used and useful.

As at January, 2021 the project had expended 71% of its budget, with the most significant underspends in travel for non-staff, and training line items. The most significant amount of money remaining is for subcontracts (\$634k) (120). See Figure 1 under EQ15 for a snapshot of expenditure over the life of the project, which reflects a drop of in expenditure during COVID.

The nature of the contracting arrangement with the FCDO challenged consistency in implementation for the ILO and implementing partners. The annual renewal of the contract included reporting, review and consultation. This consumed several months (July-September) during which time redrafting of workplans was also required, while much of the work of the project was paused (108, 109, 111, 112). The timing coincides with the major festival season in Nepal (September-October) which further delayed continuation of project activities. The ILO was forced to mirror this cycle with contractors. Several key actors cite instances where the imposed pause in contracting resulted in missed opportunities—to hold time sensitive meetings, hire local consultants for time sensitive inputs, field an additional round of youth fellows, etc. In a project like SEP-TA which was attempting to gain policy traction with multiple stakeholder agencies in a complex, rapidly changing context, the contracting format may have been a mismatch.

It is not possible to assess the cost of gender integration with the information to hand. (See EQ12 for more on gender mainstreaming).

EQ 17. To what extent have the project resources been leveraged with other related interventions to maximize impact, if any?

The project coordinated effectively with several other interventions that had shared objectives. Effective coordination with the ILO's SDC-funded MIRIDEW project promoted synergies and cost-sharing on issue of labour migration (107, 121). The partnership reportedly enabled the two donors to work to their strengths with the SEP-TA focusing on provincial and MIRIDEW on regional issues. The project cost shared studies of

destination countries and the cruise ship sector (both undertaken by the same ILO consultant). SDC reportedly did not want to be involved in the GCM work, which was supported by SEP-TA. SEP-TA also co-financed technical support and for the Social Security Fund with the GiZ (111, 327). Cooperation with the World Bank's YETI project appears to be promoting synergies in capacity building (for instance of the ESC's) and strategy. All of these coordination efforts appear to advance reciprocal impact.

Sustainability

EQ18. How effective was the project in establishing national ownership?

As noted above, the ILO retained and strengthened its historical relationships with all of the tripartite partners through the SEP-TA. Those interviewed were fairly unanimous in their appreciation of the knowledge products and high quality technical support they'd received from the ILO, though in most cases it is too early to tell to what extent they will be used and effective. The opportunities for social dialogue amongst partners on specific issues, and the PLAC in Province 5 and more recently in Province 2 in particular appear to have garnered significant buy-in as a useful fora for tripartite dialogue and dispute resolution. It is also too early to determine whether it will be used this way, and whether similar buy in can be replicated in the five other provinces without the heavy dose of technical assistance offered by the ILO in the SEP focus sites.

Three observations: First, because of the responsive nature of the implementation of the SEP-TA, particularly to government agendas and the complex implementation context, engendering national ownership was neither straightforward nor comfortable all the time for the ILO. Political considerations often colored government decision-making. ILO advisors seemed to have done a skillful job of offering examples—good practice and mistakes—from other countries in order to highlight the reasoning behind their recommendations on specific issues. This was noted as an effective approach for government decisionmakers looking to introduce two high stakes initiatives. At the same time, because many of the consultants were senior Nepali experts or otherwise known to government stakeholders, they were also able to engage with other parts of government to gain support for policy recommendations when the “client” ministry resisted. The ILO reportedly enjoyed entre and trust that other “outside” international partners did not. Second, in the absence of a theory of change or other strategic framework for SEP-TA it is more challenging to assess what the project aspired for the government, or the other tripartite partners, to own. In the main, it adapted to government priorities. Third, even under the best of circumstances, a four year project cycle is too short to build top to bottom ownership and be able to see policies implemented effectively. This was even more challenging in this project as federalization shifted the scaffolding for policy implementation. Notes one ILO Advisor: *you can ask us to provide an output like producing a strategic plan and all in three months....I can do this. But to build ownership, I need time.* The fact that the ILO is likely to remain in Nepal and continue the efforts started in this project is promising in this regard.

EQ19. To what extent can the project results be maintained or even scaled up/replicated by other partners beyond project completion?

Sustainability. As noted in EQ 18, it may take many years to understand how and if initiatives started under this project will be sustained in the implementation sites, or scaled to others. Similarly, the durability of policy advice accepted and advanced under SEP-TA may take years. The answer to this evaluation question is, therefore, largely conjectural and based largely on anecdotal evidence collected through interviews.

At the national level, changes in ministry leadership may have compromised potentials for sustainability, curtailing the time and continuity needed for new policies and related programmes to embed. COVID served to disrupt priorities and required refocusing of attention and programmes. At the same time, Nepal's traditional dependence on external funding and advisors, and the abbreviated project cycle itself puts

sustainability at risk, though the anticipated continuity of the ILO in country may mitigate that to some extent, as noted above.

An important legacy of the project is documentation. Many of the procedures, tools, and model bylaws used in the project sites can support replication in other sites and represent an important contribution to sustainability. ILO contributions to the launch of the Social Security Fund insofar as it has strengthened administrative systems, are likely to endure. Inputs to administration and delivery of the PMEP have been important and likely similarly durable, though the evaluation team did not speak with government officials working on the PMEP. Capacity support to the social partners in the context of adjustments to federalization and compliance with the Labor Law and Contribution-based Social Security Laws is similarly probably sustainable, as these structures are likely to continue to play a key role in shaping the labor sector in Nepal. The planned Labour Studies Program at Tribhuvan University (TU) promises to enhance domestic capacity to meet the future planning and policy demands in the labour sector, and represents a contribution to sustainability (321).

Replicability/scale. Considerations of replicability are surprisingly limited in the documentation for the SEP-TA. The project focused on two provinces and two municipalities. Many of the knowledge products, mechanisms and technical assistance it offered are similarly important to all seven provinces and 753 municipalities, at minimum to meet the requirements of the law. Support for replication could have benefited from insights into fundamental success factors, adaptable blueprints, and access to domestic sources of trusted advice, only some of which the project leaves behind.

Some diffusion of ideas and models has occurred organically, for instance in Province 1 where the JUTCC has reportedly been proactively promoting the establishment of a PLAC based on precedents from Provinces 5 and 2. Labor desks are anticipated in the annual plans of three municipalities in Lumbini Province. USAID is reportedly going to underwrite replication of the Daayitwa model pioneered under SEP-TA.

Nonetheless, the level of technical assistance invested in operationalizing many of the innovations in the project—particularly at provincial and municipality levels—are unlikely to scale effectively without external funding. Many of the initiatives under the project appear to have been conceived of as innovations meriting testing, but remained untested. Indeed multiple informants referred to activities as “pilots” and this word appears frequently in project reports (11 times in the progress report of 2021Q3). Overall, the project missed an opportunity to gather evidence about what worked in some of the most commercially active and progressive sites in the country (310). Such evidence would have contributed to adaptation and investment efficiencies for scale. At national level, the significant investment in supporting two of the country’s most ambitious employment-related initiatives—the PMEP and SSF—certainly offered opportunities to generate evidence about what was working at policy and implementation levels, and why. This was explored in more detail in EQ13.

Impact

EQ 20. To what extent has the project contributed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to higher-level and/or systemic changes?

The SEP TA commission of the political economic analysis and subsequent output by a reputed high level consultant contributed to discussion and suggested pathways for higher level systematic change of the Nepalese labour market (335, 336, 337). The knowledge product was shared with the high level officials in a policy roundtable offering the opportunity to anticipate significant systemic change (337). Nonetheless, neither the PEA nor many of the suggested initiatives were implemented wholesale, and it is too early to know whether they will get traction over time. Intentional promotion and practice of social dialogue and supporting

the establishment of Provincial Labour Advisory Council was deemed a good practice by the majority of the respondents, marking the possibility for a sea change in labor relations.

EQ 21. How have interventions made as part of the project affected the socio-economic and/or environmental state of the locations in which it operated?

Since SEP-TA was addressing aspects of the enabling environment in which the broader SEP program was addressing socio-economic drivers, and given the short duration of the project, it would be premature to comment on this.

6.3 Cross cutting issues

The ToR puts forward five thematic cross cutting issues for this evaluation to consider. Some have been covered in the prior sections and references to specific EQs are provided (101).

5.3.1 The normative and tripartite mandate of the ILO

The project promoted key elements of Nepal's Decent Work Country Program, advancing normative elements of the Labor Law in the newly federalized context; helping to shape and launch the Social Security Fund prescribed under the Contribution-based Social Security Act; and providing inputs for an implementation strategy for the national Global Compact on Migration. The ILO did a good job of enabling tripartite members to move towards requirements under the Labor Law and Contribution Based Social Security Act, including at provincial level. Under the SEP-TA, the ILO advanced model mechanisms for tripartite negotiation in several provinces. See EQ1, EQ2, EQ3.

5.3.2 Gender equality, non-discrimination and the inclusion of people with disabilities

This was a weak part of the project with no earmarked budget for gender mainstreaming, no gender targets, disaggregated data, or expert gender inputs over the life of the project. The main project investment in gender was capacity support to the Federation of Women's Entrepreneurs' Association of Nepal (FWEAN) (an affiliate of FNCCI) and a couple of papers on gender and work in specific municipalities produced by youth fellows. It is challenging to find proactive initiatives for gender mainstreaming in initiatives with government or employee organizations. See discussion under EQ12

Attention to inclusion of other marginalized groups, including people living with a disability, is flagged in SEP planning and early FCDO reporting documents and marginalized groups are explicitly cited in targets associated with Outcome 1. Inclusion considerations were not specifically addressed in the design document for SEP-TA and has not been mentioned in reporting documents. (The Social Security Fund includes compensation for people disabled through work accidents, and the ILO provided a range of inputs to helping structure and launch the SSF, though this is one of many elements of the Fund and cannot be taken as a significant indication of mainstreaming. Similarly, the PMEP targets disadvantaged segments of the population, though the extent to which SEP-TA inputs strengthened that focus or reach is unknown).

5.3.3 A just transition to environmental sustainability

Given its geopolitical position, environmental and climate change issues have long impacted on Nepal's economic and social development. Green jobs and the need to transform the economy away from dependencies on agriculture are touched on in the Political Economic Analysis (337), and at the end of the project a milestone was added to ILO's remit to advocate with employer organizations to 'build back greener' (118). However, neither direct nor indirect impacts of the project on environmental considerations can be identified based on the evidence available. See also EQ21.

5.3.4 Responsiveness to the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda

The project proposal highlights that [SDG] *Goal 8 on decent work includes specific indicators on creating policies for job creation, formalisation, the promotion of safe employment for migrants and the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking* (102). The project ended up contributing to the enabling environment for job creation and formalization, with labour migration getting less traction for reasons explained above. See Section 5.1 which documents achievements—all of the Outputs are relevant to SDG 8-- and EQ1, EQ2.

7. Conclusions

The SEP-TA project aimed to advance best practice policy and policy norms on issues central to Nepal's economy at a time of significant change. The fragility of the moment--as the country was recovering from years of civil war, continued political turmoil, a devastating earthquake, and grappling with embedding a new constitution and new system of governance--offered opportunities and challenges. While the project design included a balanced emphasis on labour migration and domestic employment, the project ended up focusing largely on the latter, consistent with changes in government priorities over the course of the project period.

The ILO brought considerable social capital to the partnership with the MOLESS and social partners. It provided entre to the larger SEP project, and eased a range of bottlenecks in the enabling environment. The project generated a significant quantum of knowledge products beginning with a Political Economy Analysis and including toolkits for assessing business viability; employment mapping; model bylaws for business compliance with the Labor Law and for province-based tripartite mechanisms; assessment of migration destination options; analytical pieces on local employment issues and labour migration, among others. Many of these were accompanied by workshops and trainings, which added legitimacy and effectiveness.

The project provided a range of technical assistance to MOLESS in launching two major government initiatives: the Prime Minister's Employment Program and the Social Security Fund. Inputs included long and short term advisors, training, infrastructure and equipment support. Employer and trade union peak bodies received capacity and strategy development support, which also enabled them to adjust their representative capacity to the new federalized structure in the two provinces where the project focused. Youth inclusion and voice was actioned through support to 15 municipality-based research fellows and two national youth summits. Gender was addressed largely through support to the FNCCI affiliate, FWEAN. To accomplish all of this, the ILO drew on regional and international in-house expertise, retained several senior Nepali consultants, and partnered with a number of research and civil society organizations. All of this was orchestrated by a two person professional team (sometimes the second slot vacant), arguably too small to manage the volume of activities.

Project activities slowed during the early months of the pandemic, but ILO managed to convene a number of on-line meetings to move initiatives forward; published guidelines for safe return to work; and supported bipartite negotiation for worker compensation related to work closure and job loss.

A major achievement of the project was progress on social dialogue at all levels of the newly federalized system. The establishment of a Provincial Level Advisory Council in Butwal, a commercial hub, augers well for sustainability. But the project fell short in considerations of replication and the need to reach the other 5 Provinces and 751 municipalities untouched by the project to finish the job. For a project that introduced so many previously untested tools and strategies to advance policy change and social dialogue, the lack of a learning framework represents a significant, missed opportunity.

The project design was consistent with broader ILO country and international Decent Work and other agendas as well as relevant Sustainable Development Goals (8 and 10). However in the absence of a theory of change, a dearth of monitoring data, and minimal access to government and on the ground views, it is only possible in this retrospective evaluation to conjecture whether the project adequately met its initial goals, whether underlying assumptions about chosen strategies were valid, and whether alternatives would have offered greater value for money. The ILO of course was in an advisory role, with multiple clients. Over the course of the project the

ILO responded to multiple changes in leadership at MOLESS, and annual, revised directives from the FCDO. All of these factors contributed to a project which accomplished a lot, but remained largely in a reactive modality.

8. Lessons learned and emerging good practices

Many of the lessons learned and emerging good practices put forward in the Mid Term Review were independently confirmed by this final evaluation. Additional ideas have been added.

8.1 Lessons learned

7.1.1 Contractual arrangements can constrict project impacts

While annual contract renewal may promote reflection and accountabilities (and ensure alignments in a multi-agency project), it imposes an arbitrary pause in project activities which can disrupt continuity of implementation and stymie progress when opportunities arise during the pause period.

7.1.2 A theory of change essential for a complex policy project

A policy project being implemented in a politically dynamic environment needs a theoretical framework to maintain focus on strategic outcomes. A ToC articulates assumptions underpinning chosen interventions that can be tested and adjusted as evidence emerges about what works in context. In a project with multiple stakeholders, a ToC offers a logic behind shared strategies, and a roadmap. A project theory of change also enables consideration of prerequisites in the operating environment that are necessary for change to happen, as well as risks that the project may face. It is the starting point for learning about what can work at scale.

7.1.3 In a project which is innovating, an M&E learning framework and expertise is essential

For a project that is introducing locally untested tools and strategies to advance policy change and social dialogue, adaptive learning is essential. This is particularly critical when the established administrative architecture and locus of decision making is shifting at the same time, as in Nepal's federalized system. Reliance on output indicators offers only insight into what was done, not what resulted or why. Reliance on output indicators can contribute to an implementation mind set which is reactive to immediate requests, but potentially not responsive to strategic goals. In the absence of a robust M&E framework with articulated outcomes, and no M&E expertise on the team, evidence about the effectiveness of the variety of interventions and knowledge products will remain anecdotal at best. This poses challenges in confidently advancing models, tools and strategies for scale, and for understanding project contributions to impact and sustainability.

7.1.4 Policy projects require time and confidence building

A four year project cycle is insufficient to achieve policy outcomes. Policy reform is a complex lengthy process requiring consultation, research, multiple arms of government, and garnering buy in from other stakeholder groups. In a federalized system, policy implementation requires formulation of locally aligned plans and guidelines. This adds additional time as it requires an analogous process of garnering multi-stakeholder input and buy in, and expertise. Continuity with a trusted partner like the ILO can add value to the policy making process. Well timed technical inputs, models drawn from other countries, and adaptable prototypes of key legal documents are integral inputs.

8.2 Emerging good practice

7.2.1 Social dialogue and social dialogue mechanisms

The ILO effectively promoted social dialogue through capacity strengthening and strategy support to each of the tripartite partners. Historical and project-based support contributed to the trust and credibility that enabled the ILO to bring social partners together around key issues of concern to one or several partners—in

the case of the project around setting a minimum wage and responding to business closures and job loss as a result of COVID. Trust and confidence in the ILO as a neutral, expert partner, combined with technical inputs from senior South Asian experts, relevant knowledge products, and legal requirements contributed to the establishment of social dialogue mechanisms at provincial and municipality levels. While too early to say, signs are good that these mechanisms will be used and useful, moving tripartite partners beyond prior logjams.

Greater evidence behind contributing success factors would inform plans for replication.

7.2.2 Flexibility and continuity

Policy is not built in a project cycle. The ILO's longstanding relationship with key government ministries and a responsive posture even in the face of frequent changes in leadership and policy priorities, contributed to trust and enabled the ILO to nudge the policy process forward with expert technical inputs. Patience is essential, and optimally also a robust theory of change to maintain focus on the desired outcomes. Insider or former insider experts who can champion a policy vision are invaluable. All of this is particularly critical when government partners are less directed, progressive, or capacitated, and when government changes disrupt focus.

9. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Project management. In a future project, calibrate the size and scope of the project management team to the anticipated workload. The management team should be large enough to be able to manage the number of expert and partner contracts, deliverables, events and representational requirements without burn out. For a future policy project in which counterpart capacity is also a consideration, a Chief Technical Advisor or senior ILO expert should be a part of the team and involved in strategic decision and representation. (Ref: EQ13)

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office, FCDO	Medium	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 2: M&E Expertise. In a future project supporting policy and coordination innovations include M&E expertise on the implementation team. The team member should be responsible for learning frameworks including for testing pilot or model approaches and information and knowledge management. The expert would be responsible for ensuring evidence is appropriately rigorous, relevant to informing project objectives, timely, and packaged in a way that can contribute to learning, design and implementation adaptations, and reporting for key stakeholders. (Ref: EQ4, EQ5, EQ13, EQ15, EQ16, EQ19)

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	Medium	Medium term

Recommendation 3: Theoretical framework. Any future project requires a Theory of Change. The ToC should summarize key assumptions contributing to the choice of proposed strategies, and link planned activities with anticipated outcomes. Future programming that addresses domestic labour market employment could use the Political Economic Analyses developed under the SEP-TA as a starting point. The ToC should be a reference point for project decisionmaking, linking and justifying all activities into a coherent frame. It should include contextual assumptions, and risks.(Ref: EQ4, EQ9, EQ10, EQ11, EQ14, EQ15, EQ19)

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	Low	Short term

Recommendation 4: Gender mainstreaming. Future programming needs to include explicit, evidence based strategies, measurable indicators and targets and associated expertise to respond to gender issues related to employment and labour migration. Project ToC should include explicit assumptions and approaches for addressing gender-specific priorities and show their integration and links with the broader program (EQ12).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office & all stakeholders	High	Medium	Medium term

Recommendation 5: Inclusion of marginalized groups. Future programming needs to address how people facing exclusion because of caste, age, economic status, disability, geography will benefit from project

initiatives. In the absence of a representative agency, project strategies, indicators and targets should articulate how priority groups will be included (EQ14, cross cutting issues).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	Medium	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 6: Labour migration policy framework. The ILO should leverage its trusted relationship with MoLESS to continue to play a technical, enabling role in promoting safe migration and migrant rights through the MIRIDEW project and beyond. Support to implementation of plan for the Global Compact on Migration and finalizing amendments to the Foreign Employment Act should be prioritized. Capacity support at provincial and municipality levels to enable effective implementation should follow (Output 4.7; EQ2, EQ10).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 7: Labour migration and trade unions. The ILO support to trade unions that enable representation of returned labour migrants should be prioritized, and include migrants returning from India.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	Medium	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 8: Knowledge products. In order to support replication of achievements from project sites in other parts of Nepal, the ILO should publish bylaws, toolkits, guidelines and other documents developed under the SEP-TA that support enactment of the Labour Law. Insofar as possible, dissemination should rely on tripartite partners to promote ownership and use. Current drafts should be updated based on i) gender input; ii) feedback gathered from previous social partners, and local government users, who could also circulate to constituents as appropriate (Outputs 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5; EQ3, EQ7, EQ10, EQ12, EQ15, EQ16, EQ18, EQ19).

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office, municipality & provincial governments	Medium	Medium	Short term

Recommendation 9: Local government capacity building. ILO should continue to support provincial and municipality governments to take forward their responsibilities under the Labour and Contribution Based Social Security Laws. Related to this, the ILO should capacitate employer and trade union chapters to enable establishment of effective social dialogue mechanisms at each level. This process should include learning loops, cross pollination opportunities, sharing of knowledge products and tools. (Outputs 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6; EQ3, EQ10, EQ11, EQ18, EQ19)

Addressed to	Priority	Resource required	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	High	Long term

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11. Annexes

11.1 Lessons learned in ILO template

ILO Lesson Learned Template	
<p>Project Title: Skills for Employment-Technical Assistance (SEP-TA)</p> <p>Project TC/SYMBOL: NPL/17/01/GBR</p> <p>Name of Evaluator: Laurie Zivetz, Ishan Ghimire</p> <p>Date: August, 2021</p> <p>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.</p>	
LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	Contractual arrangements can constrict project impacts. The four year project commitment included an annual review and contract renewal process. While the review process helped maintain alignment with other components of the larger overall program, and recalibrate activity focus, it also required a two month pause for consultations, reporting, and work planning. Technical implementing partners supporting the project’s work were also subject to the same annual contract renewal. The process coincided with Nepal’s major festival season, essentially adding a month to the two month review process. The ILO’s project required a responsive, flexible posture—for the ILO, tripartite and other implementing partners—which was mismatched with the contracting arrangement.
Context and any related preconditions	The project aimed to support policy development and support to two national employment-related programs launching in the context of a newly federalized system and multiple cabinet reshuffles.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Country Office or Regional Office or donor agencies wishing to contract with the ILO

<p>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</p>	<p>The reasons for this contracting mechanism are unknown (other members of the consortium had different contracting arrangements). ILO and partners reported missed opportunities to respond to technical assistance requirements, rapid deployment of experts for time sensitive work, and hold meetings to maintain momentum.</p>
<p>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</p>	<p>FCDO and ILO reports suggest that the annual review process was robust. Consultations resulted in adjustments in focus and activities over the course of the project in response to the dynamic environment and government priorities. Nonetheless, regular review processes can be built in without the additional contracting burden.</p>
<p>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</p>	<p>Annual contract renewal requires additional administrative and team leadership time. Implementation pauses should be factored in to project planning, if they are going to cause unavoidable pauses.</p>

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Skills for Employment-Technical Assistance (SEP-TA)

Project TC/SYMBOL: NPL/17/01/GBR

Name of Evaluator: Laurie Zivetz, Ishan Ghimire

Date: August, 2021

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	A Theory of Change (ToC) is essential for a complex policy project like the SEP-TA project in Nepal. Without it, it is possible that competing, immediate issues may have distracted from a consistent focus on strategic outcomes (this finding is based largely on annual reports and could not be triangulated with key stakeholders). A ToC also offers the opportunity to articulate assumptions underpinning key project approaches, consider contextual risks, and be explicit about intervention linkages. A ToC offers a conceptual roadmap that can inform work across a broad spectrum of stakeholders and sites. It can be adjusted as contextual factors or priorities change, implementation assumptions are validated (or not), and learning about what is working and what is not comes to light.
Context and any related preconditions	The project aimed to support policy development and implementation in the context of a newly federalized system of government and frequent cabinet reshuffles. There were multiple experts, and implementing partners, and work took place at national, provincial and municipality levels. A Political Economy Analysis offered a far reaching vision for employment and labour migration in Nepal, but a project-specific framework that posited a strategic implementation logic was lacking.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO project leadership and managers, expert advisors supporting the project, implementing partners, tripartite counterparts, the funder, other agencies working within the same consortium.

<p>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</p>	<p>Without a ToC the project became largely reactive to immediate felt needs of government leadership, which changed multiple times over the course of the project. Individual experts and project managers lacked a shared framework for considering requests and reprioritizing resource investments at key decision points. Further since the ILO was one of a number of implementing agencies operating under the umbrella of a larger program, the absence of a ToC limited a shared point of reference for project implementation. Reports suggest the FCDO asked for such a broader framework, and that the annual reframing of priorities would have benefited from a ToC.</p>
<p>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</p>	<p>Government focus on the domestic economy and enhancing the economic safety net for workers, plus newly promulgated policies and national programs provided the starting point for project initiatives. The early development of a Political Economy Analysis provided a vision with specific long term recommendations for transforming employment and the Nepali economy. In tandem government policies and national programs and the PEA could have been a suitable starting point for crafting a ToC.</p>
<p>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</p>	<p>Development of a Theory of Change should be part of project design and inform project management and monitoring frameworks, indicators, and strategic implementation decisions. It should be a living document, reviewed at key reflection points in the project. It should be included in ToRs for consultants and implementing partners so that they can situate themselves in the overall logic of the policy initiative.</p>

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Skills for Employment-Technical Assistance (SEP-TA)

Project TC/SYMBOL: NPL/17/01/GBR

Name of Evaluator: Laurie Zivetz, Ishan Ghimire

Date: August, 2021

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	In a project which is innovating, an M&E learning framework and expertise is essential. For a project that is introducing locally untested tools and strategies to advance policy change and social dialogue, adaptive learning is essential. This is particularly critical when the established administrative architecture and locus of decisionmaking is shifting at the same time, as in Nepal's new federalized system. In the absence of a robust M&E framework with articulated outcomes, and no M&E expertise on the team, evidence about the effectiveness of the variety of interventions and knowledge products remains anecdotal at best. This poses challenges for the ILO to confidently advance models, tools and strategies for scale and replication, and for understanding project contributions to impact and sustainability.
Context and any related preconditions	Many of the tools and model bylaws introduced by this project were mandated by law. There are 7 Provinces and 753 municipalities in the country that have to comply. The project worked in 2 provinces and two municipalities. There was no M&E expert on the team. Logframe indicators changed frequently, and were almost always output indicators. Some indicators included verifiable targets, but many were not measurable, and even some that were, lacked a baseline or system for tracking.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Country Office and technical experts responsible for future programme design and staffing.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	In an effort to be "responsive" to changing government priorities (and changes in government), the project set outcome indicators aside after the first year. Logframes included lists of activities (inputs) clustered under broad operational headings--outputs. Reliance on output indicators offers only insight into what was done, not what resulted or why. Further, reliance on output indicators can contribute to an implementation mind set which is reactive to immediate requests, but potentially not responsive to strategic goals.

<p>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</p>	<p>An activity-focused output approach enabled a great deal of short term flexibility.</p>
<p>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</p>	<p>A monitoring and learning framework needs to be built into design efforts, with measurable output and outcome indicators. M&E expertise is essential in a policy project that is introducing new approaches and tools.</p>

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Skills for Employment-Technical Assistance (SEP-TA)

Project TC/SYMBOL: NPL/17/01/GBR

Name of Evaluator: Laurie Zivetz, Ishan Ghimire

Date: August, 2021

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<p>Policy projects require time and confidence building. The SEP-TA project was implemented during a time of significant change in Nepal. The dynamic context offered both challenges and opportunities to reaching project goals for mainstreaming employment policy particularly at provincial and municipality levels, and finalizing sensitive legislation on labour migration.</p> <p>The ILO strengthened its historically good relationship with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in the course of this project, responding to a range of requests at several levels of government. Multiple stakeholders remarked that the ILO as an international, specialist aid agency—enjoyed a particularly trusted advisory position because of confidence built over time. Observers also pointed to government perceptions of ILO responsiveness—as distinguished from imposing an agenda. Reliance on local expertise also enhanced trust.</p> <p>All of these factors helped the ILO move project goals forward. At the end of the day, however, even without the obstacles this particular project faced, major policy change requires a time horizon which can exceed a single project cycle.</p>
Context and any related preconditions	<p>Although the ILO had a long and trusted relationship the project launched during a period in which a new constitution had just been ratified, government restructuring was underway, new laws were still embedding and major national employment-related programs launching with multiple cabinet reshuffles over the life of the project. Shocks resulting from the COVID pandemic affected government priorities and attention.</p>
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	<p>ILO technical experts engaged in project design and implementation. Consultation with stakeholders .</p>

<p>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</p>	<p>Trust building requires patience, flexibility, and compromise (including with initial objectives). These can be inconsistent with project cycle timelines, targets, considered best practice approaches, and at times overall strategic goals.</p>
<p>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</p>	<p>The ILO’s projected long term presence in Nepal reassures government and social partners of continuity, and contributes to confidence building.</p>
<p>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</p>	<p>Design needs to include realistic timelines, a risk assessment, and opportunities for course correction.</p>

11.2 Emerging good practices in ILO template

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template	
<p>Project Title: Skills for Employment-Technical Assistance (SEP-TA)</p> <p>Project TC/SYMBOL: NPL/17/01/GBR</p> <p>Name of Evaluator: Laurie Zivetz, Ishan Ghimire</p> <p>Date: : August, 2021</p> <p>The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.</p>	
GP Element	Text
<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>The Skills for Employment Project of the FCDO aimed to promote jobs and reduce Nepal’s dependence on labour migration. ILO’s SEP-TA component addressed advancing employment and migration laws and policies. As part of SEP-TA, the ILO promoted the establishment of social dialogue mechanisms in two of Nepal’s most commercially active provinces and four municipalities in one of those provinces. These tripartite mechanisms were required under the new Labour Law (2017). Their establishment also signaled an important milestone in the previously contentious relationship between employer organizations and trade unions in the country.</p> <p>The ILO drew on its historical, trusted relationships with the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), national trade unions and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MOLESS). It worked with local chambers, trade union chapters and provincial and municipality governments to support the establishment of the social dialogue mechanisms. Inputs included: technical assistance and facilitation from a senior social dialogue expert (based nearby in the regional ILO office in Delhi); sharing relevant models and experience of social dialogue mechanisms from other countries; development and translation of relevant knowledge products (for instance grievance handling and collective bargaining tools). The process built capacity and ownership. By the end of the project, two Provincial Labour Advisory Council (PLAC) had a legal framework, and one (in Lumbini Province) was ratified and operational. Municipality labour desks designed for information sharing about new entitlement programs and local dispute resolution received similar types of inputs and by the end of the project, frameworks were in place.</p> <p>Importantly, the ILO kept national level stakeholders on the Central Level Advisory Council (CLAC) engaged in the process, which was contributed to the legitimacy of the process at provincial level, and set the stage for national leadership in replication across the country. Over the life of the project, the ILO also helped convene tripartite and bipartite dialogue on key national issues such as minimum wage and response to business closures and job layoffs as a result of COVID—maintaining social dialogue engagement at all levels. While too early to say, signs are good that the mechanisms will be used and useful, moving tripartite partners beyond prior logjams.</p>

<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>Labour relations in Nepal have been tense, aggravated by a lack of useful fora for dispute resolution, and stakeholder capacities. Tripartite structures are well established at national level, but social partners are readjusting their representation in the new federalized system. The newly federalized structure, and regulatory requirements provided a statutory impetus to project work.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>Inputs led to the establishment of the PLAC framework in two provinces, and ratification in one. As far as the evaluation team is aware, no other provinces have established a PLAC to date (although efforts in one other province are being encouraged via the national Joint Trade Union Coordination Committee (JTUCC).</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>The legal framework for the PLAC and labour desks is in place in two provinces and four municipalities in one of the provinces respectively. The PLAC has been approved by one provincial government and has reportedly met on several occasions to discuss emerging labour issues—largely related to the pandemic. Unfortunately the several year process leading up to these outcomes is not well documented, and there was no learning framework that would inform replication. The evaluation spoke with ILO and a handful of national level stakeholders about the achievements reported here, but no tripartite representatives in the provinces or municipalities. More evidence about contributing success factors would inform plans for replication.</p>
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>There are seven provinces and 753 municipalities in Nepal, and social dialogue mechanisms need to be established in each. Commercial activity varies considerably across the country, so priorities, presence and capacity of tripartite partners will also vary. It’s fair to say that most will require support to advance a legal frameworks, budget, and operational approaches appropriate for each context. The ILO invested a lot in helping the PLAC in Provinces 2 and 5 to launch—an investment that is unlikely replicable. Knowledge products and tools are in place however. After user input and a gender analysis are integrated, dissemination of these tools will contribute to replication. Other types of capacity strengthening—for local governments, reforming trade union chapters of chambers of commerce under the new federalized structure—will also assist. Cross-pollination of experience and drawing on local expertise offer value for money.</p>
<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>Priority 2 in ILOs DWCP 2018-22 is directly relevant: <i>Strengthening institutional capacities, enhance social dialogue, and applying fundamental conventions and other international labour standards</i></p>
<p>Other documents or relevant comments</p>	

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

Project Title: Skills for Employment-Technical Assistance (SEP-TA)

Project TC/SYMBOL: NPL/17/01/GBR

Name of Evaluator: Laurie Zivetz, Ishan Ghimire

Date: : August, 2021

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

GP Element	Text
<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>The Skills for Employment Project was a major initiative of the FCDO aimed to promote jobs and reduce the country’s dependence on labour migration. ILO’s SEP-TA component provided technical assistance designed to move employment and migration laws and policies forward. The ILO’s longstanding relationship with key government ministries and a responsive posture even in the face of frequent changes in cabinet leadership and political priorities, contributed to continuity and trust. This enabled the ILO to contribute to the policy process. Insider or former insider Nepali experts were instrumental in championing a policy vision. All of the factors were particularly critical at moments when government partners were less directed, progressive, or capacitated, and when government changes disrupted focus.</p> <p>Trust at the national level also translated into confidence building in newly established provincial and municipality centers, where capacity was stretched and policy mandates for generating employment strategies and tripartite mechanisms immediate.</p> <p>While the project achieved a lot in the employment space, it got less traction on the more politically sensitive and multi-stakeholder issues related to labour migration. None the less, the trusted relationship undoubtedly contributed to the invitation for the ILO to help draft the national plan of action for the Nepal’s Global Compact on Migration.</p>
<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>The project cycle may be insufficient for moving policy initiatives forward. Continuity of relationship and a responsive posture are key.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>Multiple observers noted that the ILO retained a special advisory status to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security attributed to its particular expertise and lack of a policy specific agenda.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>This is a generic recommendation related to a modality for operation.</p>

<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>Consultations in the development of DWCP and Country Programme Outcomes in with key national stakeholder agencies may contribute trust and shared policy perspectives. Expertise from the ILO to address felt programmatic and policy needs of these partners also served to mainstream and operationalize higher ILO goals.</p>
<p>Other documents or relevant comments</p>	

11.3 List of persons interviewed

ILO

Mr. Richard Howard	Country Director
Mr. Prakash Sharma	National Project Coordinator
Mr. Saurabh Shah	National Project Officer
Dr. Biswo Poudel	Senior Economist, ILO Consultant
Mr Paguman Singh	Social Security Expert, ILO Consultant
Mr Uddhav Poudyal	Mid Term Evaluator, SEP-TA
Mr. Ravindra Peiris	Senior Specialist on Employers, ILO Decent Work Team, Delhi
Mr. Basanta Karki	ex-Migration Officer, National Project Coordinator/MIRIDEW, ILO
Mr. Mahandra Naidoo	Senior Specialist on Labour Administration and Social Dialogue, ILO Decent Work Team, Delhi
Dr. Swarim Wagle	Senior PEA consultant, ILO

Government

Dr. Narayan Regmi	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, chief of planning division in MoLESS
Ms. Guma Devi Acharya	Deputy Mayor, Butwal Municipality
Mr. Keshav Aryal	Undersecretary, Previously at Ministry of Social Development, Lumbini Province
Mr. Kapil Mani Gyawali	Executive Director, Social Security Fund
Mr. Madhav Pokarel	Section Officer, Tilottama Municipality

Social Partners

Mr. Hansa Ram Pandey	Senior Expert, FNCCI
Mr. Hari Paudel	Assistant Director, FNCCI
Ms. Reeta Simha	President, FWEAN
Ms. Anamika Singh Bhandary	Executive Director, FWEAN
Mr. Dhan Bahadur BK	Vice President, ANTUF
Mr. Bidur Karki	Vice President, GEFONT
Mr. Indra Deo Yadav	CEO, NTUC

Expert organizations

Mr. Nilambar Badal	Project Coordinator Law and Policy Forum for Social Justice (LAPSOJ)
Dr. Pukar Malla	Founder and Chair, Daayitwa
Dr. Jeevan Baniya	Assistant Director, Centre for the Study of Labor and Mobility (CESLAM)

Other

Mr Robert Clark	Private Sector Development Advisor, FCDO
Mr. Kavindra Subba	Project Manager, FCDO
Ms. Jasmine Rajbhandary	Senior Social Protection Specialist, World Bank, Nepal
Ms. Samikshya Gurung	Daayitwa fellow

11.4 Terms of Reference

Call for interest for a principal and national evaluator for the final independent evaluation of ILO Technical Assistance Component - Skills for Employment Programme (FCDO-SEP Project)

Terms of Reference

Title of Project	ILO Technical Assistance Component of Skills for Employment Programme (SEP)
TC CODE	NPL/17/01/GBR
Administrative Unit	ILO Kathmandu
Technical Backstopping Units	DWT-Delhi ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia, New Delhi (DWT-New Delhi); Employment Policy Department, Geneva
Donor	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UK <i>(formerly known as Department for International Development, DFID)</i>
Implementation Partners	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS); Employer Organization (FNCCI and selected affiliates, CNI); Trade Union Federations (GEFONT, NTUC, ANTUF); Youth organization (Daayitwa); migration workers' organizations (TAF, LAPSOJ); other stakeholders.
Type of Evaluation	Independent Final Evaluation
Timing of Evaluation	June-July 2021
Project budget	GBP 2.9 million
Project duration	4 years (August 2017 – July 2021)

Introduction

These terms of reference are a call for interest for a principal and national evaluator to lead and support, respectively, the final, independent evaluation of the DFID-funded ILO Technical Assistance - Skills for Employment Programme (SEP), which is scheduled to end in July 2021.

The evaluation of this development cooperation project is an assessment of the intervention, focusing on what worked, what didn't work (and why this was the case), and the lessons learned. The evaluation process also examines if the best

approach was taken, and if it was optimally executed. The evaluation will structure its enquiry around the OECD DAC pillars of a project’s relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and contribution to broader impact, as well as the suitability of project design to ILO’s strategic and national decent work programme frameworks.

This evaluation will be an independent final evaluation, conducted by external, independent evaluators selected in consultation with the Regional Evaluation Officer of ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok and managed by an evaluation manager from ILO Headquarters in Geneva. Key stakeholders, ILO constituents, partners and the donor will be consulted throughout the evaluation process.

Project Background

The project falls under [ILO Programme & Budget Policy Outcome 3](#): Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all. It also contributes to the realisation of [SDG 8](#) and [SDG 10](#).

With a total budget of US\$ 3.7million, the project has undertaken activities in Nepal since 2017 to provide Nepali workers with more productive domestic employment opportunities by filling skill gaps in both formal and informal sectors, with a focus on sectors that are instrumental for transformational economic growth in Nepal. The overall aim of the project has been to support domestic employment creation and reduce long-term dependency on migration, whilst recognising the importance of migration as a source of work for Nepali workers. The project undertook a mid-term evaluation in January 2021.

The project is a response to a number of factors affecting the country’s economic growth. Systemic constraints, such as political instability, poor infrastructure, the persistence of structural inequalities and an unattractive business environment are among the principal obstacles facing Nepali economic development. These are compounded by a disproportionate dependency on remittances that constitute as much as 30% of the nation’s GDP and high levels of informality.

These impediments have curtailed the economy’s capacity to absorb the growing numbers of people entering the workforce. An estimated 400,000 people enter the labour force every year, of which the labour market is only able to absorb around 10%.

As a response, the project has implemented a number of activities with the aim of:

- (i) improving coordination and partnerships for job creation in Nepal;
- (ii) improving implementation of the relevant laws and policies for better functioning of the labour market and for addressing barriers to decent work;
- (iii) strengthening and supporting the implementation of national policies to enhance the governance of labour migration in Nepal; and
- (iv) strengthening bilateral and provincial mechanisms to improve Nepali migrant workers’ access to better jobs.

These activities were carried out under a management structure, within which the ILO acted as the executing agency. The direct project partners were the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the National Planning Commission and the Prime Minister’s Office, Workers’ organizations and Employers’ organizations. The ILO also worked closely with other government partners (e.g.: Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports) as necessary.

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established to provide advice on the direction of the project. The PSC also facilitated coordination across various stakeholders to ensure the project’s maximum impact were achieved and to ensure sustainability of the project. The PSC comprised of representatives from key Government partners, workers’ organizations, employers’ organizations (private sector), donor partners, and youth organization(s).

Purpose, Scope and Clients

Purpose

This evaluation is being conducted as the final, independent evaluation ahead of the project's end on 31st July 2021. This final evaluation is being carried out with the following objectives:

- Determine (i) the relevance of the project's interventions; (ii) the efficiency of the project's implementation and (iii) its effectiveness; (iv) the impact that the project has had on development progress in the areas of its operation; and (v) the degree of sustainability of the project's interventions.
- Identify gaps and limitations in project implementation and offer recommendations for improvement to support the design of future projects in the country.
- Identify better practices and lessons learnt to be taken advantage of in future similar initiatives.

Recommendations will be used to improve the implementation of future projects and programmes; to enhance accountability; and to generate learning both for the ILO and key stakeholders.

Scope

The evaluation will take into account all activities undertaken between the design of the project and the beginning of the final evaluation. It will also consider interventions under migration component that have been delivered in coordination with ILO's MIRIDEW project.

The evaluation is expected to integrate at all stages of the methodology and all deliverables (including the final report) the ILO's cross-cutting issues, namely international labour standards; social dialogue and non-discrimination (including disability inclusion). The evaluation is also expected to give specific attention to the project's relevance to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels, including the national Decent Work Country Framework, the national United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals.

With respect to gender equality, this guidance implies (i) applying gender analysis by involving both men and women in consultation and evaluation's analysis, (ii) inclusion of data disaggregated by sex and gender in the analysis and justification of project documents; (iii) the formulation of gender-sensitive strategies and objectives and gender-specific indicators; (iv) inclusion of qualitative methods and use of mix of methodologies, (v) forming a gender-balanced team, and (vi) assessing outcomes to improve lives of women and men.

The evaluation process is expected to commence with the briefing and onboarding of the selected evaluator between 24th-28th May. The evaluation will conclude at the end of July 2021.

The evaluation is expected to cover the following project components:

1. Establish result-based evaluation framework:

- Assess the coherence and logic of project's design and, whether the project adapted to any changes in the economic, political and development circumstances in Nepal, including to changes in the operating environment due to the COVID19 pandemic;
- Assess the project design in terms of its relevance to the overall development situation at the national level. This will include its relevance to national strategies, ILOs' DWCP program framework and relevance to beneficiaries' needs;
- Assess performance of the project in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness of producing the expected outputs (including intended and unintended, positive and negative results) as stated in the original project document; and the factors that hindered or facilitated achievement of the objectives;
- Assess the complementarity and synergies between the project components' interventions, as well as the impact and sustainability of these interventions.

2. Evaluate and report on progress and results:

- Assess the quality and timeliness of inputs, the reporting and evaluation system and extent to which these have been effective;
- Assess relevance of the project’s management arrangements; identify advantages, bottlenecks and lessons learned with regard to these management arrangements;
- Identify constraints, failures, achievements and best practices and propose recommendations to make adjustments to ensure the smooth execution of future projects;
- Assess efficiency of resource use; and
- Assess the likelihood of extension and sustainability of the interventions.

3. Document good practices and lessons learned:

- Analyze the ILO’s reaction to underlying factors beyond ILO’s control that affected the achievement of the project outcomes;
- Outline project good practices.

Clients and stakeholders

- Primary Clients:
 - Skills for Employment Programme (SEP)
 - Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
 - The ILO SEP Project Team
 - ILO Country Office for Nepal
 - DWT-New Delhi (ILO Decent Work Country Team)
 - ROAP (ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)
- Secondary clients are other stakeholders, including national and provincial workers’ and employers’ organisations, and other government bodies.

The direct beneficiaries of the project are the ILO’s tripartite partners, civil society organisations (e.g. at least one youth organisation), private sector (e.g. research organisations) and the Asia Foundation. The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are young Nepalis; prospective labour migrants; Nepali migrant workers; and women and disadvantaged groups.

Evaluation Criteria and Questions

These questions will consider core evaluation criteria (e.g. relevance and validity of the design, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) against the initiatives carried out throughout the life of the Project.

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

The following themes are deemed to cut across all aspects of the scope of the evaluation and are to be taken into consideration during data collection.

- (i) the normative and tripartite mandate of the ILO;
- (ii) gender equality, non-discrimination and the inclusion of people with disabilities
- (iii) a just transition to environmental sustainability;
- (iv) responsiveness to the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030; and
- (v) COVID-19 response measures.

Relevance and Validity of the Design

- To what extent was the project design linked to ILOs' DWCP framework?
- To what extent does the Government of Nepal consider that the project contributed to their larger framework?
- To what extent were project objectives consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements?
- To what extent were the project design (objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities) and its underlining theory of change logical and responsive to the development challenges identified?
- How appropriate and useful were the indicators described in the project document in assessing the project's progress? If necessary, how may they have been reformulated to be more useful? To what extent were indicators gender sensitive?
- Were any lessons learned from previous projects in the area?
- Were the outputs achievable or overly ambitious?
- Were risks assessed in an appropriate manner?

Coherence

- To what extent did the project succeed in adapting to the socio-economic challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- In what ways did the Project align with or perhaps contradict other interventions carried out by ILO Nepal, the Government and/or the national social partners?
- Have there been new intervening factors/actors (e.g. other donor assisted programmes) that may have impaired or enhanced project performance or future ILO development assistance?
 - Are there ways in which the ILO could capitalize on synergies and improve collaboration with these new actors? Possible duplication of effort/resources is to be considered.

Effectiveness (including effectiveness of management arrangement)

- How effective was the Project's coordination with the social partners?
- To what extent was gender mainstreaming addressed in the design and implementation of the project?
- To what extent did the capacity of project management and the management arrangements put in place support and/or hinder the achievement of the planned results?
- To what extent has the project achieved its objectives? And are there any differences in the results obtained across social groups?

Efficiency

- To what extent has the project delivered value for money?
- How well were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) allocated or used strategically to achieve the planned results? Have they been delivered in a timely manner? If not, what were the factors that hindered timely delivery of outputs? Where possible, intervention benefits and related costs of integrated gender equality is to be analysed.
- To what extent have the project resources been leveraged with other related interventions to maximize impact, if any?
- Was the methodology of implementation the right one under the circumstances?
- Was the budget spent according to the proposed budget lines?
- Was the rate of delivery acceptable under the circumstances and according to plan?

Sustainability

- To what extent are the project results likely to be durable?
- To what extent can the project results be maintained or even scaled up/replicated by other partners beyond project completion?
- What are the areas of engagement that should be continued? What are the areas that need further emphasis?
- How effective was the project in establishing national ownership?
- To what extent have government institutions benefited from policy dialogue support and process etc.?

Impact

- To what extent has the project contributed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to higher-level and/or systemic changes?
- How have interventions made as part of the project affected the socio-economic and/or environmental state of the locations in which it operated?

Methodology

The methodology should include examining the intervention's Theory of Change (or reconstruct one if the TOC is not in place) with particular attention to assumptions, risks and mitigations strategies and the logical connect between levels of results and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at global and national levels as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets.

The final evaluation is expected to include both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, leading to conclusions that benefit from credibility based on triangulated findings. The evaluation may also include photographs and short case studies that demonstrate the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations.

Data sources will include primary and secondary data. The former will centre around meetings with key stakeholders of the project and the inclusion of inputs from meetings and discussions with the ILO Country Director; ILO staff; and key stakeholders, including constituents and technical partner. Secondary data will include project documents, including

previous evaluation reports, progress reports, training reports, minutes, reports from partners, relevant correspondence and others as deemed appropriate.

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

Key here will be desk review that will analyse project and other documentation including the approved log frame, periodic progress reports to donors, research products, tools, mission reports, seminar and stakeholder consultation reports, concept notes and any other related documentation provided by the project management and backstopping officers. The desk review will suggest a number of initial findings that in turn may point to additional or fine-tuned evaluation questions. Any fundamental changes should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluator, and reflected in the inception report. This will guide the final evaluation instrument to be included in the evaluation inception report. The evaluator will review the documents before conducting interviews.

More specifically the following documents will be shared with the evaluator at the commencement of the work:

1. Project Documents, respective Work Plans and Logical Frameworks
2. Periodic Progress Reports submitted to the donors
3. All studies and reports produced for and by the Project to support the stated outcomes
4. Reports submitted by the implementing partners
5. All other relevant documents and publications

The evaluation process will be participatory. All key stakeholders identified by the project team will have the opportunity to be consulted, to provide inputs to the TOR and to the evaluation report, and to use the evaluation findings and lessons learnt, as appropriate. Consultation modality selection and meetings will be made in accordance with COVID-19 related restrictions.

An inception report will be prepared followed by a draft evaluation report, which will be shared with all relevant stakeholders and a request for comments will be asked within a specified time (not more than 5 working days).

Main Outputs

This section is to be read in conjunction with the proposed work plan and timeframe. The consultants will be contracted to produce the following main outputs, to be led by the principal evaluator and supported by the national evaluator. Quality of the reports will be assessed against the relevant ILO Evaluation Checklists.

1. An inception report containing justification and details of the action to be carried out and agreed prior to the commencement of work. The inception report should be developed in line with ILO [Checklist 3](#).
The consultant will be expected to include in the inception report a list of anticipated risks, the likelihood of such risks and measures to be undertaken to mitigate these. All data gathering mechanisms and methods used should be disaggregated by sex. Evaluation methodology and subsequent analysis should address gender concerns. Linkages should be identified between data sources, data collection methods, and analysis methods.
2. A draft evaluation report following a structure similar to that described in ILO [Checklist 5](#). This will include the standard [ILO Title Page](#).
3. Evaluation summary (a maximum of four pages following ILO guidance) in line with the [standard ILO Template](#) and the guidance provided in [ILO Checklist 8](#).
4. A final evaluation report incorporating and/or responding to all stakeholders' comments.

5. (Principal Evaluator) The templates for [lessons learnt](#) and [emerging good practices](#) duly completed.
6. (Principal and National Evaluator) Three factsheets translated into Nepali, in line with ILO branding, targeted to the needs of each national ILO constituent containing:
 - a. A summary of the project results concerning the work and priorities of the ILO constituent in question.
 - b. Detailed points on the challenges, better practices, lessons learnt and recommendations concerning the work and priorities of the ILO constituent in question.
7. A PowerPoint presentation in line with ILO branding presenting the key findings and recommendations to be shared with ILO and key stakeholders and the incorporation of stakeholder comments into the draft evaluation report.

The evaluators should plan for a critical reflection process and quality communication and reporting of evaluation outcomes (which may include debriefing the National Project Coordinator, Country Director and other key stakeholders).

Management Arrangements

Principal Evaluator

The final evaluation will be carried out by an independent consultant recruited by the evaluation manager, Mr. Adam Adrien-Kirby based at ILO Headquarters (Geneva), in coordination with the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions, the Principal Evaluator will be home-based without travel. In the interest of maintaining independence and impartiality, the principal evaluator will report to the evaluation manager, who is also an independent party without any connection to the design or implementation of the project or of any associated interventions.

National Evaluator

The national evaluator is anticipated to support the principal evaluator in the development of the draft and final evaluation reports. This work will include supporting the principal evaluator to design the evaluation process in line with the national context. The national evaluator will also provide support in arranging and conducting interviews, and by collecting other primary quantitative and/or qualitative data that may be required but are not accessible at a distance. In the interest of maintaining independence and impartiality, the national evaluator will report technical matters relating to the evaluation to the principal evaluator and all administrative/contractual matters to the evaluation manager, who is also an independent party without any connection to the design or implementation of the project or of any associated interventions.

Quality assurance & formatting requirements

Quality recommendations in the evaluation report must meet the criteria below. The evaluator should refer to [ILO Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation](#) for further guidance.

1. Recommendations are based on findings and conclusions of the report.
2. Recommendations are clear, concise, constructive and of relevance to the intended user(s).
3. Recommendations are realistic and actionable (including who is called upon to act and recommended timeframe).

The ILO Guidelines also provide formatting requirements for evaluation reports, establishing in particular the following criteria, whereby recommendations should be

1. Actionable and time-bound with clear indication to whom the recommendation is addressed;

2. Written in two to three sentences of concise text;
3. Numbered (no bullet points) and
4. No more than twelve.
5. Presented at the end of the body of the main report, and the concise statement should be
6. Copied over into the Executive Summary and the Evaluation Summary (that is, the concise statements of recommendations should be verbatim identical in the recommendation section of the main body of the report, the Executive Summary, and the Evaluation Summary).

The consultant will be required to submit all written outputs in conformity with the ILO's branding scheme, templates of which will be provided.

Proposed work plan and timeframe

The evaluation process is expected to commence with the briefing and onboarding of the selected evaluator between 24th-28th May. The evaluation will proceed with the development of the inception report at the beginning of June and, subsequently, data collection and analysis. The evaluation will conclude with any possible oral presentations/debriefings and the submission of all written outputs at the end of July 2021. A total number of 28 (principal evaluator) and 27 (national evaluator) working days are anticipated.

Phase	Responsible Person	Tasks /Activities	Proposed number of working days
1 (24 May-1 June)	Evaluation Manager / Project Manager / Principal and National Evaluator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal and national evaluator briefing and introductions • Desk review • Submission of inception report on or before 1st June • Validation of inception report on or before 4th June 	7
2 (7th – 25th June)	Principal and National Evaluator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection and analysis • Preparation of draft report, evaluation summary and PowerPoint presentation 	15
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present findings and recommendations to key stakeholder group • Incorporate comments from stakeholders into draft report for submission to the Evaluation Manager. 	1
3 (28th – 2nd July)	Evaluation Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation of draft report to stakeholders • Stakeholder review and compilation of comments received by ILO 	0
4 (5th-16th July)	Principal and National Evaluator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalization of all written documentation • Translation of factsheets 	3 (Principal) 2 (National)
Total :			28/27 working days

Legal and ethical matters

The evaluation will comply with UN Norms and Standards. The evaluator will be required to sign and abide by the [ILO Code of Conduct for Evaluators](#) while carrying out the evaluation. [UN Evaluation Group \(UNEG\) ethical guidelines](#) will be followed. The consultant should not have any links to project management, or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.

The evaluation report and its contents are the property of the ILO. All draft and final outputs, including supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible with Microsoft Office for Windows.

Ownership of data from the evaluation rests jointly with the ILO and the consultant. The copyright of the evaluation report will rest exclusively with the ILO. The use of data for publication and other presentations can only be made with written agreement of the ILO. Key stakeholders can make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

Qualifications and competencies

The principal evaluator will be required to:

- have an excellent internet connection that can support virtual interviews and meetings
- be proficient in written and spoken English or a native English speaker (knowledge of Nepali would be an advantage)
- exercise excellent facilitation and communication skills, employs tact and diplomacy when working with non-governmental organisations
- have proven experience in conducting objective and candid qualitative research including developing the necessary methodology and assessment tools
- be experienced in conducting interviews e.g. one-to-one interviews, focus groups, etc.
- pay excellent attention to detail and have strong planning and prioritisation skills
- be independent and impartial when interpreting results and providing recommendations
- be able to work with minimal supervision as well as effectively within a group
- be familiar with or have an interest in the field of labour rights, employment and/or social dialogue, particularly in Nepal or the Asia-Pacific region

The national evaluator will be required to:

- have an excellent internet connection that can support virtual interviews and meetings
- be proficient in written and spoken English and a native Nepali speaker
- have proven experience in conducting objective and candid qualitative research
- be experienced in conducting interviews e.g. one-to-one interviews, focus groups, etc.
- pay excellent attention to detail
- be able to work with minimal supervision as well as effectively within a group
- be familiar with or have an interest in the field of labour rights, employment and/or social dialogue, particularly in Nepal or the Asia-Pacific region

11.5 Inception report (with EQ Matrix and data collection protocols)

ILO Technical Assistance Component – Skills for Employment Programme (SEP- TA), Nepal

Inception Report

Laurie Zivetz and Ishan Ghimire, Independent Evaluators

June 2021

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1. Introduction

The Skills for Employment Program (SEP) is an ambitious initiative designed to *support domestic employment creation and reduce long term dependency on migration whilst recognizing the importance of migration as a source of work for Nepali workers*.²⁶ The project was funded by the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) and provides up to £29.5m between 2015 and 2022. There are four program components/outputs: 1) Skills systems strengthening, innovation and delivery for domestic jobs; 2) Migration for development; 3) Skills for reconstruction; 4) Technical assistance to Government of Nepal (GoN) on policy and coordination.²⁷ The ILO was one of a number of implementing partners under the SEP, and was responsible for implementing Output 4 of the SEP program (SEP-TA). The component provided technical assistance to the three tiers of Government (national, provincial and municipal) related to employment, labour and foreign employment laws, regulations, policies and governance. Consistent with the ILO's DWCP strategy, the ILO's mandate included cooperation with other tripartite partners---business and labour unions--and prioritized inclusion of youth and women as participants and beneficiaries. Outcomes anticipated in the original proposal were:

Outcome 1. Improved coordination and partnerships for job creation in Nepal

Outcome 2. Improved implementation of the relevant laws and policies for better functioning of the labour market and for addressing barriers to decent work.

Outcome 3. National Policies strengthened and implemented to enhance the governance of labour migration in Nepal

Outcome 4. Bilateral and regional mechanisms strengthened to improve Nepali migrant workers' access to better jobs.

The ILO component had an overall budget of £2.9 million (approx. 10 percent of the SEP funding).

This inception report describes an approach to the final evaluation of the SEP-TA project, and covers the project period August 2017-June 2021.

2. The context and the project

The project launched at a time of significant political and development change in Nepal. Although the business case for SEP was made in 2015, the aftermath of the earthquake in 2015 required significant reorientation of SEP activities. Moreover, the new Nepalese constitution was enacted in late 2015 which paved the way for federalization of political and governing structures. General elections for federal and provincial assemblies were held in November-December 2017 and the new Government of Nepal (GoN) embarked on an ambitious administrative restructuring towards a federalist system with greater policy and management authority vested in the 7 provincial governments and 753 local bodies (municipalities and rural municipalities). A new Labour Act was enacted in September 2017. Between 2016 and 2021, two periodic plans of the government (14th and 15th) were issued. Both plans had similar goals: to increase domestic employment and make labour migration safe, dignified and systematic. However the 15th Periodic Plan (2019/20 -2023/24) places more emphasis on increasing productivity at home through an emphasis on domestic employment generation, noting systematic risks related with foreign employment. The Plan encourages an end to what is referred to as “compulsive” foreign employment.

In February 2019, the Rs12billion (\$10m) Prime Ministers' Employment Program (PMEP) was launched and became a centerpiece of government efforts to position the domestic economy for the future. However,

²⁶ ILO, Terms of reference, Call for interest for a principal and national evaluator for the final independent evaluation of ILO Technical Assistance Component- Skills for Employment Programme (FCDO-SEP Project), u/d

²⁷ FCDO, Annual Progress Report on SEP, 2018-2019, August 2019

implementation of the PMEP and indeed realization of the new Labour Law in practice were hampered by horizontal and vertical capacity deficits which were most pronounced at lower levels of the newly federated government. The COVID pandemic in the last year and a half of the project curtailed a number of planned activities, and raised new challenges, as government, businesses and worker organizations scrambled to support shuttered businesses, laid off workers and the unemployed, and stranded and returning migrants.

These transitions offered significant opportunities and inevitable challenges to the project. Laws and policies needed to be updated and provinces and local bodies -- now responsible for a vast array of local development activities including employment and labour -- needed plans, capacity and collaborative partnerships with business and employee associations to make those plans work and meet the challenges of the day.

The project design was guided by and aligned with three frameworks namely, the Decent Work Country Program (2013-17), Program and Budget for the Biennium 2016-17, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The outcomes listed in the proposal matched with the three priorities agreed in the DWCP between the GoN and the ILO: 1) to promote employment and inclusive growth; 2) to improve labour market and industrial relations; and 3) to promote fundamental principles and rights to growth. Similarly, the program design aligned with 5 out of the 10 outcomes in the ILO P&B Biennium 2016-17: Outcome 1 – More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects; Outcome 2 -Ratification and application of international labour standards; Outcome 3 - Creating and extending social protection floors; Outcome 9 - Fair and effective international labour migration policies; and Outcome 10 - Strong and representative employers’ and workers’ organization. Outcomes in the project proposal were also aimed to complement the SDG Goal 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

In the course of the project, the ILO revised objectives and strategies several times in response to shifting government priorities and directives from FCDO. The original proposal included four outcomes with supporting outputs and indicators. By 2019/2020 there were nine outputs.²⁸ Overall changes reflect growing attention to domestic economic development and away from labour migration.

Outcomes listed in Proposal (2017)	Output indicator in SEP Logframe
1: Improved coordination and partnerships for job creation in Nepal.	Improvements to laws, regulations, systems, innovation or coordination in Employment policies skills and migration.
2: Improved implementation of the relevant laws and policies for better labour market functioning and for addressing specific barriers to decent work for the most marginalised.	
3: National policies strengthened and implemented to enhance the governance of labour migration in Nepal.	
4: Bilateral and regional mechanisms strengthened to improve Nepali migrant workers’ access to better jobs.	

Outputs in project proposal (2017)	Sub-Outputs, 2020/21 Q3 Report ²⁹
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²⁹ In the ILO and FCDO Annual reports for 2019/20, Output 4.2 was repeated with different activities and milestones under the two outputs. There were 10 Outputs listed. This was streamlined in the next quarterly report; the 9 final outputs are presented here.

1.1 Partnerships are established with relevant stakeholders for increased coordination on job creation.	4.1 Technical assistance to domestic employment policies
1.2 Sectoral Ministries enabled to develop sectoral strategies for job creation.	4.2 Technical Assistance to Municipal Governments to develop and implement job creation strategies
1.3 Youth advocacy on job creation strengthened through advocacy pilots and interventions by youth organisations.	4.3 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels
2.1. Improved institutional and analytical capacities of the FNCCI to analyse the business environment and influence the development and implementation of policies and legislation that support private sector growth.	4.4 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law
2.2. Strengthened capacity of the Government of Nepal to implement the Labour Law and Social Protection Act.	4.5 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the Social Security Act.
2.3. Improved capacity of the Labour Office, and of Workers' and Employers' organisations, to carry out collective bargaining functions. Stakeholders enabled for tackling barriers to formal and productive work for the most marginalised.	4.6 Technical Assistance to Federal and State Governments to revise, develop and implement laws and policies to support labour migrants
3.1. National legislation and regulations on labour migration revised or drafted, following consultation with social partners.	4.7 Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal at all levels to improve the national legal and policy framework for labour migration governance.
3.2. Administrative capacity enhanced at the central and provincial levels, to support data/information, administrative and operational functions, redress mechanisms and services to migrants and their families.	4.8 Technical Assistance to GoN to identify, scope and provide access to new labour markets
4.1 MOUs and BLAs signed and implemented with countries of destination to promote better wages and working conditions for Nepali women and men.	4.9 Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal to develop new BLAs and MoUs according to international standards
4.2 Innovative model to promote fair recruitment into an identified sector and country of destination designed.	
4.3 Information on labour market needs in countries of destination is collected and analysed in a systematic manner, and used to inform skills training programmes.	
4.4 Regional cooperation and platforms on labour migration strengthened through the implementation of identified areas of regional cooperation.	

3. Methodology

The evaluation relies on two main sources of information: documents and stakeholder interviews. It is undertaken by a two-person team, an international and Nepali evaluator, during the period June-August, 2021.

Evaluation questions provided in the ToR were refined based on early document review and approved by the Evaluation Manager. They are:

Relevance and Validity of the Design

1. To what extent was the project design linked to ILOs' DWCP framework?
2. How does the project link with and align with GoN's larger framework on employment and labour migration?
3. To what extent were project objectives consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements?
4. To what extent were the project design (objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities) and its underlining theory of change logical and responsive to the development challenges identified?
5. How appropriate and useful were the indicators described in the project document in assessing the project's progress? If necessary, how may they have been reformulated to be more useful? To what extent were indicators gender sensitive?
6. Were risks assessed in an appropriate manner?

Coherence

9. To what extent did the project succeed in adapting to the socio-economic challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
10. In what ways did the Project align with or perhaps contradict other interventions carried out by ILO Nepal, the Government and/or the national social partners?
11. How effectively did the project support the broader goals of the SEP program?

Effectiveness (including effectiveness of management arrangement)

12. How responsive was the project to the needs of GoN?
13. How responsive was the project to the needs of the social partners?
14. To what extent was gender mainstreaming addressed in the design and implementation of the project?
15. To what extent did the capacity of project management and the management arrangements put in place support and/or hinder the achievement of the planned results?
16. To what extent has the project achieved its objectives? And are there any differences in the results obtained across social groups?

Efficiency

16. To what extent has the project delivered value for money?
17. How well were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) allocated or used strategically to achieve the planned results? Have they been delivered in a timely manner? According to proposed budget lines? If not, what were the factors that hindered timely delivery of outputs? Where possible, intervention benefits and related costs of integrated gender equality is to be analysed.
18. To what extent have the project resources been leveraged with other related interventions to maximize impact, if any?

Sustainability

22. How effective was the project in establishing national ownership?
23. To what extent can the project results be maintained or even scaled up/replicated by other partners beyond project completion?

Impact

27. To what extent has the project contributed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to higher-level and/or systemic changes?

28. How have interventions made as part of the project affected the socio-economic and/or environmental state of the locations in which it operated?

3.1 Geographic focus

The SEP-TA project was designed to with a focus on on policy development and coordination. This ended up including supporting the capacity, convening dialogue, and mechanisms of tripartite partners to deliver on policy mandates. In addition, in the context of a recently promulgated labor law and federalization—which required each province and municipality to draft their own policies and protocols related to labor and labor migration—the remit in this regard was significant. The project focused its attention on the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS) and on two provinces—Provinces 2 and 5—and in each province, one municipality—Birgunj and Butwal. Inputs were largely but not exclusively provided to MoLESS, trade union organizations and business associations at national level as well as affiliates in the two provinces and two municipalities. Trade Unions, business associations and civil society and research organizations were contracted to deliver knowledge products, and all partners received technical assistance and training. As such, in this project some of the implementing partners were also key beneficiaries. This evaluation will seek to talk to all participants and beneficiaries and to consider engagement and outcomes for tripartite agencies at national, focus provincial and municipal levels.

3.2 Document review

In preparation for this inception report, the team has reviewed project reports, workplans, studies, assessments and toolkits commissioned by the project, and minutes of key meetings. Contextual information including ILO and GoN strategy documents were reviewed. Some of the key documents related to the overall SEP project--in particular annual project reports which provide updates and forward-looking directives to each of the partners have also be reviewed. Detailed notes and key quotes from the document review are posted on a shared google sheet structured around the original four outcomes. A list of documents reviewed to date are included in Annex B.

3.3 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

All of the primary data for this evaluation will be gathered through interviews. The Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM) presented in Section 6. provides an overview of sources, including which informants will be probed for perspectives on specific issues related to each evaluation question.

Interviews will begin with an in-depth briefing with the SEP-TA team. Insofar as possible, at least one stakeholder from each participating partner will be interviewed, though several interviews with key partners such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLESS) is desirable. A list of requested interviews is provided in Annex A. Additional interviews may be scheduled based on recommendations from the first wave of interviews. Protocols for interviews have been designed to triangulate findings gleaned from the document review with key informant perspectives, and will be updated as the evaluation unfolds. Interview protocols are presented in Annex C.

Because COVID restrictions preclude international travel and at this writing also prohibit face to face meetings in Nepal, it is likely that all interviews will be undertaken on Zoom. The ILO SEP-TA team will provide introductions and logistical scheduling support for the meetings, which are expected to take place over a four week period (June 8-July 9).

It is possible that multiple people will attend some of the interviews when several people from the same organization have participated in the project, and are available. In a limited number of cases, a focus

group may be convened, for instance amongst youth fellows supported by the program, or trade unions that participated in similar initiatives.

Evaluation team members will take detailed notes during each interview. Using the EQM as an organizing structure, interview notes will then be written up and posted on a shared google forms platform. Notes and forms will remain internal to the evaluation team to protect confidentiality commitments to informants.

3.4 Validation meeting

A virtual validation meeting is currently scheduled for August 5. The ILO SEP-TA team will convene this meeting which could include key counterparts and implementing partners. A draft report will be circulated ahead of that. The meeting will be an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on and discuss evaluation findings and recommendations and to correct errors of fact.

4. Limitations and risks

The evaluation faces and anticipates a number of limitations.

- **Delays:** The evaluation has experienced some delays from the originally anticipated schedule (May 24-July 16), with a staggered launch date of June 8 for the team lead and June 14 for the national evaluator. As a result, an extension was provided (see timeline in Section 5 below). Documents were received in waves, with key project reports coming quite late.
- **Theoretical framework:** The SEP project developed a Theory of Change in the first year of the project. However it is too broad to infer causal assumptions driving the SEP-TA component. There is no explicit Theory of Change specific to the SEP-TA component, though the proposal document provides a clear logic for the original outcomes. However, anticipated outcomes and outputs changed over the course of the project, sometimes annually, making it challenging to assess the validity of the original design in this retrospective exercise. A linear, cumulative assessment of target achievements is also somewhat problematic, as targets changed. The evaluation will take a retrospective look at the extent to which the ILO was responsive to evolving needs of tripartite partners while maintaining fidelity to its DWCP strategy, international norms, and the overarching goals of the SEP program. Causal assumptions will need to be inferred from strategy decisions and technical and budgetary investments made under SEP-TA. Changes in focus and priorities for the overall SEP program in response to changes in contextual realities will need to be taken into consideration as well insofar as they impacted on revised objectives or revised hypotheses about causality. In the absence of a ToC for SEP-TA, the latter will need to be inferred.
- **The COVID pandemic** has had significant impacts on project delivery, and will also affect the evaluation, which launched as Nepal was in the midst of the worst wave of COVID cases since the beginning of the pandemic. This affects not only the ability of the evaluation team to undertake normal face to face meetings and interviews, but means people are more likely to be distracted by personal issues and the challenges of lockdown. The Mid Term Review of ILO's MIRIDEW project (which included a small focus on SEP-TA's work in labour migration) conducted in Dec, 2020-Jan, 2021 cites a range of challenges in this regard.
- **The COVID pandemic also delayed the Mid Term Review** of the SEP-TA project, which was undertaken in March/April, 2021 just three months before this final evaluation launched.

A number of risks, some related to these limitations, can be anticipated in this evaluation. Some are common to any evaluation while a number are specifically related to this project and this time.

Risk	Mitigation
Proximity of MTE and Final evaluation contribute to respondent resistance or fatigue ³⁰ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain interview notes from MTE evaluator if possible Seek out alternative informants from key agencies where possible Introduce additional lines of questioning into interviews with stakeholders who were already interviewed in the MTE.
TOR and/or key findings overlap (draft MTE and early final evaluation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust methodology for final evaluation to ensure additionality in insights in areas not covered by MTE. Eg. consider gap filling in assessment of project pilots and models.
Stakeholders unavailable or unwilling to speak because of COVID-related events in family or generally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO to seek to ascertain availability early on and find alternative respondents from key organizations. ILO to enlist implementing partners to support setting up meetings
Poor internet connectivity makes Zoom interview difficult or impossible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get phone numbers for all respondents and revert to phone call if necessary. Reschedule interview.
Informants uncomfortable in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National evaluator to undertake interviews where ILO team advises respondent prefers Nepali.
Evaluation raises concerns about sensitive issues related to on-going ILO-government discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO can request segments of the report to be redacted for internal viewing only.

5. Workplan

The following Gantt chart presents the timeline for this evaluation, including deadlines for key deliverables.

Activity	Deliverable due	Project week											
		Jun 7-11	Jun 14-18	Jun 21-25	Jun28-Jul2	Jul5-9	Jul12-16	Jul19-23	Jul26-30	Aug2-6	Aug9-13	Aug16-20	Aug23-27
Document Review	Jun 7-11	█											
Briefing with SEP-TA team	7-Jun	█											
Inception Report, draft	18-Jun	█	█										
Comments from ILO	22-Jun			█									
Final Inception report	25-Jun			█									
Key Informant Interviews	Jun14-Jul 9		█	█	█	█							
Draft report submitted	29-Jul						█	█	█				
Validation meeting	5-Aug								█				
Written comments due	12-Aug									█			
Final report, LL, EGP	23-Aug										█	█	
Factsheets, English & Nepali	23-Aug												█

³⁰ At this writing, the MTE report has not been received.

6. Evaluation Question Matrix

The following table provides indicators, data sources and approaches to analysis for each of the agreed evaluation questions. In consultation with the Evaluation Manager, evaluation questions have been modified somewhat from the original ToR.

Evaluation Question	Indicators	Documents	Informants	Analysis Plan
RELEVANCE AND VALIDITY OF THE DESIGN				
1. To what extent was the project design linked to ILO's DWCP framework?	-Project ToC outcomes consistent with DWCP objectives -Anticipated project outcomes and DWCP framework use similar language	ILO and SEP Project Documents	SEP-TA team; ILO Delhi team	-Compare initial project design with ILO DWCP Nepal (2018-2022) framework -Assess the approach taken to design the program
2. How does the project link with and align with GoN's larger framework on employment and labour migration?	-Number of SEP-TA studies, advice, meetings that GoN stakeholders can name, and attribute to SEP-TA -Government documents that reference ILO or SEP-TA-supported studies, TA or meetings	Correspondence between GoN and ILO; minutes of meetings; project supported studies, policy documents and briefs	MOLESS; National Planning Commission; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Industry; Ministry of Youth and Sports; SEP-TA team	-Match and compare project design and implementation against relevant Government policies including 14th and 15th periodic plans, employment policies, and national programmes -Identify and assess government's level of participation in project design and implementation.
3. To what extent were project objectives consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements? (beneficiaries are workers, migrants, unemployed and looking for work.)	-Number of consultations with worker organizations. -Number of beneficiary representatives participating in project consultations. -Number of consultation mechanisms established with project support that include beneficiary representatives. -Evidence of beneficiary voice in project TA recommendations.	ILO and GoN planning documents, including SEP-TA and FCDO annual reports; minutes of meetings; Daawyita fellows	Trade Union bodies (Tripartite partners); Daawyita fellows; The Asia Foundation; Academics	-Assess beneficiaries' level of participation in the project design and consultations -Probe tripartite and partner representatives about i) priority requirements; ii) and value of project response.
4. To what extent were the project design and its underlying theory of change logical and responsive to the development challenges identified?	Outcome-related stakeholders and observers can confirm relevant causal link relevant to their domain, and can attribute at least one element of constructive change to ILO/SEP-TA.	Theory of Change (SEP); SEP-TA proposal; logframe; national and project planning documents; PEA	Tripartite partners; informed observers	- Assess validity of causal assumptions implicit in the inception documentation (proposal) in relation to the context and outcomes

<p>5. How appropriate and useful were the indicators described in the project document in assessing the project's progress? If necessary, how may they have been reformulated to be more useful? To what extent were the indicators gender sensitive?</p>	<p>-Percentage of indicators that were SMART. -Percentage of indicators referenced in annual reports; -Proportion of indicators that enable gender insights.</p>	<p>Logframe; workplans; FCDO annual reports</p>	<p>SEP-TA team; FCDO</p>	<p>-Assess the indicators as to whether they are SMART(SpecificMeasurableAttainable RelevantTime based) and gender responsive -Tabulate and assess indicator changes and use in monitoring project progress</p>
<p>6. Were risks assessed in an appropriate manner?</p>	<p>-Documented risk assessment -Proportion of risks anticipated in the planning that eventuated. -Proportion of mitigation initiatives that resulted in risk reduction. -Number of project-specific responses to COVID challenges that stakeholders can name (includes i) logistical responses to planned activities; ii) substantive adjustments to project focus).</p>	<p>Workplans; annual ILO reports; annual FCDO reports</p>	<p>Project team; implementing partners; FCDO; informed observers</p>	<p>-Assess (implicit) risk assessment and (implicit) Theory of Change assumptions and contingency preparation against project implementation.</p>
COHERENCE				
<p>7. To what extent did the project succeed in adapting to the socio-economic challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>		<p>"Policy" and other COVID-specific analyses; annual ILO and FCDO annual and technical reports; meeting minutes</p>	<p>Project team; SEP and tripartite implementing partners; FCDO informed observers</p>	<p>Assess flexibility, adaptability, and mitigation strategies in project design and implementation</p>
<p>8. In what ways did the project align with or perhaps contradict other interventions carried out by ILO Nepal, the Government and/or national social partners?</p>	<p>-Documented or anecdotal evidence of leveraged synergies from other ILO projects in support of SEP-TA outcomes. -Evidence of SEP-TA workplan alignment with government and other tripartite member published goals.</p>	<p>MTR, Proposal, Government planning documents including 5 year plan; ILO 5 year plan</p>	<p>Project team; SEP and tripartite implementing partners; FCDO, informed observers</p>	<p>-Assess the stakeholder analysis for the project -Mapping of project interventions against on-going ILO and other major relevant initiatives</p>

<p>9. How effectively did the project support the broader goals of the SEP program?</p>	<p>-SEP tripartite partners can identify specific complementarities between SEP-TA and i) other SEP components; ii) other national employment and migration-related programs. -Documented or anecdotal evidence of reciprocal linkages/contributions of SEP-TA to other programs.</p>	<p>FCDO annual reports; proposal</p>	<p>FCDO, SEP partners</p>	<p>Assess frequency of interaction, triangulate perspectives on coordination</p>
<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p>				
<p>10. How responsive was the project to the needs of the GoN?</p>	<p>-Mention of SEP-TA experts or inputs in key policy documents. -Invitation to the project to provide input to key policy or programmatic processes. - GoN stakeholder rating of SEP-TA inputs.</p>	<p>Correspondence with GoN at all levels; minutes of meetings with GoN; policy documents</p>	<p>GoN ministry, provincial and municipality stakeholders, FCDO</p>	<p>-Map project TA to all levels of government; -Government scoring on SEP-TA inputs to employment and labor migration initiatives.</p>
<p>11. How responsive was the project to the needs of social partners?</p>	<p>-Social partners rate SEP-TA inputs as highly valuable. -Social partners can name at least 2 examples of SEP-TA inputs that advanced their interests or contributed to their needs.</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings; workplans</p>	<p>Business and trade union stakeholders, youth organizations</p>	<p>-Map project TA and capacity building for social partners. -- Partner views of inputs to employment and labor migration initiatives.</p>
<p>12. To what extent was gender mainstreaming addressed in the design and implementation of the project?</p>	<p>-Number of outputs and outcomes that are gender specific. --Number of assessment documents that provide gender-focused analysis and recommendations. - Gender balance in project initiatives.</p>	<p>Project reports; commissioned studies; meeting minutes</p>	<p>Project team; implementing partners; FCDO</p>	<p>Assess articulation and achievement of gender objectives Assess ILO and government insight into and prioritization of gender aspects of the project.</p>
<p>13. To what extent did the capacity of project management and the management arrangements put in place support and/or hinder the achievement of the planned results?</p>	<p>-Proportion of delays in scheduled outputs linked to staffing constraints/management bottlenecks.</p>	<p>FCDO reports; MTR; project reports</p>	<p>SEP-TA team; FCDO</p>	<p>-Triangulate enabling arrangements and bottlenecks in decision-making, resourcing, collaborating -Assess adaptive changes in the organogram.</p>
<p>14. To what extent has the project achieved its objectives? Are there any differences in the results obtained across social groups?</p>	<p>-Targets vs achievements, disaggregated by social group.</p>	<p>Logframe; project and FCDO annual reports</p>	<p>SEP-TA team; FCDO; tripartite partners</p>	<p>-Comparative analysis of targets vs achievements by social group</p>
<p>EFFICIENCY</p>				

<p>15. To what extent has the project delivered value for money?</p>	<p>-FCDO VfM scoring averaged across project years.</p>	<p>Budgets; FCDO and project annual reports; logframe</p>	<p>SEP-TA team; FCDO; tripartite partners</p>	<p>-Assess costs of specific activities against outcomes -Consider re-budgeting efficiencies -Assess leveraging of inputs/collaboration with other projects</p>
<p>16. How well were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) allocated or used strategically to achieve the planned results? Have they been delivered in a timely manner? If not, what were the factors that hindered timely delivery of outputs? Where possible, intervention benefits and related costs of integrated gender equality is to be analysed</p>	<p>-Number of changes in resource and input allocation approved by FCDO. -Proportion of budget allocated for gender-specific initiatives.</p>	<p>Budgets; annual reports; logframe</p>	<p>SEP project team; FCDO</p>	<p>-Assess implementation timelines -Assess use of internal and external (consultant, ILO, implementing partner) expertise -Assess gender equality-specific investments, opportunities and outcomes</p>
<p>17. To what extent have the project resources been leveraged with other related interventions to maximize impact, if any?</p>	<p>-GBP amount of leveraged inputs to the project from other sources. -GBP value of inputs from SEP-TA cited by other stakeholders to have added value to their programs.</p>	<p>Budgets; annual reports; MTR</p>	<p>SEP-TA team; FCDO; tripartite partners</p>	<p>Assess leveraging strategies, opportunities and achievements</p>
<p>SUSTAINABILITY</p>				
<p>18. How effective was the project in establishing national ownership?</p>	<p>-Number of SEP-TA initiatives that tripartite partners anticipate continuing. -Level of seniority of representatives from participating agencies in project meetings.</p>	<p>FCDO and SEP-TA annual reports; meeting minutes and studies</p>	<p>Government partners, SEP-TA team, informed observers</p>	<p>Assess government participation in key events/activities Consider interviewee references to project strategies and outcomes</p>
<p>19. To what extent can the project results be maintained or even scaled up/replicated by other partners beyond project completion?</p>	<p>-Evidence of project initiatives adopted by other development partners. -Other development partners report planning to adopt SEP-TA initiated concept or initiative.</p>	<p>FCDO and SEP-TA annual reports;</p>	<p>SEP-TA team; tripartite partners; informed observers</p>	<p>Assess government agency/SAARC/IP commitment to pursue project objectives post project. -Map enabling/challenging factors</p>
<p>IMPACT</p>				
<p>20. To what extent has the project contributed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to higher-level and/or systemic changes?</p>	<p>-Evidence of partial or full achievement of ToC outcomes linked to SEP-TA.</p>	<p>-PEA analyses and other studies; SEP -TA and FCDO annual reports</p>	<p>SEP-TA team; tripartite partners; informed observers</p>	<p>-Assessment and elaboration of stakeholder attribution for specific systemic changes during project life. -</p>

<p>21. How have interventions made as part of the project affected the socio-economic and/or environmental state of the locations in which it operated?</p>	<p>-Evidence for downstream outcomes related to policy or practice changes attributable to SEP-TA interventions</p>	<p>Logframe; SEP-TA and FCDO annual reports; research reports</p>	<p>-Assess knowledge and application of specific environmental considerations/implications of migration -Triangulate stakeholder assessment of socio-economic or environmental changes as a result of the project.</p>
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Annex A. Proposed stakeholders to be interviewed

This list reflects a combination of suggested interview respondents from the ILO team, and requests based on document review from the evaluation team. Names provided by the ILO team.

Stakeholder	Name	Position	Remarks
ILO Country Office for Nepal	1. Dr Richard Howard	Director	
	2. Mr Prakash Sharma	National Project Coordinator, SEP TA	
	3. Mr Saurabh Shah	National Project Officer, SEP TA	
	4. Mr Basanta Karki	Ex-Migration Officer/National Project Coordinator	Focal person for SEP -MIRIDEW work
	5. Ms Nita Neupane	Sr. Program Officer	
ILO Consultants	6. Dr Biswo Poudel	Senior economist – consultant	Consultant for employment component
	7. Dr Swarnim Wagle	Project Consultant	Currently Senior Team Leader for Strategy, Policy and Partnerships
	8. Mr Raju Shrestha	Municipal work, employment – consultant	Municipal Work, TA to Social Security Fund
	9. Dr Keshav Bashyal	Social Dialogue – consultant	
	10. Mr Uddhav Paudel	Mid-term evaluator – consultant	
ILO Decent Work Team Delhi	11. Mr Mahandra Naidoo	Senior Specialist on Labour Administration and Social Dialogue	Provincial social dialogue and other social dialogue work
	12. Mr Ravindra Peiris	Senior Specialist on Employers	Toolkit and other TA to FNCCI/FWEAN
	13. Mr Syed Sultan Ahmmed Uddin	Senior Specialist on Workers Activities	Work with JTUCC
Employers Organization	14. Mr Hari Paudel	Assistant Director, FNCCI	Responsible for project implementation in FNCCI
	15. Mr Hansa Ram Pandey	Senior Expert, FNCCI	Focal person for project engagement and backstopping for employer activities

	16. Mr Gokarna Awasthi	Deputy Director General, FNCCI	Engaged in ILO SEP project work
	17. Ms Reeta Simha	President, Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations of Nepal	ILO SEP engagement with FWEAN
	18. Mr Saurav Krishna Shrestha	Programme Coordinator, Federation of Women's Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal	Focal point for over 10 months for FWEAN engagement with SEP
	19.	National Business Initiative	
	20.	Confederation of Nepalese Business Industries	
	21. Ms Nivita Pradhan	Nepalese Young Entrepreneurs Forum	FNCCI Youth affiliate
Trade Unions	22. Mr. Dhan Bahadur BK	Vice President, All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF)	
	23. Mr Bidur Karki	Vice President, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)	
	24. Mr Indra Deo Yadav	CEO, Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC)	
	25. Ms Deepa Dawadi	Executive Director, Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre	ILO SEP Engagement on Provincial Social Dialogue/Top level medium term action plan/ Bipartite dialogues
Implementing partners	26. Mr. Nilamber Badal	Project Coordinator, Law and Policy Forum for Social Justice (LAPSOJ)	Legal expert agency for labour migration governance component
	27. Dr Pukar Malla	Founder and Chair, Daayitwa	Youth Component
	28. Mr Jagdish Ayer	Member/President, National Youth Council/ Association of Youth Organizations in Nepal	
	29.	CESLAM	Carried out studies on labour migration components
	30.	The Asia Foundation	

Federal and provincial government	31. Mr Suman Ghimire	Joint Secretary/National Director, Prime Ministers Employment Program	On employment and PMEP related work
	32. Mr Suresh Rawat	Undersecretary, Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Security	PMEP related work
	33. Mr Ramesh Pandey	Section Officer, Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Security	Labour Relations and Industrial relations work
	34. Dr Narayan Regmi	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies	Head of Planning Section, MOLESS (earlier). Currently focal point for ongoing work with the Ministry of Industry
	35. Mr Mahesh Prasad Dahal	Secretary(Retired), Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Security	Focal point for SEP work before retiring
	36. Mr Keshav Aryal	Undersecretary, Ministry of Land and Cooperative, Lumbini Province (Province 5)	Before transfer, focal point for Provincial Social Dialogue Mechanism in Ministry of Social Development
	37. Mr Ram Prasad Ghimire	Currently Joint Secretary at Ministry of Finance	Headed labour relations and social security at Ministry of Labour, Ex-Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Security Then Secretary, Ministry of Social Development, Province 2
	38. Mr Kapil Mani Gyawali	Executive Director, Social Security Fund	
	39.	Department of Foreign Employment	
	40.	Foreign Employment Board	

Municipality	41.	Butwal Municipality	
	42.	Birgunj Municipality	
FCDO	43. Ms Priti Prajapati	Private Sector Development Advisor	Previously led SEP Program
	44. Mr Robert Clarke	Private Sector Development Advisor	Overall manager from FCDO
Others (Academics, Development Agencies)	45. Jasmine Rajbhandary	World Bank	
	46.	Labour and Employment Expert	
	47.	Migrant worker's organizations	

Annex B. Documents reviewed

The documents listed here have been provided by the ILO SEP-TA team. They have been reviewed and coded. The references are somewhat shorthand and presented to provide the reader with an overview of document review conducted to date.

S.N	Title	Author	Date
1	TOR	ILO Geneva	2021
2	ILO Proposal	ILO Country Office for Nepal	2017
3	ILO Program and Budget for the Biennium 2020-21	ILO Geneva	2020
4	The ILO's Strategic Plan 2022-25	Strategic Programming and Management Department, ILO Geneva	2020
5	Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal Decent Work Country Program 2018-2022	ILO Country Office for Nepal	2018
6	United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2018-2022 for Nepal	United Nations Country Team	2017
7	Final Internal Mid-Term Evaluation Report, MIRIDEW_SEP	Pierre Mahy	January, 2021
8	Progress Report 2017-18	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office	September, 2018
9	Progress Report 2018-19	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office	August, 2019
10	Progress Report 2019-20	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office	August, 2020
11	Progress Report 2019-20	ILO SEP	Aug 2019- July 2020
12	Progress Report 2018-2019	ILO SEP	Aug 2019- July 2019
13	ILO Quarterly Report	ILO SEP	1 Aug-31 Oct, 2020
14	ILO Quarterly Report	ILO SEP	1 Feb-30 April, 2021
15	Annual progress report	ILO SEP	Aug 2017- July 2018
16	Economic Survey Nepal 2019-2020	Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal	2020
17	The ILO in Nepal 2019	ILO Country Office for Nepal	2019
18	Nepal Labor Migration Report 2020	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Government of Nepal	2020

19	National Employment Policy 2071 (2014)	Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of Nepal	2014
20	Report on the Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18	Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal	2018
21	Labour and Employment Policy 2062	Government of Nepal	2005
22	The Determinants of Sectoral Employment in Nepal, Masters' Thesis	Thaman P Bastola	2020
23	Youth Employment in Nepal	Dhushyanth Raju and Jasmine Rajbhandary (eds), World Bank	2018
24	Building Resilient Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	Akash Shrestha, National Business Initiative (NBI) Nepal	January, 2020
25	COVID-19 Impact on Enterprises: Survey summary of results	ILO Country Office for Nepal	Not dated
26	Rapid Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (internal)	ILO Country Office for Nepal	Not dated
27	Public Perception on Dignity of Labour in the Context of Youth Employment in Province 2 and 5	Daayitwa, Kathmandu	2020
28	Strategies for Building a Resilient Micro Cottage and Small Enterprises: A Post Pandemic Scenario	Purushottam Ojha, National Business Initiative (NBI) Nepal	April 2021
29	Future of Work (in Nepali)	Biswo Poudel	Not dated
30	Competitiveness and Resilience Assessment Tool, Training manual	ILO-Encompass	August, 2020
31	Micro and Small Enterprises Growth in Province 2 and Province 5: Study and Policy Recommendations	Daayitwa, Kathmandu	Not dated
32	Employment Data Collection in Butwal-Sub Metropolitan City and Birgunj Metropolitan City	Pashupati Nepal, ISSR	2019

33	Municipalities Selection Criteria	SEP, Employment Component	Not dated
34	Policy Brief Agricultural Support to Farmers	Daayitwa	nd
35	Policy Brief Enterprise Resource Center	Daayitwa	n/d
36	Policy brief - Women Economic Empowerment	Daayitwa	n/d
37	Policy brief - Youth Employment for Migrant returnees	Daayitwa	n/d
38	Toolkit for employment friendly budget, (Draft 0.0)	Biswo Poudel	nd
39	Youth Anxieties, Perceptions and Activism Survey	Niti Foundation	2020
40	12 Research papers on youth/women employment/entrepreneurship, reintegration of migrants, distribution of emergency support	Daayitwa Nepal Public Administration Fellowship	2020
41	Effective employer guide on Persuasive Communication	ILO	2010
42	Employee's services, terms and conditions and enterprises' internal management regulations/bylaw (Model)	Employer's Council, FNCCI	2020
43	Procedure for operating labour desk at metropolitan/sub-metropolitan/municipality/rural municipality 2020 {model}	N/a	2020
44	MoU between Tribhuvan University and ILO	ILO and TU	2021
45	Procedure for Formation of Provincial Labour Advisory Council, 2019 (Province 5 - Lumbini)	Provincial Government, Lumbini Province	2019
46	Action Checklist for Prevention and Mitigation of COVID -19 at Work	ILO	n/a

47	Extension of Social Security Fund Schemes to Workers in Informal Employment and Self-Employed in Nepal	N/A	Not dated
48	Social Security Fund of Nepal: A Capacity Needs Assessment and Learning Plan	Constanza de Toma, ILO ITC	April, 2021
49	Report: Improving technical Capacitate of Social Security Fund Nepal to better support implementation of schemes and mechanisms	Paguman Singh	May, 2020
50	Annex 1 Communications Strategy for SSF 2019-2024 (in Nepali)	Social Security Fund	
51	Foreign Employment Policy 2076, Province 2 <i>Draft</i> (Confidential)	Ministry of Social Development, Province 2	2019
52	Covid response to migrant workers: ILO Plan and Some ideas	ILO Country Office for Nepal	April, 2021
53	Rapid Market Assessment, Assessment of ten potential countries of destination for low and semi-skilled Nepalese migrant workers	Adrea Salvini Kft	Not dated
54	Operationalizing and Regulating Cruise Sector/Seafarer Employment for Nepali Migrant Workers	Adrea Salvini Kft	February, 2020
55	National Strategy for the Implementation of Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), Draft	CESLAM	June, 2020
56	COVID 19 and Nepali Labour Migrants Impacts and Responses	CESLAM	August, 2020
57	Annual plan of Birgunj Metropolitan, Province 2076/77	Birgunj Metropolitan Office	2019
58	PEA Brief on Employment-Oriented Initiatives in Urban Municipalities	Swornim Wagle	October, 2018
59	PEA Brief Global Value Chains (GVCs) for Industrial Catch-up and Job Creation: Strategic Policy Choices	Swornim Wagle with Abyaya Neopane	December, 2018
60	PEA Brief I: Structural Transformation and Labour Market Restructuring in Nepal	Swornim Wagle	July, 2018
61	PEA Brief II State Goals and Plans on Employment	Swornim Wagle	July, 2018

62	Assessment of current status of industrial relations in Nepal and suggestions for the effective prevention and resolution of collective disputes and the promotion of collective bargaining (Draft)	Marleen Rueda and Saurabh Shah	July, 2018
63	PMEP Proposed Activities (2019/2020)	PMEP, MOLESS	2019
64	Consultation on the Social Security Fund meeting	ILO	May, 2021
65	National Bipartite Dialogue b/w employers and workers to talk about needs and solutions in response to impact of covid, Meeting minutes		19-Apr-20
66	Collaboration for diploma on industrial relations & social dialogue (follow up), Meeting minutes	ILO	12-Apr-21
67	Collaboration for diploma on industrial relations & social dialogue (follow up), Meeting minutes		14 October, 2020
68	Collaboration for diploma on industrial relations & social dialogue (follow up), Meeting minutes		20 October, 2020
69	JTUCC-Med Term Strategic Plan 20-21	Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre	Not dated
70	Meeting between Trade Unions and ILO on Covid response, Meeting minutes	ILO	9 April, 2020
71	Invitation letter from provincial ministry to the ILO SEP Project	Ministry of Social Development, Province 5	17 February, 2020
72	Meeting of JTUCC and ILO on Nepal Wage Report, Minutes	ILO	14 September, 2020
73	Meeting FNCCI and ILO on Nepal Wage Report, Minutes	ILO	12 March, 2021
74	Follow up workshop on social dialogue for provincial tripartite partners, Butwal, Minutes	ILO	12 November, 2019
75	Tripartite dialogue on covid Impact and role of stakeholders, virtual	ILO	1 May, 2021
76	Dialogue on Promoting Domestic Employment in response to COVID-19	ILO, MOLESS, DFID	14 July, 2020

77	Meeting minute: Business Recovery_Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies	ILO	8 February, 2021
78	Meeting minute: Discussion on MSME Development in Nepal - Past, Present and Way Forward with MoICS	ILO	9 October, 2020
79	Meeting minute: Discussion on Nepal's Intellectual Property Law, Practices and Reform Agenda_MoICS	ILO	10 November, 2020
80	Meeting Note: MOLESS_PMEP	ILO	4 August, 2018
81	Meeting Note: MOLESS_PMEP	ILO	8 January, 2019
82	Meeting Note: MOLESS_PMEP	ILO	15 July, 2020
83	Meeting Note: MOLESS_PMEP	ILO	14 January, 2019
84	Meeting Note: MOLESS_PMEP	ILO	22 September, 2020
85	Meeting Note: MOLESS_PMEP	ILO	23 December, 2020
86	Meeting note: MOLESS_PMEP and Employment	ILO	3 May, 2021
87	National Dialogue on Business Recovery	MOLESS, ILO, DFID	10 March, 2021
88	YA: Final Technical Report	Daayitwa	24 July, 2020
89	Event Report: Young Entrepreneurs Summit - Women 2021	Nepal Young Entrepreneur's Forum	16 January, 2021
90	Concept Note for Growth Enterprise	MoICS	June, 2020
91	Translated Action Checklist: Preventing COVID 19 at Work (Nepali)	ILO	Not dated
92	Report on fixing minimum wages in Nepal (in Nepali)	Bishnu Gautam	2020
93	Social dialogue, ppt presentation	ILO	Not dated
94	Rapid Impact Assessment COVID Impacts on Nepali migrant workers	Jeevan Baniya et al, CSLM	August, 2020
95	Development of New Membership Strategies for FNCCI Provincial	UKAID, ACT/EMP, ILO	December, 2020

96	Effective employers training	UKAid, FNCCI, ITC/ILO, ACT/EMP	December, 2020
97	Introduction to Business Continuity Planning Tool	UKAid/ILO	June, 2020
98	Media management, ppt	Gokarna Awasthi	Not dated
99	Discussion on Reintegration of Returnee Migrants	UKAid, ILO	June, 2020
100	National Industrial Policy Recommendations	Biswo Paudel	June, 2021
101	Employment Impact Assessment methodology and implementation plan for PMEP	Biswo Paudel	Not dated
102	Model Employment Strategy (in Nepali)		
103	Labour Market Assessment of six high-potential countries for Nepalese migrant workers	Andrea Salvini Kft (ILO)	December, 2020
104	Policy Roundtable ppt.	Swarnim Wagle	December, 2018
105	PMEP Skills Training Committee Folder	MOLESS	March, 2021
106	Dialogue Reports with stakeholders	National Business Initiative	Dec 2020 and Jan 2021
107	FWEAN-ILO-Provincial government 5 Dialogue on Promoting Women Entrepreneurs	FWEAN/ILO/MOICS Province 5	May, 2020
108	ENCOMPASS Regional Training Report	ILO ACT/EMP	October, 2020
109	Meeting with Minister MOLESS	ILO	September, 2019
110	Meeting minute: Consultation and Strategic Planning Meeting for FNCCI SME Committee members	ILO	April, 2021
111	Meeting minute with Industrial Promotion Division at MOICS	ILO	June, 2021
112	Online Multi-stakeholder Social Dialogue Meeting	Daayitwa	July, 2020
113	Online Multi-stakeholder policy dialogue meeting	Daayitwa	July, 2020

Annex C. Key Informant Interview Checklist, by Stakeholder

Questions have been generated based on document review, and will be adjusted as interviews proceed and new issues and lines of inquiry emerge.

Stakeholder – SEP TA Team
General
Could you tell us about how the program was designed, especially TA component? Who were involved in the beginning?
What measures were taken to factor 'political issues and realpolitik' into program's TOC?
The MTR noted the absence of a Project Steering Committee under MIRIDEW. Seems like this is also the case for SEP and SEP-TA? What mechanisms have you relied on to maintain alignment with tripartite stakeholder priorities in a rapidly changing environment?
Why were Province 2 and 5 selected for program activities?
Outputs
4.1 TA to domestic employment policies
Where institutionally would you say program's greatest focus has been on employment issues? On labour related issues? Why? What were the key activities/milestones under this output? What were the major achievements?
The project operated in a dynamic political and economic context. What changes were made from the plans proposed in the initial proposal? Who initiated or suggested the changes? How were priorities set? Was there a change in TA assisted by the government?
At which level and agency were most of the program activities concentrated? Where was most of the budget spent?
Numerous policy briefs related to industry, enterprise and sectoral growth have been produced by ILO consultants and youth implementing partners. How has the project ensured coherence between national, provincial and local policy briefs?
At what level of government has there been more readiness to accept the recommendations? What are the challenges at the different level of government for adopting and implementing the suggestions provided?
The project supported the government's flagship program on domestic employment (PMEP), including an embedded consultant who helped design regulatory frameworks guidelines and dissemination. How effective do you believe this TA was? Why was the project consultant based in the PMEP transferred to the SSF?
Re PMEP: Were there different priorities at the three levels of government? How was it addressed? What linkages were made in program activities at different level of government?
Re PMEP: How much interface did PMEP design and framework have with the employment generation programs of the ADB and WB? To what extent did the ILO consultant enable those linkages? Probe for examples.
There is little mention of basic education in this project, although the PEA points to the need for a more educated workforce to position Nepal's economy going forward. Why? Is CTEVT enough?
2019 FCDO annual report. recommend: ILO should move away from employment status reports to providing thought leadership on labour market data systems. This is not in the matrix.
What measures has the project taken to ensure that cross-cutting themes of ILO are adequately addressed in the outputs produced by the project?
4.2 TA to Municipal Govt's to develop and implement job creation

<p>The PEA suggests different municipality level initiatives for domestic employment - employment audit, ALMP etc. What has been the experience in applying these tools at different municipalities? Do the need of such initiatives resonate with municipalities capacities? Probe whether such initiatives can be implemented by the government on their own after project completion? Do you reckon such initiative are replicable and scalable to other municipalities?</p>
<p>How do the toolkits for budget drafting for employment creation and the fellows research intersect? How have each of these products been used in practice? How do you monitor this use and usefulness?</p>
<p>4.3 TA to Municipal govts to develop and implement job creation</p>
<p>Why was the audit of the implementation of the PMEP in Provinces 2 and 5 planned and then shelved? (111)</p>
<p>How did the PEA inform the employment audit? How was the audit used? Has it been adopted in other municipalities?</p>
<p>4.4 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels</p>
<p>What is the overall objective of the youth-related strategy? What are the causal assumptions behind the fellows initiative?</p>
<p>The FCDO 2018/19 report suggested to reform youth programs implemented by Daayitwa deeming their initiatives did not align with long term goals and linkages with SEP goals. What happened and why? How was it addressed? What have been the results after making changes?</p>
<p>What were the outcomes from the youth employment summit?</p>
<p>4.5 TA to tripartite constituents for the implementation of labor law</p>
<p>The ILO supported the JTUCC in developing its 20/21 strategic plan. The plan does not indicate how/whether the SEP-TA or other ILO project will support implementation, and timeline is not included. Comment? What have been the achievements?</p>
<p>Establishment of the Provincial Labor Advisory Committee and a range of social dialogue fora have been major achievements of the project. What have been the priorities of this body? How has the ILO supported (19/20 Ann Report suggests PLAC asked for support)? What do you anticipate its priorities and needs will be going forward?</p>
<p>Early documents make multiple mention of challenges related to collective bargaining. The FNCCI HR model addresses this. Was there anything similar on the Trade Union side? Any evidence of change?</p>
<p>Was the Wage Report presented only to the JTUCC? Why not tripartite? Did any result from this effort?</p>
<p>Employer's organizations have been major beneficiary of capacity building - linking them with ACT/EMP and ILO/ITC. What are the most significant results? How will the linkages between employer's organization and resource partners sustain after the project ends?</p>
<p>Compared to employer's organization, it appears that there have been fewer capacity building programs with the trade unions. Why is that?</p>
<p>The ILO convened(?) or participated in tripartite negotiations related to COVID response. Has this provided a positive platform going forward? Can you provide three tangible results?</p>
<p>There was an agreement reached during COVID on wage payment and other support to workers during COVID lockdown. What role did the ILO play in enabling that decision?</p>
<p>4.6 TA to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the Social Security Act</p>
<p>The ILO provided TA and support to all tripartite partners under the SEP-TA to implement the SSA. Outcomes remain tentative, despite 2015 constitution mandating 80% coverage by 2030. What do you consider the most effective strategies? Which should be continued or scaled?</p>

Evidence? Probe what TA was provided to ensure that SSA is availed by the informal workers/sectors?
The FCDO 2019 annual report request the ILO to support the private sector to adhere to the law while not compromising their employment creation potential. How did you address?
In the 2021 consultation on the SSF, the concept of a pilot was mooted. Is this going ahead?
The ILO supported preparation of a strategic communications plan for SSF. What was the goal of this plan, and how much of it has been actioned? Constraints?
4.7 TA to Federal and State Govts to revise, develop and implement laws to support labor migrants
What support did ILO provide to revising the Foreign Employment Act (national)? and supporting provinces to develop policies? deliver services? What are the particular amendments suggested by the ILO to the Foreign Employment Act? Note to self – the foreign employment act has been under discussion for amendment for many years now. Probe on corruption and undue influence in the sector and how is that addressed by the program.
4.8 TA to GoN at all levels to improve the national legal & policy framework for labor migration
Migration policy advanced in Provinces 2 and 5, with support of LAPSOJ. How effective has the Labour Advisory Committee been? What support would be needed going forward to operationalize?
Did the ILO adjust its approach to TA based on experiences to date? What do you see as the prospects for replication (with or without ILO support)?
What support did ILO provide to FEIMS?
The Shuvayatra app has 31,000 unique users as at the ILOs' 2019-20 annual report. That's under 10% of registered migrants in 2019. VfM? How to get the word out? Note to self – the ILO report shows that about 750000 USD was allocated to TAF.
How has the project addressed the link between the PMEP and FEA in light of the PEA findings about labor force development? (general strategy and under covid, ref webinar on reintegration in covid during 2020)
The ILO generated a lot of ideas for safe return and reintegration of migrants (ppt, in our doc 329). Are you tracking level of adoption? How are you supporting under SEP-TA?
2019/20 report makes reference to a National Network on Safe Migration. What was the project's link with that body?
How did ILO listen to felt needs/voice of migrants in offering policy or program advice?
4.9 TA to GoN to identify, scope and provide access to new labor markets
GoN's 15th periodic plan changed its focus from the 14th with regards to foreign employment. While strengthening labour migration governance seemed priority in the 14th Plan, the 15th Plan deems that foreign employment should be discouraged and replaced with domestic employment activities. How did this change affect program's goals and activities?
How have the two studies (10 labor market options; cruise sector) been used?
4.10 TA to GoN to develop new BLAs and MoUs according to international standards
Original doc's emphasized SAARC as key to achieving safe and scaled migration. Virtually no mention by end of the project. What happened?
MTR notes MOLESS hesitancy in accepting outside advice on migration issues. Why? What was ILOs response/approach?
Was the work on the Global Compact on Migration a priority for GoN? How did this affect other elements of the SEP-TA?
Other Q's for ILO SEP-TA team

In the 2019/20 annual report: Outputs 4.2 and 4.3 are the same. Error? The difference b/w 4.7 and 4.8 is not clear.
How was the staffing structure for this project determined? Looking back, was it the right size and configuration of skills?
How did you approach gender in your planning and monitoring of the various activities of the project? Probe on how it was addressed in meetings, in tools developed, in strategy support to partners.
Doc's outstanding: 1. Project Logframe; 2. First and last annual reports to FCDO; 3. ToC (NB SEP ToC does not include ref to "coordination" or "policy").
You mentioned 10 implementing partners. Who are they?
Could you provide us a list of consultants hired by the ILO?
You mentioned that the program is not being extended. Have you been provided reasons for so considering much of the budget was underspent due to circumstances?
How did you ensure beneficiary voice in project TA recommendations?

Stakeholder - ILO Consultants
General
What support did you provide to this project? Probe: What were the key output(s) produced by the consultant? Who were the partners?
Since you provided your inputs, do you know how it was used and what is happening now? Probe: In your opinion, what other assistance is highest priority going forward?
How does the SEP-TA project build on strategies or make contributions to other initiatives you support in Nepal or the region?
Output 4. 1 Technical assistance to domestic employment policies
The project supported the government's flagship program on domestic employment (PMEP), including an embedded consultant who helped design regulatory frameworks guidelines and dissemination. Why was the project consultant based in the PMEP transferred to the SSF?
(BP) You made a number of recommendations about incentivizing domestic employment generation in your reports. How much was adopted? Were these reports requested by GoI?
(BP) In the study “Future of work”, you explained different affects brought about by the changes in nature of work (Digital and other technological transformation, green revolution and demographic transition – as pointed out in the PEA). How was this study utilized in SEP-TA activities? Who was it addressed to?
(BP) Re PMEP: How much interface did PMEP design and framework have with the employment generation programs of the ADB and WB? To what extent did the ILO consultant enable those linkages? Probe for examples.
(BP) You proposed an employment impact assessment methodology for the PMEP program (DOC 378) including public audit at local levels. Was the methodology implemented by the different tiers of the government? Will the government at all levels be able to carry out the assessment after SEP program ends? What are the capacity issues? How periodically should the program be assessed?
Which elements of the PMEP been informed by the PEAs and reports you authored? What have been the bottlenecks? How receptive was MoLESS to ILO input?

(BP) What has been the Government’s response to your recommendations on National Industrial Policy?
(BP) The dignity of labour study has led to some MoLESS actions to encourage domestic employment (and keep workers in Nepal). Pls describe. What have been the achievements so far? Challenges? Have other parts of the ILO supported this or just SEP-TA?
(BP) Numerous policy briefs related to industry, enterprise and sectoral growth have been produced by ILO consultants and youth implementing partners. How has the project ensured coherence between national, provincial and local policy briefs? At what level of government has there been more readiness to accept the recommendations? What are the challenges at the different level of government for adopting and implementing the suggestions provided?
Output 4.2 Technical Assistance to Municipal Governments to develop and implement job creation strategies
(BP) You prepared the employment friendly budgeting toolkits for the municipality governments. How was this utilized by the municipalities? Did the toolkit resonate with municipalities need and capacity? What were the challenges in mainstreaming the proposed process? How did it match with the prevailing practices of government budgeting?
How do the toolkits for budget drafting for employment creation and the fellows research intersect? How have each of these products been used in practice?
Why was the audit of the implementation of the PMEP in Provinces 2 and 5 planned and then shelved? (111)
How did the PEA inform the employment audit? How was the audit used? Has it been adopted in other municipalities?
Output 4.3 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels.
(BP)What are your thoughts on the youth component of the SEP TA? How can youths’ voices be institutionalized in employment generation efforts of the government?
Output 4.4 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law.
Was the Wage Report presented only to the JTUCC? Why not tripartite? What was the result?
Employer’s organizations have been major beneficiaries of capacity building – linking them with ACT/EMP and ILO/ITC. What are the most important results? What outstanding needs are there? How will the linkages between employer’s organization and resource partners sustain after the project ends?
Compared to employer’s organization, it appears that there have been fewer capacity building programs with the trade unions. Why is that?
Output 4.5 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the Social Security Act
Why did the project focus on communications? How was the impact of these efforts measured?

What impact did this project have on capacity of the SSF to deliver? What are the main outstanding areas that need attention.
Why was the project consultant based in the PMEP transferred to the SSF?
Output 4.6 Technical Assistance to Federal and State Governments to revise, develop and implement laws and policies to support labour migrants
What support did ILO provide to revising the Foreign Employment Act (national)?
To support provinces to develop policies? Deliver services?
Output 4.7 Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal at all levels to improve the national legal and policy framework for labour migration governance
Migration policy advanced in Provinces 2 and 5, with support of LAPSOJ. How effective has the Labour Advisory Committee been? What support would be needed going forward to operationalize?
What support did ILO provide to FEIMS?
How has the project addressed the link between the PMEP and FEA in light of the PEA findings about labour force development? (general strategy and under covid, ref webinar on reintegration in covid during 2020)
The ILO generated a lot of ideas for safe return and reintegration of migrants (ppt, in our doc 329). Are you tracking level of adoption? How are you supporting under SEP-TA?
(BP) What are your thoughts on reintegration on migrant workers in the domestic market? How does your study on domestic employment strategies and methods incorporate the issues of returning labour migrants?
Output 4.8 Technical Assistance to GoN to identify scope and provide access to new labour markets.
How were the reports prepared by ILO received and used by GoN?
Output 4.9 Technical Assistance to the Government of Nepal to develop new BLAs and MoUs according to international standards.
MTR notes MOLESS hesitancy in accepting outside advice on migration issues. Why? What was ILOs response/approach?
Was the work on the Global Compact on Migration a priority for GoN? How did this affect other elements of the SEP-TA?
Other questions
How did you approach gender in your planning and monitoring of the various activities of the project? Probe on how it was addressed in meetings, in tools developed, in strategy support to partners.

Stakeholder – Federal and Provincial Ministries
General
Over the last four years, what support did the ministry receive from the ILO in the areas of...(note below)? Probe on: how long, what the outcomes were.

On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being extremely useful and 1 being not at all useful, how would you rate this assistance? Please explain your answer.
What additional support in (areas listed below) do you need going forward?
Output 4.1 Technical assistance to domestic employment policies.
The project commissioned Dr. Wagle to prepare a series of assessments for PMEP global value chains and job creation, and market restructuring in Nepal. How were these used by MOLESS?
The project supported the government's flagship program on domestic employment (PMEP), including an embedded consultant who helped design regulatory frameworks guidelines and dissemination. How effective do you believe this TA was?
In 2019-20 it was agreed upon that ILO consultant would be better placed in SSF and not PMEP? Why was that decision made?
Re: PMEP: How much interface did the PMEP design and framework have with the employment generation programs of the ADB and WB? To what extent did the ILO consultant enable those linkages? Probe for examples.
The ILO commissioned a study on setting the minimum wage (by Bishnu Prasad Gautam). Do you know about this study? Were recommendations considered? What was the outcome?
The ILO commissioned a study on Industry Policy (Biswo Paudel). How have the recommendations from that study been used?
Output 4.2 Technical Assistance to Municipal Governments to develop and implement job creation strategies.
The PEA suggests different municipality level initiatives for domestic employment - employment audit, ALMP etc. What has been the experience in applying these tools at different municipalities? Do the need of such initiatives resonate with municipalities capacities?
What support has the ILO SEP-TA offered to strengthening implementation of PMEP? What additional support is needed?
Output 4.3 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels.
Do you know about the research fellowships or youth summit supported by this project? Did you participate in any way? Was it useful? What outputs have been adopted/mainstreamed?
How important is youth voice in your work? What are the best mechanisms for youth engagement?
Output 4.4 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law.
(Provincial) SEP TA supported in preparing a Procedure for establishment of PLAC. How has it been helpful? What are the key priorities and activities taken by PLAC in the province?
(Provincial)The project provided support to establishment of a Provincial Labor Advisory Committee. What has it done ? how effective has it been so far?
What support would it need in future? Have other provinces sought advice from you about establishing a PLAC?
Output 4.5 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the Social Security Act

<p>The ILO provided TA and support to all tripartite partners under the SEP-TA to implement the SSF. Outcomes remain tentative, despite 2015 constitution mandating 80% coverage by 2030. What do you consider the most effective strategies? Which should be continued or scaled? Evidence?</p>
<p>The ILO supported preparation of a strategic communications plan for SSF. What was the goal of this plan, and how much of it has been actioned? Constraints?</p>
<p>The ILO provided five trainings on social protection to SSF staff. Has this been mainstreamed?</p>
<p>Output 4.6 Technical Assistance to Federal and State Governments to revise, develop and implement laws and policies to support labour migrants</p>
<p>What are government’s plan and priorities on implementation of law, policies and regulations on labour migration? What technical assistance was sought from the ILO? How did the SEP TA respond? Was the assistance helpful?</p>
<p>What support did ILO provide to revising the Foreign Employment Act (national)?</p>
<p>Output 4.7 Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal at all levels to improve the national legal and policy framework for labour migration governance</p>
<p>(Province 2) A draft Foreign Employment Policy was prepared. What support did SEP provide on this? How will this draft be taken forward? Will the draft be approved by the provincial government?</p>
<p>Were the ideas and recommendations generated by the ILO SEP on safe return and reintegration of migrant workers shared with you? What input did you have? Was any of it adopted? How?</p>
<p>Output 4.8 Technical Assistance to GoN to identify scope and provide access to new labour markets.</p>
<p>Are you aware of the market studies on destination countries for migrant workers? If so, was this useful for you? Has any actions been taken based on the study findings?</p>
<p>Output 4.9 Technical Assistance to the Government of Nepal to develop new BLAs and MoUs according to international standards.</p>
<p>What are the government’s plan and priorities in engaging with the destination countries for labour migrants? Was the work on the Global Compact on Migration a priority?</p>

<p>Stakeholder – Municipality</p>
<p>General</p>
<p>Over the last four years, what support did the municipality receive from the ILO in the areas of...(note below)? On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being extremely useful and 1 being not at all useful, how would you rate this assistance? Please explain your answer.</p>
<p>Output 4.1 Technical assistance to domestic employment policies.</p>
<p>How has the SEP-TA(ILO) project supported implementation of the PMEP in your municipality? What was most useful? What else would be helpful?</p>
<p>Output 4.2 Technical Assistance to Municipal Governments to develop and implement job creation strategies.</p>

What are the key priorities for your municipality in terms of labour and employment? What are the short-term needs and long-term strategies? What are the major areas requiring TA and how did ILO address the needs?
Have you used the tool for local employment strategy generation or budget drafting for employment creation prepared by the ILO? How useful was it?
What other types of assistance do you need in developing job creation strategies?
Output 4.3 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels.
Do you know about the Daayitwa youth fellows program? Was there a fellow who did some research in your municipality? What do you remember about it? Has there been any follow up from the research?
More generally, how important is it for youth to have a voice in employment policy and programs?
Output 4.4 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law.
Creation of labour desk at the municipality level is mandatory as per the new law. Has a labour desk been established in your municipality? ILO provided a model operating procedure for labour desk as TA - has that helped?
Has the ILO provided support on safety at work during COVID?
Output 4.5 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the Social Security Act
Output 4.6 Technical Assistance to Federal and State Governments to revise, develop and implement laws and policies to support labour migrants
Output 4.7 Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal at all levels to improve the national legal and policy framework for labour migration governance
What is the role of municipality on labour migration issues? What assistance did the program provide? How was it useful?
What additional assistance do you need in setting a framework for labour migration governance?

Stakeholder - FNCCI
General
Over the last four years, what support did the FNCCI receive from the ILO in the areas of...(note below)? On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being extremely useful and 1 being not at all useful, how would you rate this assistance? Please explain your answer.
How did the ILO help you and your members respond to impacts of the COVID pandemic? Probe on benefits.
4.1 Technical assistance to domestic employment policies.

Are you aware of the Political Economic Analyses supported by the ILO (Wagle) looking at strengthening Nepal’s economic position in future? If so, what is the business community’s view of the perspectives and recommendations?
Are you aware of the ILO’s Enterprise Competitiveness and Assessment Toolkit? If so, how has it been used by your membership? How useful do you/they think it is? What would you amend?
Output 4.3 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels.
Do you think it is a priority for youth to be involved in contributing to policy and programming discussions about employment? Are you aware of the youth fellows in your municipality?
Did you attend the youth summit? Was it relevant/useful?
Output 4.4 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law.
SEP TA supported FNCCI in drafting the model bylaws. What is the implementation status of the bylaws?
FNCCI members are integral part of the Labour Advisory Councils and Labour Desks at all levels. What are your thoughts on TA provided by ILO on formulating procedures for operating these mechanism? How was the business sector involved in producing such operating procedures?
Is FNCCI involved in scaling provincial PLAC or 113municipal Labour Desks outside of the project areas?
Did the project support any initiatives that promoted more constructive collective bargaining? Describe. How effective were they? What else needs to be done?
How did the ILO work with you during minimum wage negotiations? How effective would you say this was?
There was an agreement reached during COVID on wage payment and other support to workers during COVID lockdown. What role did the ILO play in enabling that decision?
Employer’s organizations have been major beneficiary of capacity building – linking them with ACT/EMP and ILO/ITC. What are the most significant results? How will the linkages between employer’s organization and resource partners sustain after the project ends?
Output 4.5 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the Social Security Act
Are you aware of the communications plan of the SSF? How has FNCCI participated in terms of outreach to members? What are the issues arising? What else needs to be done?
Other
Over the course of the last four years, the ILO hosted a number of social dialogues to discuss laws and COVID responses. Was this useful? How?

Stakeholder - Trade Unions
General
Over the last four years, what support did the municipality receive from the ILO in the areas of...(note below)? On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being extremely useful and 1 being not at all useful, how would you rate this assistance? Please explain your answer.

<p>How did the ILO help you and your members respond to impacts of the COVID pandemic? Probe on benefit.</p>
<p>Output 4.1 Technical assistance to domestic employment policies.</p>
<p>What role have you played in connecting the PMEPP with informal labor sector (and Employment Service Centers)? Has the ILO supported these efforts? How? What other types of support would have been helpful?</p>
<p>Output 4.3 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels.</p>
<p>Do you think it is a priority for youth to be involved in contributing to policy and programming discussions about employment? Are you aware of the youth fellows in your municipality?</p>
<p>Did you attend the youth summit? Was it relevant/useful?</p>
<p>Output 4.4 Technical Assistance to tripartite constituents for the implementation of the labour law.</p>
<p>How has the ILO supported dialogue on labor and employment at your level? Probe on specifics and examples. What else do you need?</p>
<p>Did you participate in negotiations with business related to wages for employees under COVID? What role did the ILO play? How helpful was this to the outcome? Why?</p>
<p>The JTUCC strategic plan supported by the ILO does not include information about resourcing or timeline. Can you clarify your expectations? What have been the achievements so far?</p>
<p>Trade Unions members are integral part of the Labour Advisory Councils and Labour Desks at all levels. What are your thoughts on TA provided by ILO on formulating procedures for operating these mechanism? How were the trade unions involved in producing such operating procedures?</p>
<p>Is JTUCC involved in scaling provincial PLAC or municipal Labor Desks outside of the project areas? Is there a demand from members?</p>
<p>Did the project support any initiatives that promoted more constructive collective bargaining? Describe. How effective were they? What else needs to be done?</p>
<p>How did the ILO work with you during minimum wage negotiations? How effective would you say this was?</p>
<p>There was an agreement reached during COVID on wage payment and other support to workers during COVID lockdown. What role did the ILO play in enabling that decision?</p>
<p>Output 4.6 Technical Assistance to Federal and State Governments to revise, develop and implement laws and policies to support labour migrants</p>
<p>What are the key issues for implementation of the Social Security Act? What role has your organization played in design? Roll out? What support did the ILO provide on that? What remains to be done?</p>
<p>Output 4.7 Technical Assistance to Government of Nepal at all levels to improve the national legal and policy framework for labour migration</p>
<p>One of the key issues listed by JTUCC is migrants and several trade unions have networks for migrants workers at home and abroad. Has the SEP TA program interacted with you on issues of migrants? Similarly, on issues of gender and equality?</p>

Stakeholder: Implementing partners (Daayitwa, TAF, CESLAM, LAPSOJ, FWEAN ...)
General
How did your organization come to know about the SEP? How was your organization selected as an implementing partner?
Over the last four years your organization has worked closely with the ILO under the SEP program. Can you describe what you have done? What are the initiatives that you consider the most important and impactful? Why? Aside from financial support, what support did you get from the ILO in carrying out these activities?
Did your organization coordinate or collaborate with other implementing partners of the SEP program? What were the outcomes?
Numerous studies were produced by the SEP program. How did the knowledge products support your program activities?
What knowledge products did you produce under this program? How were they used? How effective do you think they were?
How did the program activities change as a result of the COVID pandemic? What were the results? What support did ILO provide to respond to the changes?
Output 4.1, 4.2
(Daayitwa) In 2019 Daayitwa's scope of work was expanded to support Output 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. on job creation and youth engagement. What have been the key results of that change? Was the team prepared to expand their work? What capacity support did SEP team provide? Was the expansion of work requested by you or put forth by ILO?
(Daayitwa) How were the topics which the individual fellows researched chosen? What steps were taken to ensure findings were useful and used? Overall how effective were these steps?
(Daayitwa) SEP TA team tasked Daayitwa to develop policy brief for the provincial government. What were the outcomes of these policy briefs on agriculture, returnee migrants, employment resource center, and women entrepreneurs? How were they used?
Output 4.3 Youth employment campaign delivered by Youth Innovation Leaders at local, provincial and federal levels.
(Daayitwa) Daayitwas led studies on graduation of micro-enterprises. What were the outcomes of the study? Follow up at municipality, provincial, national level?
(Daayitwa) We understand the ability to integrate youth fellows on employment issues at municipality issue was challenging in many cases. Can you provide some examples of where it worked and where it didn't?
Was your organization involved in the youth employment summit? What were the outcomes from the youth employment summit?
Output 4.7 – 4.10
(TAF) Could you tell us more about the work on Shuvayatra? How has it been received by different stakeholders? Did you engage with the government at different levels about the application? Besides using the application, are migrant workers involved in any aspect of the application? How did ILO support this aside from funding?
(CESLAM) Have you followed the status of the draft national strategy on GCM? How was it received by the government? Similarly, on study conducted on covid's impacts on labour migrants? What were the outcomes?

Stakeholder: FCDO (some Q's also relevant for ILO Country Director)
Why did you select the ILO for inclusion in this project?
Why did Component 4 begin two years into the project? On reflection was this the best sequencing?
What have been the most important accomplishments of the SEP-TA? Probe on why.
The outputs and indicators (milestones) for this sub component changed every year over the course of the project. Was this as a result of ILO recommendations, FCDO's directives, or a mutual agreement?
Several of the FCDO reports encourage greater collaboration between the ILO and WSP. Were there specific synergies you were looking for? How did it work in practice?
What about ILO's partnership with national and municipal government agencies in moving policy initiatives forward? Were there any areas where you felt the ILO could have done a better job? Probe for specifics and perceived reasons.
Why was the SEP TA component not extended though the budget has been underspent due to variety of reasons?
In the 2017/18 annual report some concerns were expressed about i) follow up from studies and meetings and how they inform policy; ii) coordination with LBS; iii) integration of the youth component--linking with other project activities; iv) formal stocktaking of initiatives t reflect contextual changes related to federalization. Did the project address these early concerns? Probe.
In your 2019 FCDO report (where did this exhortation come from?): The ILO programme requires a strategic stocktake and to ensure the labour and migration constraints identified in the first-year political economic analysis are being eased through annual refresh and workplans so activities are more clearly linked to outcomes. ILO's value addition to SEP include fostering relations with MOLESS, addressing constraints on industrial relations and trade union disputes which limit job creation and productivity, supporting sub-national governments with evidence based employment-centric planning, labour market information system thought leadership, and governance of foreign employment in relation to diversification to new destinations, lowering costs and increasing incomes for migrant workers. <i>This should be the focus of their future workplans with DFID to align more closely with SEP</i> (September 2019, ILO and DFID).
the FCDO 2018/19 report suggested to reform youth programs implemented by Daayitwa deeming their initiatives did not align with long term goals and linkages with SEP goals. What happened and why? How was it addressed? What have been the results after making changes?
How relevant is the original Theory of Change now? What did you see as ILO's role in the SEP-causal assumptions?

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