



Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) -Phase IV (LKA/20/03/CHE)

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Acronyms

ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
ADD	Abu Dhabi Dialogue
ALFEA	Association of Foreign Employment Agencies
BLA	Bilateral Labour Agreements
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program
EFC	Employers Federation of Ceylon
EO	Employers Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GOALS	Governance of Labour Migration in South and South East Asia
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILO-ITC	ILO-International Training Centre
ILO ROAP	ILO Regional Office for Asia Pacific
ILS	International Labour Standards
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LFEA	Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEP	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAPRR	National Action Plan on Return and Re-integration
NLMP	National Labour Migration Policy
NPC	National Project Coordinator
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee

PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PD	Project Document
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQRF	South Asian Qualifications Referencing Framework
SD	Social Dialogue
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau for Foreign Employment
SLMP	Safe Labour Migration Program
SNLMP	Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TU	Trade Union

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT	
Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure	Since the 1980s, overseas employment has been a key contributor to Sri Lanka's economy mainly in the form of foreign exchange remittances. In 2022, private remittances sent to Sri Lanka amounted to USD 3,789.4 million, with over 90 per cent of Sri Lankan employees working abroad were employed in the Arab States. The project 'Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy' is the International Labour Organisation (ILO) component of the Safe Labour Migration Programme (SLMP) in Sri Lanka, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Global Programme for Migration and Development since 2010. The current transfer phase of the Project reflected in its interventions, the regional Governance of Labour Migration in South Asia (GOALS) Programme, also supported by SDC, which partnered with governments and other stakeholders in the South Asia sub-region for cross-country of origin support to national level actions; while these national experiences and best practices were also disseminated in the regional Colombo Process and Abdu Dhabi Dialogue. The design of Phase IV was developed to respond to contextual and current issues whilst also building on the past three phases of interventions on labour migration. The Project was structured around three Outcomes: Outcome 1: Outward Labour Migration policies and plans are better monitored for implementation, by the Government of Sri Lanka Outcome 2: Fair and ethical recruitment, skills recognition and certification, and sustainable reintegration is fostered through institutional enhancement and the 'Whole- Of-Government-Approach' Outcome 3: Improved Evidence Base on Labour Migration to inform knowledge, dialogue, policy and action Over Phases I-III, the Project has supported the Government of Sri Lanka to formulate an Operational Manual for Labour Sections of Sri Lankan Missions in Countries of Destination (2012 and revised in 2019); to develop the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Sri Lankan Migrants (adopted in 2015); and to update

and strengthen the National Labour Migration Policy National Policy on Migration for Employment (in 2019-2020), among other activities.

The Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy Project – Phase IV has at large met its planned Outcomes and contributed to meet the set out long-term Objective: “All women and men migrant workers in Sri Lanka are ensured safe, orderly and regular employment”. The project’s startup was extremely challenging as the project was confronted with challenges coming from the COVID-19 pandemic. When the worst consequences of the pandemic were settled Sri Lanka entered a serious economic and political crisis which again had a negative impact on the projects possibilities for implementing its activities. During the second half of the implementing period the project managed to speed up the implementation.

In Sri Lanka there is now an increased interest in self-regulation within the recruitment industry, as many agencies are keen to differentiate themselves from unethical recruiters and to be identified by migrant workers and employers alike as professional, responsible and trustworthy. This is also a recommendation of the end-of-phase III evaluation. Therefore, the other prong of this strategy was to build the capacity of the Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (ALFEA) to train its members and others on a fee-paying model, which is self-sustaining.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) became an important part of the project. Resources very successfully invested in strengthening the governments capacity in this field and even there still are challenges in relation to outreach a good basis for further development was created.

Present situation of the project

The objectives of the project have largely been met even though due to delays not all outputs have been delivered, some outputs e.g. the Learning Management System and AI based knowledge management are reported to be ready to be launched. It is expected that in the short- and mid-term (after the closure of the project) the government will secure that all initiated activities will be running full scale. The evaluation understands that there is a strong political commitment to see this happen, but some resource issues might be a challenge.

Throughout the implementation of the current project attention was paid to assess the sustainability of the investments of the project and to recommend for its sustainability as the project ends and no new interventions are planned. ILO has according to the donor well communicated the process of consolidation to all its sub partners and beneficiaries. It has also witnessed outcomes of this awareness among

	the mid- and senior level government officials. As a result, the government immediately took actions to sustain the readily available structures and systems.
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	The main purposes of the evaluation were to fulfil the accountability to the donor and to the tripartite constituents, to serve internal organizational learning and develop actionable Recommendations. This evaluation reviewed the project design, implementation, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability and made recommendations for eventual future interventions. The findings and recommendations are to be used as organizational learning to improve the future relevant projects and programmes. The scope of the evaluation covers the implementation in Sri Lanka. The evaluation collected data and information from implementing partners and beneficiaries of the project, including concerned governmental institutions, social partners and relevant CSOs. The evaluation covers activities, outputs and outcomes of the projects for the period between 15 January 2021 to 30 September 2024. It covers all the planned outputs and outcomes under the project to achieve the program goal of the project which is: Labour migration in Sri Lanka is well- governed, orderly and regular for all women and men, ensuring decent, safe and productive employment. As the project operated at the national level, with a greater emphasis on policy-level engagements rather than service delivery, due consideration was given to national-level deliveries. The evaluation is based on the following OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation.
Methodology of evaluation	The Evaluator conducted a participatory, theory-based evaluation to answer the questions raised in the Terms of Reference. The evaluation interviewed governmental and local officials (men and women) who have participated in capacity building activities to learn how relevant the training has been and to what extent the new knowledge and skills are used in their daily work. The evaluation further conducted semi-structured interviews with project staff, including the project staff of other ILO projects and ILO staff responsible for financial, administrative and technical backstopping of the project.

The evaluation was confronted with certain challenges in meeting the intended outreach to beneficiaries. This was due to Presidential elections taking place two days before the field mission started and the from this unavailability of some senior government officials.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The design of Phase IV responded to lessons learned from prior phases of the program by focusing on limited but strategic interventions with clear links between the different Outcomes of the Project. Further, it incorporated collaboration between SDC Safe Labour Migration Programme partners: the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) and with a district-based network of CSOs.

The policy development of the National Policy on Migration for Employment and the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration are by all informants seen to have the potential to contribute to the promotion of decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers.

The evaluation notes a strong and fruitful cooperation with relevant ministries and an almost daily contact with the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment. The evaluation finds that this close cooperation has created a strong felt ownership to the program among governmental officials.

The project developed a good cooperation with the Governance of Labour Migration in South and South East Asia (GOALS) project within which a good cooperation and coordination was established with IOM. The current project focused in this cooperation mainly on the activities to be implemented in Sri Lanka. It was however informed that stakeholders saw the agencies working in silos with limited interaction when it came to activities.

The project management, with the understanding and flexibility from the donor managed to speed up implementation of planned activities during the last two years of the project – and even secure implementation of more activities than planned.

In general, the project has been implemented with a good level of effectiveness especially taking in to account the challenges and delays it was confronted with in the first two years of implementation caused by developments beyond the reach of the project.

Outcome 1: Outward Labour Migration policies and plans are better monitored for implementation, by the Government of Sri Lanka

The evaluation finds that the Government now has stronger capacity for implementation and monitoring of the developed policy – based on the Action Plan developed within the project. There is however still long way to go before the policies and practices will reach all women and men labour migrants. Overall, this Outcome has been met. This even a lacking ownership among social partners.

Outcome 2: Fair and ethical recruitment, skills recognition and certification, and sustainable reintegration is fostered through institutional enhancement and the ‘Whole-Of-Government- Approach’

Through the strengthening of the qualification framework both regionally in South Asia and in Sri Lanka has skills development and reintegration possibilities been improved.

While the RPL system is operational, and complemented by the National Skills Passport, there have been a number of issues impeding its efficiency and effectiveness. There is reported to be scope for improvement in coordination of stakeholders, especially at divisional secretariat level; also, in accessibility to migrant workers who may be on home leave for short periods of time; lower proportion of women to men workers participating in the scheme; also there is a need for expansion of assessment centres.

Outcome 3: Policy makers, individuals and institutions at national and regional level used evidence base to inform policy dialogues, policy drafting and knowledge exchange

The project has together with an ILO project for policy dialogue developed eight large scale and Ministry level policy position papers. These have been used both nationally and regionally as basis for evidence-based policy development discussions. The evaluation was informed that that within a short period of time 52 studies, reports and other materials on labour migration have been published by different institutions and agencies creating a huge knowledge base in Sri Lanka. Even though the planned Knowledge Hub did not take off as planned the evaluation finds that the project has met this Outcome by contributing to building up capacity among Governmental officials. It is expected that the strong commitment shown will secure further achievements in this field. An AI based knowledge management system has been developed towards the end of the project.

The evaluation finds that the ILO in the design phase could have made more efforts to conduct needs assessments of how many trainers and master trainers the partners needed to be able to implement planned activities. Also, the project could have benefitted from stronger needs assessment when developing training materials.

There are big numbers of women going abroad for work, these will benefit from the initiatives taken within the current project. There was however no quota for women participants set out for training and other activities. Even this there were often a majority of women among participants at the different levels. The project could have established minimum quota for women participation in the activities and also promoted these standards among partners. For implementing partners, gender balance could have been a requirement.

The project has contributed to lasting changes in norms and policies that strengthen governance, capacity building and skills development related to labour migration. The policies are in place this can have a strong impact on the Sri Lankan labour migration on the mid- and long-term.

The interventions long-term effects can be expected to be seen in skills qualification frameworks, RPL (e-RPL) and also in further professionalism in the work of the Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (LFEA's) in terms of capacitating duty bearers in protecting

rights of migrant workers in areas such as governance of labour migration, monitoring and review of implementation of Code of Conducts.

Women migrant workers should be actively involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of labour migration governance. Research, data collection and analysis should be gender responsive through disaggregation based on sex and gender, to record the status and conditions of migrant workers who are women vis-à-vis those of men, and of labour migration as experienced by women and men respectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations:

1) The ILO is recommended to investigate with EOs and trade unions the need for developing policies on labour migration to meet the challenges and benefit from labour migration both inwards and outwards. These policies could also be developed in relation to the Just Transition agenda.

2) The current project comes to an end and the donor has indicated that no further funding for financing the activities initiated under the project will be available. Governmental officials indicated to the evaluation that no allocations are foreseen in their budgets for these activities. The GoSL is therefore recommended urgently to initiate fundraising with other donors to secure continuation of the many successful activities. Some actions are budgeted with external financial assistance.

3) The ILO and GoSL are recommended to involve future users when developing training and awareness raising materials to ensure that the materials meet the needs of the users.

4) Job orders are normally short-term. GoSL is recommended to include strategic sectors where the employment perspectives are 3-5 years giving the TVET system time to prepare potential migrant workers with needed knowledge and skills.

5) The GoSL is recommended to use social platforms (Tik-Tok, Instagram, X, Facebook and others) to raise awareness about e-RPL and RPL. This is to overcome the challenges with low outreach to target groups.

6) The ILO/IOM and the GoSL are recommended to investigate the reasons for missing outreach of the e-RPL and Skills Passport. This is

to mitigate at an early stage if there are any push challenges in the set-up.

7) The GoSL is recommended to give further priority to the work of FEDOs. This would mean capacity building and providing them with the needed material resources so that they can reach out to potential and returning migrants.

8) The GoSL is recommended to give further priority to the whole-of-Government approach to be developed at the provincial, district and divisional level. This is to maximize the benefits of the many efforts made at these levels to ensure fair and safe migration and return. The “Whole-of-Government” approach is appreciated by all stakeholders, but when it comes to funding some parts of the governmental structures have significant funding whereas others are lacking funding. It is therefore recommended to expand the approach also to cover funding.

9) The ILO is recommended to follow up to plans which were in place before the pandemic on capacity building for private employment agencies and their organization(s). Jointly or separate the Government, trade unions and agencies should be made aware of the ILO guidelines for PEAs and C181 with the perspective of using the guidelines when developing regulations for the industry and to prepare for a later ratification of C181.

10) The ILO is strongly recommended to ensure that in own activities and in activities implemented by partners a quota of 40% women and 30% male participation is in place. Also, it must be ensured that these quotas are reflected in project design and reporting. Reporting on project progress MUST have gender disaggregated data throughout.

11) The ILO should consider to have a media strategy in place for all projects and also ensure that the needed capacity for realizing such a strategy is in place in the CO.

12) The ILO is recommended to give priority to promotion of social protection (incl. pension schemes) for migrant workers in possible future interventions. With migrant workers staying abroad for several years or return into migration time after time it would be fair to include them in social protection schemes.

Main lessons learned and good practices	A lesson learned from the current project would be that the physical set-up for the management of the project(s) can have an important positive influence on the projects approach to “work as one”. Another lesson learned would be the importance of not only develop new initiatives in skills recognition and qualification frameworks, but also secure that information about the initiatives reach the potential users. The project has shown interesting emerging good practises. The direct involvement of social partners in the preparation of Bilateral Labour Agreements is an interesting new approach that should be promoted by the ILO and scaled. Sri Lanka has established a possibility for migrant workers when home for shorter periods to fast-track recognition of their skills/qualifications. This is an interesting approach, and it should be monitored to understand id it can be scaled without degrading the value of certificates.
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1. Context and Background of the project

1.1 Context

Since the 1980s, overseas employment has been a key contributor to Sri Lanka's economy mainly in the form of foreign exchange remittances. In 2022, private remittances sent to Sri Lanka amounted to USD 3,789.4 million, with over 90 per cent of Sri Lankan employees working abroad were employed in the Arab States.

A new feature is the emergence of non-traditional markets for Sri Lankan labour migration, mainly male, migrant workers. While the Middle East continues to provide the largest number of jobs abroad, especially for women; new countries of destination include South Korea, Japan, Malaysia and Cyprus. Meanwhile, an increasing number of male workers also find jobs in the Middle East, particularly in construction. While there is an upward trend in the proportion of workers in skilled, middle management and professional categories of employment; Sri Lankan migrant workers continue to be concentrated in occupations defined as 'Housemaids' (30.3%) and "Unskilled Labour" (25.2%).¹

Labour migration in Sri Lanka at a glance;

- *In 2022, Sri Lanka saw 311,269 people leaving the country, the highest in history. Previously, the country's annual peak was 300,413 in 2014. It was more than double of the migrated population of 121,795 in the previous year 2021. (Central Bank Data 2022)*
- *Private remittances sent to Sri Lanka in 2022 amounted to USD 3,789.4 million, in comparison to USD 5,491.0 million in 2021 recording a monthly average of USD 315.8 million per month. An improvement in inflow of workers' remittances was witnessed in the recent months in line with the higher departures for foreign employments. (Sources: UNDESA, SLBFE statistics, World Bank).*
- *Men/women ratio of foreign employment: 66 per cent male and 34 per cent female.*
- *Over 90 per cent of Sri Lankan employees working abroad were employed in the Middle East.*

The project "Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy' is the ILO component of the Safe Labour Migration Programme (SLMP) in Sri Lanka, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Global Programme for Migration and Development since 2010.

Migrant workers from Sri Lanka are primarily in the low and semi-skilled sectors with many workers, mostly but not only women, lacking decent work and vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Effective migration governance mechanisms – which are utilized by policymakers and state officials to monitor and review implementation of labour migration processes that are rights-based and gender responsive – can ensure that the outcomes of migration for employment are beneficial to migrant workers and their families as well as the development of countries of origin and destination alike.

This makes it more urgent for workers to expand their opportunities through recognition of their skills and competences, including where acquired informally, as well as for acquisition and certification of skills through the national vocational qualifications system.

State agencies and actors became more aware of the breaches of rights and protection in the form of unpaid wages, abysmal living and working conditions in countries of destination, and issues related to re-

¹ Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2020). Economic and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka 2020, Table 3.32, p. 123, https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/sites/default/files/cbslweb_documents/statistics/otherpub/ess_2020_e1.pdf

integrating returnee migrants and providing alternatives to aspirant migrants, following the COVID-19 crisis. Post COVID developments underscored the crucial importance of efficient and effective governance mechanisms, which are inclusive for all stakeholders including migrant workers; and the critical role of whole-of-government-approaches to the return and sustainable reintegration of migrant workers.

The current transfer phase of the Project reflected in its interventions, the regional GOALS Programme, also supported by SDC, which partnered with governments and other stakeholders in the South Asia sub- region for cross-country of origin support to national level actions; while these national experiences and best practices were also disseminated in the regional Colombo Process and Abdu Dhabi Dialogue.

The design of Phase IV was developed to respond to these contextual and current issues whilst also building on the past three phases of interventions on labour migration. The Project was structured around three outcomes:

- (1) enhancing the benefits of the labour migration governance framework (the National Policy on Migration for Employment and the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration) through improved monitoring and review of its implementation;
- (2) fostering fair and ethical recruitment, skills recognition and certification, and strengthened service delivery by state officials, through strategic initiatives driven by the stakeholders themselves; (later amended)
- (3) providing policymakers, public officials and other stakeholders with an evidence base for their informed participation in policy, dialogue and action on labour migration.

The ILO supported the Government of Sri Lanka to formulate through extensive consultations, Sri Lanka's first framework on the governance of labour migration: the National Labour Migration Policy⁴ (NLMP), in 2008. Thereafter, from 2010 onwards and through the SDC's Safe Labour Migration Programme, the ILO provided its technical assistance in the development of Sri Lanka's Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers Sri Lanka^{5,2} in 2015; and more recently, the revision of the NLMP after more than 10 years of operation, rebranded as the National Policy on Migration for Employment (2020). This revision was done to be in line with the recent national, regional and global migration frameworks.

Over the course of the previous phase of the Project, there was success in broadening the engagement between government and non-governmental stakeholders in policy dialogues on labour migration governance: including the representation of civil society organisations engaged in service provision and advocacy for migrant workers; in the National Action Committee on Migration and Employment. In the current phase of the Project, this recognition and participation was planned to be secured by migrant workers themselves through their registered societies or associations at local level, which were federated at national level in an all-island platform that amplified their voices in anything that concerns their families and themselves. Unfortunately, this structure did not last due to internal disagreements and political interference it was reported.

Human resource capacities would need to be enhanced to have regular coordination and follow-up with key stakeholders (e.g. Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labour, Skills and Vocational Development, and Women and Child Affairs, and the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment) to consistently follow up on action

² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-colombo/documents/publication/wcms_497323.pdf

plans and commitments. The State Ministry should be able to independently or collaboratively undertake quick situation analyses and develop action plans according to the needs and context. Its systems and structures should be upgraded in a self-sustaining way, for improved coordination with relevant duty bearers and continuous communication with all stakeholders. The proposed new mechanism for this purpose was the 'Secretariat' within the State Ministry, which is staffed by existing cadre and utilising existing infrastructural resources but dedicated to this specialised function.

Fair and Ethical Recruitment

The recruitment industry in Sri Lanka plays an important role in the labour migration sector. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator 10.7.1; and Declarations adopted in the Colombo Process and Abu Dhabi Dialogue reflect the importance of issues related to recruitment of migrant workers. Despite these guidelines many male workers are charged prohibitive fees (ranging from 1 month to 3 months equivalent of salary); while many women workers are offered pre-departure monetary incentives which affects their decision-making in taking up the offer of employment regardless of safeguards. Both men and women migrant workers are often provided inaccurate job information and offered bogus job offers which result in abuse and exploitation during both recruitment and in-service stages.

The presence of numerous intermediaries, some with direct connections to agencies and employers overseas, makes regulation by the SLBFE alone difficult.

Despite past investments to promote fair and ethical recruitment through increased awareness of licensed foreign employment agents and intermediaries across Sri Lanka; as well as the training of SLBFE officials on responsible practices and the operationalisation of the Code of Ethical Conduct, the prevailing environment of weak regulation enables the prevalence of unethical recruitment practices to the detriment of migrants workers, particularly in low skilled occupations, and good recruitment agencies alike.

An ILO study³ for the "Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration" (REFRAME) project identified areas of weakness in the SLBFE's regulation of foreign employment agencies and made recommendations including tightening of licensing requirements, greater transparency in the calculation of fees, and reduction in business operating costs which could in the short term reduce recruitment fees borne by workers, while moving in the direction of zero cost to workers, including an 'employer pays' model.

Therefore, phase IV of the Project, paid attention to collaboration with the SLBFE, to strengthening the institutional capacity of its Licensing Division and Monitoring & Evaluation Division to better regulate licensed foreign employment agencies in the annual renewal of licenses, as well as for more rigorous monitoring and follow-up in-between.

There is increased interest in self-regulation within the industry, as many agencies are keen to differentiate themselves from unethical recruiters and to be identified by migrant workers and employers alike as professional, responsible and trustworthy. This is also a recommendation of the end-of-phase III evaluation. Therefore, the other prong of this strategy is to build the capacity of the Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies to train its members and others on a fee-paying model, which is self-sustaining. This strengthen self-regulation by the industry, creates a culture of respect for fair and ethical recruitment practices, and also increases public awareness of these principles especially among migrant workers and aspirant migrant workers.

³ ILO (2020). Improving recruitment agency business practices in Sri Lanka, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_746787.pdf

Skills recognition and certification

Skills recognition and qualifications underpin decent work by enabling access to skilled work with a greater likelihood of better working and living conditions for prospective migrant workers. In addition, returned migrant workers also often struggle to find meaningful work upon return to Sri Lanka that appreciates and values their skills and competences acquired abroad. When looking to re-migrate, the same issue may apply, where new employers in countries of destination disregard past work experience.

The government of Sri Lanka's national policy framework prioritises the skilling of society, and specifically refers to sending skilled instead of low-skilled workers overseas for employment. On 'World Youth Skills Day 2020' the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka officially launched the National Skills Passport⁴, which is a portable record of the knowledge and skills of a worker, creating an online resume of career history with certificates and references.

The ILO in Sri Lanka has emphasised the recognition of skills of migrant workers and expanding access of migrant workers to assessment and certification of their skills and competences, whether formal or non-formal. In collaboration with the state authority, the Technical Vocational and Education Commission, as well as the Employers Federation of Ceylon with its network of employers and real time labour market information, the ILO supported the development and roll-out of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system beginning with the apparel; hotel and tourism; and plantation sectors. Returnee migrant workers have also benefited from skills assessment and certification in the construction industry.

Sustainable Reintegration

Sustainable Reintegration of returnee migrant workers – through equal access to social protection and services, justice, psycho-social assistance, vocational training, employment opportunities and decent work, recognition of skills acquired abroad, and financial services – is highlighted in Objective 21 of the Global Compact for Migration. Within Sri Lanka, it is widely recognised that sustainable reintegration has been the weakest stage in the migration cycle. Returnee migrant workers report their challenges in reintegration as including: limited access to advisory services; limited formal employment through lack of skills or certification of skills and competences; lack of capital as their earnings have been spent on household consumption, medical expenses of family members, housing; lack of networks and support structures, etc.

Therefore, the Government of Sri Lanka, with the technical assistance of the ILO and the support of SDC, developed the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration in 2015, to strengthen the National Labour Migration Policy of 2008. In the previous phase of the Project, there was renewed focus on the implementation of the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration involving SDC partner HELVETAS and SDC civil society partners. These included training of Foreign Employment Development Officers (FEDOs) and staff of the SLBFE.

1.2. Background of the Program

The three previous phases of the ILO Project supported by SDC, have as mentioned above assisted the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders to implement Sri Lanka's National Labour Migration Policy

⁴ "National Skills Passport spurs long term skills planning", The Island, 27 September 2020, <https://island.lk/national-skills-passport-spurs-long-term-skills-planning/>.

(adopted in 2008) by strengthening the governance of labour migration to ensure that migration for employment is safe, orderly and regular for women and men workers.

Over Phases I-III, the Project has supported the Government of Sri Lanka to formulate an Operational Manual for Labour Sections of Sri Lankan Missions in Countries of Destination (2012 and revised in 2019); to develop the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Sri Lankan Migrants (adopted in 2015); and to update and strengthen the National Labour Migration Policy National Policy on Migration for Employment (in 2019-2020), among other activities.

1.3 Aim of the project

In the current transfer phase of the Project, intervention has shifted from policy making to enhanced policy implementation through assumption of ownership of the Safe Labour Migration Programme by the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders.

The four core thematic areas of the National Policy on Migration for Employment are:

- Policy Area 1: Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment
- Policy Area 2: Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of their families
- Policy Area 3: Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies
- Policy Area 4: Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development Phase IV of the Project aligns itself with these core themes through its three Outcomes:

The main strategies for implementation in this phase of the Project were to:

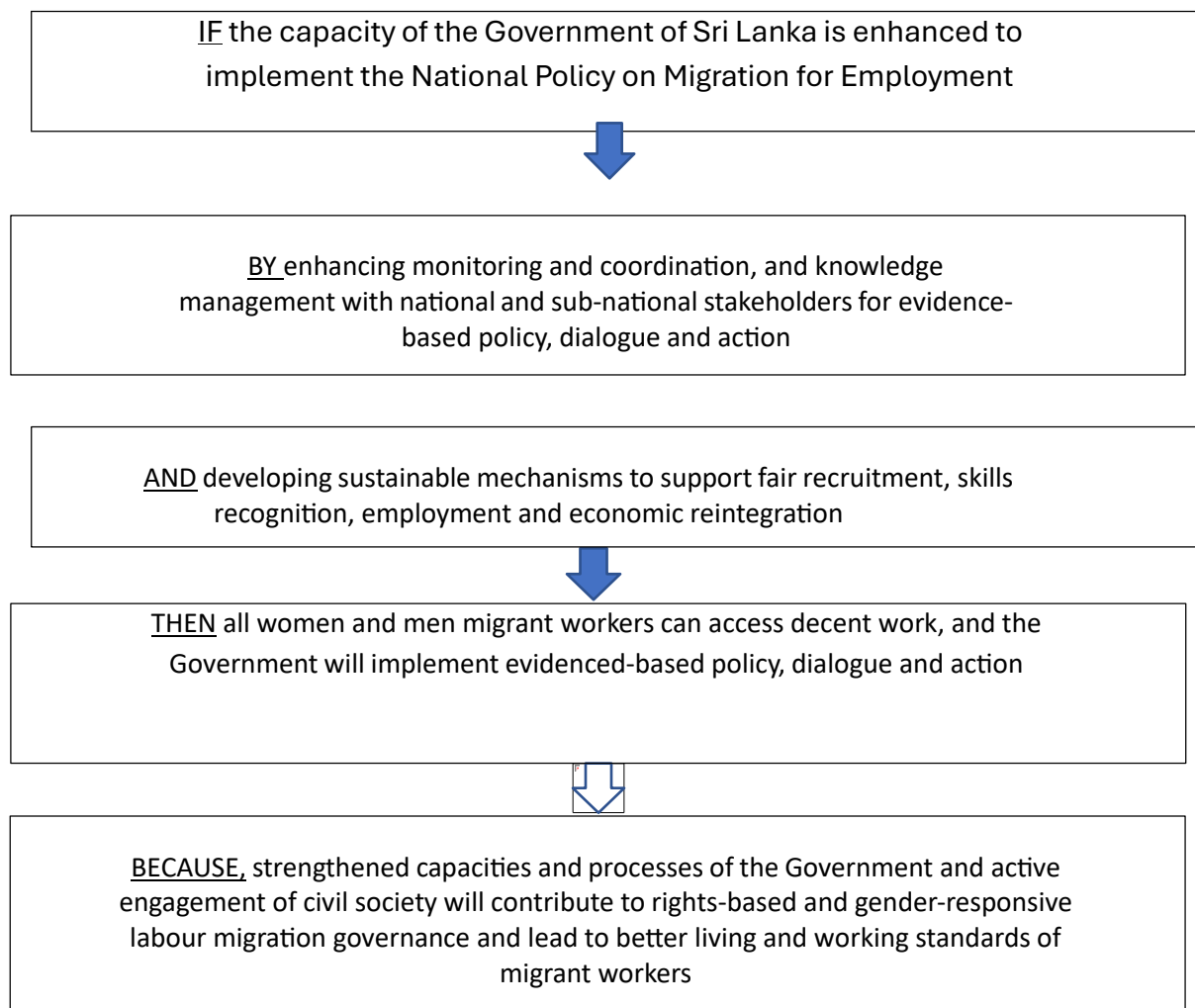
- (i) capacitate duty-bearers where necessary for improved governance of labour migration;
- (ii) focus on process sustainability and institutionalisation of roles and functions in monitoring and review of implementation by duty-bearers;
- (iii) promote the 'Whole-Of-Government-Approach' through dialogue and coordinated interventions;
- (iv) mainstream rights-based approaches and gender responsiveness in the governance of labour migration; and
- (v) boost civil society participation in the process and mechanisms of governance, including through recognition and voice for migrant workers and joint actions with trade unions.

These approaches are informed by the learnings from previous phases of the Project, and particularly the end evaluation of Phase III.

The expected Outcomes of Phase IV were:

- Outcome 1: Outward Labour Migration policies and plans are better monitored for implementation, by the Government of Sri Lanka
- Outcome 2: Fair and ethical recruitment, skills recognition and certification, and sustainable reintegration is fostered through institutional enhancement and the 'Whole- Of-Government-Approach'
- Outcome 3: Improved Evidence Base on Labour Migration to inform knowledge, dialogue, policy and action

The projects Theory of Change was established as:



This fourth transfer phase of the project was designed to build on the key interventions of the previous phases beginning in 2010, with the objective of transferring ownership of the Programme to the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders including licensed foreign employment agents, employers' association, trade unions, civil society organizations, and migrant workers societies and associations.

The objective of the Project says that labour migration in Sri Lanka should be well-governed, orderly and regular for all women and men, ensuring decent, safe and productive employment'. Labour migration is well-governed when the governance regime has the capacity to coordinate and monitor implementation. It is orderly and regular when fair recruitment practices are followed and migrant workers have decent, safe and productive employment, free from exploitation, discrimination and violence. When these processes are functional it results in economic and social benefits for women and men migrants and their families and contributes to national development in both countries of origin and destination.

1.4 Project management

The Project was housed within the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives in Colombo. The Project synergized with other ILO labour migration projects being implemented in parallel to the current Project.

Positioning this Project with two other migration related projects aimed at enhancing strategic coordination between current and future development cooperation programs on labour migration governance, maximizing these Projects contribution to achieving the objectives of the Sri Lankan Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) and the ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B).

The Project was implemented by a dedicated full-time team led by a National Project Coordinator (NPC) who was responsible for the overall Project management and implementation including technical progress and reporting. The NPC was supported by a Programme Assistant, and a Finance Assistant.

The project drew on the ILO's expertise on labour migration, skills for employment, and gender, from the ILO's Decent Work Team for South Asia in New Delhi, India; with additional support where necessary from the ILO Regional Office in Bangkok, ILO-ITC, and ILO MIGRANT and other branches in ILO HQ, Geneva.

In Sri Lanka, the Project was guided by a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) covering all SDC migration related interventions in Sri Lanka. The PAC was chaired by the Secretary to the State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Market Diversification and comprise representatives of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE), Ministry of Labour; Ministry of Skills Development (vocational skills development, assessment and certification); the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and SDC project partners.

2. Background and purpose of the Evaluation

2.1 Evaluation background

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of technical cooperation activities. The evaluation in ILO is for the purpose of accountability, learning, planning, and building knowledge. The current evaluation was conducted in the context of criteria and approaches for international development assistance as established by the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standard; and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System.

Findings and recommendations from evaluations ensure accountability and learning to the ILO constituents and stakeholders and learning for future programming. The findings and recommendations are also to be used as organizational learning to improve the design and implementation of future relevant projects and programmes.

The project followed the ILO Policy on Evaluation for Technical Cooperation projects and the Development Cooperation Internal Governance Manual.

The independent final evaluation of the project was guided by the above and to be built on a Mid-term Review (MTR) of the project which was conducted in August 2023. The MTR reviewed the project progress, achievements, and challenges, informed the ILO, project stakeholders, and the donor of key lessons learned, and proposed recommendations for improvement and adjustment needed for the remaining project implementation period. It identified (i) gaps to be addressed to fulfil further sustainability of project initiatives beyond phase III; (ii) common gaps in the migration sector for broader intervention; and (iii) replicable good practices in the migration sector. It made key recommendations and areas for improvement, with identification of responsible agencies to move them forward.

This evaluation followed the ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation; and the ILO EVAL Policy Guidelines Checklist 4 “Validating methodologies”; and Checklist 5 “Preparing the evaluation report”. Recommendations emerging from the evaluation are strongly linked to the findings of the evaluation and provide guidance to stakeholders on how they can address them.

2.2 Purpose of the evaluation

The main purposes of the evaluation were to fulfil the accountability to the donor and to the tripartite constituents, to serve internal organizational learning and develop actionable Recommendation. This evaluation reviewed the project design, implementation, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability and make recommendations for eventual future interventions. The purpose of the evaluation was to ensure accountability and learning. The findings and recommendations are to be used as organizational learning to improve the future relevant projects and programmes.

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of proposed outcomes, and test underlying assumptions about contributions to broader economic and social impacts;
- Evaluate the extent to which the project has achieved its planned objectives, and whether there are any factors contributing or hindering the achievement of the project;
- Assess the extent to which the project has addressed the midterm evaluation’s Recommendations;
- Assess the ILO cross-cutting criteria (ILS, social dialogue, gender and non-discrimination, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability). In particular, the extent to which gender equality consideration has been considered in the design, M&E framework (indicators and data collection), and during the project implementation; and
- Document lessons learned and good practices.

In addition, since this is a transfer phase of a long-term safe labour migration program since 2010 and there have been many timely initiatives, the focus of evaluation was also an assessment of sustainability of the investments of the project and to make recommendations to ensure sustainability and highlight the importance of the continuation of ILO interventions which lead to the desired impacts.

The evaluation also identified major challenges faced and action taken to address them, lessons learnt and emerging good practices for both accountability and learning.

The evaluation assessed the alignment of project interventions with ILO strategic objectives and policy outcomes as well as with existing Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and other national development frameworks. In particular, the evaluation analyses the project contribution to decent work. Lastly, the evaluation determines the coordination mechanisms with other ILO interventions.

Evaluation Recommendations are developed considering the above objectives.

2.3 Scope of the Evaluation

The scope of the evaluation covers the implementation in Sri Lanka. The evaluation collected data and information from implementing partners and beneficiaries of the project, including concerned governmental institutions, social partners and relevant CSOs.

The evaluation covers activities, outputs and outcomes of the projects for the period between 15 January 2021 to 30 September 2024. It covers all the planned outputs and outcomes under the project to achieve the program goal of the project which is: Labour migration in Sri Lanka is well- governed, orderly and regular for all women and men, ensuring decent, safe and productive employment. As the project operated at the national level, with a greater emphasis on policy-level engagements rather than service delivery, due consideration was given to national-level deliveries. Further attention was paid to assess the sustainability of the investments of the project and to recommend for its sustainability as the project ends and no new interventions are planned.

During the process of implementation, the Evaluation has noted that Outputs have been amended, this makes it more complicate to evaluate to what extend the project has achieved its objectives.

Based on the statistics of women workers, gender components were mainstreamed throughout the project; therefore, the evaluation integrates not only gender equality but also social inclusion and other non-discrimination issues throughout the process.

The evaluator reviewed data and information disaggregated by gender where available and assessed the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve lives of women and men. This information was included in the current final evaluation report. With International Labour Standards (ILS), social dialogues and tripartism, and fair transition on environment issues and the value for money approach integrated throughout the seven evaluation criteria.

In relation to gender equality, where possible, the evaluation was conducted with gender equality as a mainstreamed approach and concern. This implied (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 where possible in the analysis and justification of project documents; (iii) the formulation and/or analysis of gender-sensitive strategies and objectives and gender-specific indicators; (iv) inclusion of qualitative methods and utilization of a mix of methodologies; (v) forming a gender-balanced team, and (vi) assessing outcomes to improve lives of women and men. Thus, analysis of gender-related concerns was based on the ILO Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation, and the Supplementary Guidance Note: integrating gender equality in ILO M&E (Nov. 2023). The evaluation was conducted following UN evaluation standards and norms.

It attends to how the intervention is relevant to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels and national sustainable development strategy or other relevant national development frameworks, including any relevant sectoral policies and programme.

2.4 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation is based on the following OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation, 2020.

Assessment on coherence is integral to the evaluation. The evaluation also conducts evaluation of cross cutting issues/issues of special interest to the ILO. It complies with evaluation criteria related to ILO's mandate in cross-cutting policy drivers and pro-poor focus and inclusion issues, namely, project's responsiveness to issues relating to gender equality, non-discrimination and disability inclusion as well as

other core ILO cross-cutting priorities, including promotion of labour standards, social dialogue and tripartite processes.

2.5 Main evaluation questions

The evaluation attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Relevance and validity of design (is the intervention doing the right things)

1.1 To what extent did the project strategies contribute to the promotion of decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers? E.g. through improving monitoring of governance mechanisms, facilitating stronger links between migrant workers' associations, civil society organisations, trade unions and government counterparts; enhancing implementation of critical issues such as skills for employment and sustainable reintegration; and consolidating knowledge production and management.

1.2 How have the project's objectives been aligned and contributed to the needs and expectations of primary stakeholder?

1.3 How did the project contribute to the relevant International Labour Organisation Programme & Budget Outcomes, Sri Lanka's DWCP and to the UNSDCF?

1.4 Project's responsiveness to SDGs

1.4a To what extent did the project consider relevant SDG targets and indicators?

1.4b To what extent did the project increase stakeholders' awareness on SDG targets, objectives of Global Compact of Migration (GCM) and indicators relevant to Decent Work Agenda? (explicitly or implicitly)

1.4c To what extent did the project leverage partnerships (with constituents, national institutions and other UN/development agencies) that enhanced projects relevance and contribution to priority SDG targets and indicators? (explicitly or implicitly)

1.5 To what extent is the ToC used to guide project implementation towards the project objectives? Were the indicators clearly defined, describing the changes to be brought about? Were the risks properly identified, assessed and what recommended risks can be added to be mitigated against?

1.6 To what extent did the political and economic situation of Sri Lanka have adverse impact on the planned achievements and strategy etc. and the extent to which the project has been able to adapt and to respond to the unexpected consequences of the above events and whether the project adjusted its design to respond to the challenges?

2. Coherence (The extent to which ILO strategy and actions have been coherent and complementary to the related efforts and creating synergies and interlinkages)

2.1 To what extent have the strategy and interventions created synergies and interlinkages with other interventions being carried out by ILO in Sri Lanka and in destination countries?

2.2 Were the strategy and interventions consistent with the relevant international norms and standards to which the ILO adheres to?

2.3 To what extent have the interventions been coherent and complementary to activities being carried out by constituents, United Nations (UN) partners, and other multilateral and bilateral organizations?

2.4 What are the contributions of the project to National Development framework and other relevant policies and strategies, and the donors' programme strategies? E.g. synergies / indirect alliances / networks developed through the SLMP Programme.

3. Effectiveness (is the intervention achieving its objectives, and effectiveness of project governance)

3.1 To what extent have the project objectives been achieved, including skilling migrants for employment and transferring ownership of the Programme to the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders including licensed foreign employment agents, Employers' Associations, civil society organisations, and migrant workers associations?

3.2 What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the project's shift from policy making to enhanced policy implementation through the assumption of ownership of the Safe Labour Migration Programme by the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders?

3.3 To what extent did the results benefit the target beneficiaries i.e. returnees and aspiring migrant workers, and their families?

3.4 To what extent were the institutional set-up, capacity for project implementation, coordination mechanisms and the use and usefulness of management tools effective?

3.5 Have the project partnership strategies been appropriate and effective towards achieving the expected results? E.g. how has the project contributed to deepening the role and inclusion of non-state stakeholders especially migrant workers societies; the private sector (recruitment agencies and employers' organisations; and trade unions and civil society organisations, in the governance of labour migration?

3.6 How effective was the project in stimulating interest and participation of partners towards strengthening ownership? E.g. partners continue and completes the journey to self- resourcing of the national machinery for implementation of the National Policy on Migration for Employment and the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration.

3.7 How has the M&E strategy that the project developed enhanced accountability, learning and fed into management? Including how the behavioural change anticipated vs. achieved to contribute to the effectiveness.

4. Efficiency (how well are resources being used)

4.1 To what extent did the project leverage resources (financial, partnerships, expertise) to achieve outcomes and outputs? Could resources have been allocated in a more cost- effective manner?

4.2 Was the project implemented as planned, what have been the factors that affected timely delivery of activities and finance? How did the project adapt to challenges to project implementation?

4.3 Did the project allocate sufficient resources to integrate gender and disability?

4.4 Were enough resources available for realizing the M&E plan?

5. Impact (what differences does the intervention make?)

5.1 To what extent did the project bring lasting changes in norms and policies that strengthen governance, capacity-building and information and data management on labour migration?

5.2 Have the interventions made a difference in providing key beneficiaries with appropriate mechanisms, where missing, to expedite monitoring and review of implementation of the Government of Sri Lanka's own national policies and plans? If so, how have the interventions made a difference? (explicitly or implicitly)

5.3 What were the intervention's long-term effects in terms of capacitating duty-bearers in protecting rights of migrant workers in areas such as governance of labour migration, monitoring and review of implementation, social dialogue and mainstreaming rights-based approaches and gender responsiveness in the governance of labour migration and boosting civil society participation.

6. Sustainability (will the benefits last?)

6.1 What are institutional sustainability and policy level sustainability premised on?

6.2 What is financial sustainability of policy implementation premised on?

6.3 What are the factors that may hinder sustainability?

6.4 How effective are project activities and interventions in building and sustaining institutional ownership of project interventions?

6.5 How likely will the results of the intervention be owned and carried forward by existing cadre of state officials and existing institutions?

6.6 To what extent the project has a transfer strategy to ensure that the project's benefit will be sustained after the project ended?

6.7 To what extent targeted public and private institutions have changed institutional level practices, system, approaches, and targeting, in order to govern the labour migration out of Sri Lanka in an orderly and regular manner for all women and men, ensuring decent and safe working conditions and fair employment conditions?

7. Cross-cutting issues (Gender equality, non-discrimination, disability inclusion, International Labour Standards, social dialogue and tripartism)

7.1 To what extent did the project design identify and integrate specific targets and indicators to capture:

i. Gender equality and non-discrimination concerns?

ii. Concerns regarding persons with disabilities?

7.2 What are the key achievements of the project on gender equality and women's empowerment so far?

7.3 Within its overall objectives and strategies, what specific measures were taken by the project to address issues relating to:

i. Gender equality and non-discrimination?

ii. Inclusion of persons with disabilities?

7.4 To what extent did the project bring lasting changes in norms and policies that favour/promote:

i. Gender equality and non-discrimination?

ii. Inclusion of persons with disabilities?

7.5 How has the project been able to leverage the ILO contributions, through its comparative advantages including ILS, in social dialogue and tripartism?

2.6 Clients of the evaluation

The following are the potential users of the evaluation:

Internal:

- Project team, Colombo CO colleagues, DWT/SA colleagues (migration, skills, ACTEMP, ACTRAV etc.).
- ILO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP)
- Migration Branch (MIGRANT)

External:

- Ministry of Labour & Foreign Employment
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment/Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Defense
- Office for Overseas Sri Lankan Affairs
- Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
- Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission
- Employers Federation of Ceylon
- Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies
- Selected Trade Unions
- Selected Civil Society Organizations
- UN Network of Migration
- HELVETAS Sri Lanka
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC- Donor)
- IOM

3. Methodology

The Evaluator conducted a participatory, theory-based evaluation to answer the questions raised in the Terms of Reference (as listed above). A theory-based evaluation implies that the Evaluator works with ILO project team during the inception phase to confirm the intervention's Theory of Change, and the implicit and explicit assumptions that influence the likelihood that the intervention will achieve short- and longer-term outcomes and facilitate that key stakeholder use the knowledge and understanding they have gained.

Identified assumptions e.g. about the relevance of data collected, stakeholders' data needs and how data inform policy and decision making, then inform the data collection among the project's stakeholders. A theory-based evaluation approach asks – and answers – question including, but not limited to:

- What changes, expected and unexpected, did the intervention contribute to, and how?
- To what extent is the identified change process a reflection of the original intervention logic/did change happen the way we thought?
- To what extent are assumptions viable?
- If (some) assumptions were not valid, what could have been changed for the intervention to achieve its desired outcomes and objectives and contribute to stronger accountability and decent working conditions?

Comparing how change was envisaged in the planning stage with 'how change really took or takes place' facilitate learning and contribute to valuable insights about possible adjustments of future programs. At the same time, the approach is well placed to answer questions (raised in the Terms of Reference) about the intervention's design, implementation, outcomes and long-term value.

The Evaluator used a mixed method, convergent evaluation design to assess the anticipated link between data collected. The convergent design contributed to validating findings using different sources of information.

The approach to the final evaluation was interactive, consultative, and transparent with a mix of methods. The Evaluator used a combination of secondary and primary data collection methods including documents review, key interviews with the project stakeholders, observations, and a workshop discussion. In line with the specific objectives of the evaluation, the evaluation approach aimed at:

- Maximise the use of existing secondary documents and data.
- Undertake carefully structured interviews on the more sensitive issues.
- Facilitate a stakeholder workshop with project stakeholders to obtain feedback and validate project, challenges, and results.
- Apply triangulation of sources and techniques.

Qualitative data collection

To understand the strengths and limitations of the chosen approach and explore how this setup might have influenced perceptions and attitudes among labour migration stakeholders the evaluation conducted semi-structured interviews with a representative group of stakeholders. A full list of informants is attached as Annex III.

The evaluation conducted a findings workshop with participation of key stakeholders after the field mission. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Present the outcomes, findings and recommendations.
- Ensure ownership to the evaluation's findings.
- Reflect on the significance of the findings and results in terms of contributing to the initiative's objectives and their long-term value.

Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to identify pertinent results from each data set. These were then compared and triangulated to identify areas of convergence and possible contradiction, before conclusions were drawn.

During a field visit interviews were conducted with FEDOs beneficiaries of the project activities and also with local representatives of a CSO benefitting from the project this to understand the impact the project

has on the work with migrants at the local level. A representative of private employment agencies was interviewed to understand the potential and the challenges the industry is confronted with.

Opinions coming from stakeholders improved and clarified the quantitative data obtained from project documents. Quantitative data will be drawn from project documents including the MTR Report, Development Cooperation Progress Reports and the implementation Work Plan.

Detailed guidelines for semi-structured interviews were developed during the evaluation's inception phase. The gender dimension was considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology. The evaluation investigated the extent to which the project adhered to the UNSWAP framework for performance related to gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

The needs of vulnerable groups were considered when considering initiatives towards an inclusive labour migration market. Social dialogue, international labour standards and a just environmental transition were considered.

The evaluation included the voices of government, social partners, and key stakeholders regarding their participation throughout the project. Open and transparent consultation underpins this evaluation.

The Evaluator worked in close cooperation with the Evaluation Manager, project staff and ILO CO. Yet in line with the proposed methodology and to ensure that the evaluation contributes to a more in-depth understanding of factors (in design and operations) that have contributed to or impeded achievement of results, the Evaluation conducted:

- Interviews with ILO DWT and HQ staff incl. MIGRANT, ACTEMP and SKILLS (3 male) were conducted on-line. The purpose was to explore how, or under which circumstances the intervention contributed to the desired changes.
- Interview with CO Director and 3 programming staff (2 male and 2 female). The purpose was to understand to what extent the Country Office was able to integrate the project initiatives in its policy development and how synergies with other projects were realized.
- Interviews with 3 project staff (2 male and 1 female) to understand the staff's approach to project implementation.
- Interviews with Government partner officials at federal and district levels. These were the key informants as the fare majority of interventions under the project were targeted on government institutions and their representatives (13 in total 7 female and 6 male).
- Interviews with relevant development partners – Helvetia and IOM (one female and one male).
- An interview was conducted with a donor representative (SDC and Embassy) (one male and one female) to understand the donor's motives for supporting this project and their appreciation of the achievements till now.
- Interviews with external experts providing support to the project and its partners (3 female)
- Interviews with management of a private employment agency. This also covered ALFEA. One trade union leader was interviewed (male). These interviews were conducted to understand the involvement of social partners. (2 male)
- Three CSO representatives working with the project were interviewed (2 female and one male).

A full list of informants is attached as Annex III.

The above sample is not statistically representative because the methodology of this evaluation used mainly a qualitative approach for data collection.

The evaluation methodology included examining the interventions' Theory of Change, specifically in the light of logical connect between levels of results, its coherence with external factors, and their alignment

with the ILO's strategic objectives, DWCP, SDGs and related targets, regional, national and ILO country level outcomes.

The evaluator tried to ensure that opinions and perceptions of women, were equally reflected in the interviews and that gender-specific questions were included. By the nature of the project the vulnerable groups migrant workers and returnees are target groups/beneficiaries of the project and are by that seen as key informants. The evaluation planned to conduct focus group discussions with workers (women and men) and government officials this however did not materialize.

The evaluation interviewed governmental and local officials (men and women) who have participated in capacity building activities to learn how relevant the training has been and to what extent the new knowledge and skills are used in their daily work.

The evaluation further conducted semi-structured interviews with project staff, including the project staff of other ILO projects and ILO staff responsible for financial, administrative and technical backstopping of the project.

The selection of informants was based on a list of stakeholders provided by the project team. The evaluation suggested based on the desk review additional informants and during the field visit the project management suggested additional informants. All informants were treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality. They were informed that they would not be quoted for any statements if consent had not been given explicitly.

The methodology for the evaluation followed the ILO/EVAL evaluation policy guidelines and the ILO/EVAL checklists.

A desk review of all relevant documents project documents and its theory of change was conducted. The Evaluator examined the intervention's Theory of Change with particular attention to the identification of assumptions, risk and mitigation strategies, and the logical connection between levels of results and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes. The Evaluator also evaluated the logical framework, relevant minute sheets, implementation plan, performance evaluation plan, progress reports, mid-term review report, other relevant documents and studies. A full list of documents is attached as Annex IV.

A validation Workshop was conducted at the end of the data collection phase. The Evaluator presented preliminary findings to the ILO project team and relevant stakeholders, mainly representatives from relevant ministries to clarify, discuss, refine and validate the findings and fill information gaps.

Throughout all interviews and interactions with informants were UNEG ethical standards on integrity which involves adhering to moral values and professional standards. The evaluator acted with honesty, transparency, and impartiality as well as accountability which requires evaluators to be answerable for their actions, especially in addressing ethical issues like transparency, avoiding conflicts of interest, and reporting misconduct. All informants were treated with respect. The evaluator emphasized treating all stakeholders fairly and valuing diversity, including inclusive practices that respect factors like gender, age, ethnicity, and other unique attributes. Also, the evaluation ensured that the evaluation maximized benefits while minimizing harm to individuals and the environment, adhering to the "do no harm" principle.

Limitations

External

The evaluation was confronted with certain challenges in meeting the in the methodology intended outreach. This was due to Presidential elections taking place two days before the field mission started and the from this unavailability of some senior government officials.

Two planned visits to the district and division level were cut down to one and during this only a limited number of informants were available. For this reason, the planned FGDs with beneficiaries did not take place. The evaluation was informed that a second field visit would show “just more of the same”. With the limited time available and the large number of partners involved with the project, it was decided to concentrate on the Colombo-based institutions.

Planned interviews with trade unions and private employment agencies were cut down to one from each group. It was understood that the partners were not available due to ongoing activities after the election. The evaluation would have preferred to have more voices from the social partners to understand the level of ownership beyond government institutions, but this turned out not to be possible to arrange for.

Internal

The log-frame has very limited baseline information which makes it harder to assess the progress achieved. It also indicates that the design has not to the full extent been based on needs as if so, the baseline data would be available. The reporting is often missing gender disaggregated data which also limit the evaluations possibility of measuring progress.

An external consultant was engaged to assist in setting up meetings with stakeholders, this, however, turned out to be difficult and the NPC and project staff had to intervene to ensure that meetings were arranged. No interpreter was available, this task was expected to be covered by the external consultant, but it requires a professional interpreter to get the maximum out of interviews.

4. Findings

The evaluation has followed the DAC criteria tried to answer the main questions set out in the ToR for this evaluation:

4.1 Relevance and validity of design

The design of Phase IV responded to lessons learned from prior phases of the program by focusing on limited but strategic interventions with clear links between the different Outcomes of the Project. Further, it incorporated collaboration between SDC Safe Labour Migration Programme partners: the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) and with a district-based network of CSOs. The complementarities with the regional GOALS Programme, also supported by SDC, supported coherence between national and sub-regional initiatives, which contribute to the Objectives of relevant international and regional frameworks.

The policy development of the National Policy on Migration for Employment and the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration are by all informants seen to have the potential to contribute to the promotion of decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers.

However, the evaluation finds that the project in its design not in full has benefitted from ILO's comparative advantage as a tripartite organization. The constituents and some CSOs were invited to discuss the project in the design phase, but during the implementation phase the involvement of social partners are reported to have been less. The design could have planned for stronger involvement of social partners throughout the implementation and by that contribute to ownership among a broad range of partners and constituents. The evaluation was informed that a coalition of trade unions on migration had been established, but the evaluation did not have the possibility to meet with these. It can therefore not be confirmed to what extent the coalition is functioning.

The evaluation notes a strong and fruitful cooperation with relevant ministries and an almost daily contact with the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment. The evaluation finds that this close cooperation has created a strongly felt ownership to the program among governmental officials.

The Ministry leveraged its existing 'Training of Trainers' (ToT) unit to develop the technical and other competences including gender responsiveness of public officials through their continuing professional development as well as in preparation for national, regional and global meetings. The ToT unit was supported to develop its capacity to deliver trainings on evidence-based policymaking in labour migration governance, and on ethical and fair recruitment practices, eliminating the need for external resources in this area by the end of the Project. This unit was foreseen to work in tandem with a 'Knowledge Hub' within the Ministry to supply the 'Secretariat' with the documentation and analysis that it requires to service the needs of the Ministry and the Government of Sri Lanka as a whole in meeting its national, regional and global commitments on safe, orderly and regular migration.

Partnerships were developed with CSO's through training of trainers, this training was originally offered to the trade unions only. The evaluation has however no wider indication on how relevant this training was for the CSOs and what was done beyond the ToT. It is understood that as no funds were available within the project for the trained trainers to practise their gained skills at grassroots level. They did not run training seminars as such but functioned more as facilitators at the grass root level. Something that was very much appreciated by stakeholders. The bigger and well-funded (from other sources) CSOs could use the developed capacity in their capacity building and awareness raising activities.

To make the labour migration issues more relevant to the social partners in particular with the trade unions there is a need for supporting them in policy development and based on this developing capacity to implement such policy. This could have been foreseen in the project design phase if a needs assessment had been conducted.

Recommendation 1

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO	High	Long-term	Medium

The ILO is recommended to investigate with EOs and trade unions the need for developing policies on labour migration to meet the challenges and benefit from labour migration both inwards and outwards. These policies could also be developed in relation to the Just Transition agenda.

The Project has strengthen the recognition and representation of civil society actors in policy dialogues at national level and policy implementation at local level, through supporting the inclusion of migrant workers societies or associations in state mechanisms such as the National Action Committee of the National Policy on Migration for Employment; the meetings convened by the 'Secretariat' of the Ministry; the forums at divisional and district secretariat level on migrant workers and their families, including their sustainable reintegration; and through forging rights-based coalitions of trade unions, civil society service and advocacy organisations, and migrant workers societies.

The Project worked directly with a number of stakeholders such as the SLBFE and the Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (ALFEA) on enforcement of fair and ethical recruitment practices. It worked closely with the Ministry of Skills and Vocational Department, primarily through the Technical and Vocational Education Commission, on the assessment, recognition and certification of prior learning of returnee and aspirant migrant workers – including through amplifying the outreach while reducing the cost of the current system, through application of technology and digitalization (e-RPL system). It supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to strengthen its technical competences in the formulation and

negotiation of Bi-lateral Labour Agreements, regional and multilateral labour mobility agreements, that are rights-based and gender-responsive. This is in parallel with the efforts of the regional GOALS Programme to work with Colombo Process countries on the same.

The partners very much appreciated the capacity building activities and the general support provided by the ILO and the project staff in this work.

The planned interventions of the Project were well aligned with the GOALS Programme, such as its mutually reinforcing actions e.g. South Asia Skills Qualification Reference Framework (SAQRF), this is remarkable work done by the project wherein they have successfully obtained Cabinet approval for the SAQRF after numerous consultations and workshops. The President's Office has even established a committee to implement SAQRF—an impressive achievement, as noted by the Ministry of Education. The comparability assessment between the Philippines and Sri Lanka provided a ground for the education reform to strengthen migration focus skills development.

The strategy of the Project began from the premise that the Government of Sri Lanka's effective implementation of the National Policy on Migration for Employment; the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration; and internal plans of the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion & Market Diversification and the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, will translate into safe, regular and orderly migration of women and men migrant workers and their sustainable reintegration upon return to Sri Lanka.

The Project worked with the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion & Market Diversification in particular, to strengthen governance of labour migration through better coordination of relevant government agencies, and monitoring of implementation of national policy frameworks and related programmes. It met a felt need for a dedicated and capacitated unit within the Ministry for monitoring and review of national policies and plans; and as a conduit for data collection on regional and global commitments of the Government of Sri Lanka on labour migration.

The 'Secretariat' utilized existing physical infrastructure and human resources within the Ministry; with initial technical assistance from the ILO for its capacitation. It was also planned to meet the need for collection and utilization of documentation on labour migration in Sri Lanka, in relation to the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, through the establishment of a 'Knowledge Hub' within the State Ministry that collaborates closely with the existing 'Training of Trainers' unit within the Ministry on equipping government officials with the evidence for informed policymaking, and soft skills for better implementation of national, regional and global obligations.

The project did foresee that improvement in the activation and efficient operation of existing mechanisms based on existing plans and policies, as well as the ongoing monitoring and review of their implementation and application in a dynamic context, would strengthen the Government of Sri Lanka's ability to activate and mobilize available resources both within Sri Lanka, as well as overseas, in order to provide support and services to Sri Lankan migrant workers in distress; as well as during the routine labour migration cycle including in the return and reintegration stage.

The project has contributed well to meeting the Outcomes of the current (extended) DWCP and the achievements and continued activities are expected to impact the new DWCP to be developed. Also, this can be seen as a contribution to the global Decent Work Agenda. The project activities were all directly or indirectly contributing to raising awareness on Decent Work principles.

The Project contributed in its design to Outcome 7 of the ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B) 2020-2021: 'Adequate and effective protection for all'. Specifically, it speaks to Output 7.5: 'Increased capacity of constituents to develop fair and effective labour migration frameworks, institutions and services to protect migrant workers. It did so by promoting fair recruitment practices as guided by the ILO's General Principles

and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment; and by promoting interventions on skills recognition and certification in consultation with social partners and other civil society organisations (Output 7.5.1.). It contributed to Output 7.5.2 to deliver inclusive, non-discriminatory and gender responsive services to promote decent work for migrants and families by enhancing skills and providing opportunities for women and men labour migrants. Finally, it contributed to Output 7.5.3 by building capacity to improve bilateral labour migration agreements.

In relation to Sri Lanka's Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2018-2022, the Project contributed to achieving Country Priority 3: Rights at work for all, Outcome 3.2. Labour market outcomes of (low skilled) migrants are improved and their vulnerability to exploitation (forced labour) reduced. The focus of the Project on strengthening the governance of labour migration through rights-based and gender responsive approaches complemented other projects in the ILO CO that were intervening on fair and ethical recruitment practices; counter-trafficking of persons; skills for employment of returnees.

The Project aligned with the following national policy frameworks of the Government of Sri Lanka including National Policy on Migration for Employment for Sri Lanka, Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers (NAPRR), which is natural as these were developed with the support of ILO.

The project took into consideration lessons learned from previous evaluations and reviews, especially from the Phase III's findings and recommendations of the end of Project evaluation of phase III in its design and implementation; the MTR of phase IV and also drawing on observations of the State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion & Market Diversification; SDC in Sri Lanka, and within the ILO Country Office in Sri Lanka.

The project did not specifically set out a target for increasing stakeholders' awareness on SDG targets, but the project has contributed to meeting SDG targets hereunder target 8.8 on labour rights and decent work, 10.7 on migration and 17 on partnerships.

Switzerland is an observer to the Global Compact of Migration. Initial plans for promoting the GCM were therefore reconsidered and the planned GCM related activities were covered by other interventions beyond the current project.

The project developed a good cooperation with the GOALS project within which a good cooperation and coordination was established with IOM, there were however no joint national level activities. The current project focused in this cooperation mainly on the activities to be implemented in Sri Lanka. The Evaluation was informed by national stakeholders that they saw the three agencies working in silos with limited interaction when it came to activities in Sri Lanka. The agencies should notice this observation and seek closer cooperation in action when relevant.

The design of the ToC is by the evaluation found to be too ambitious. The ToC states by its logic that by implementation of the policies and action plan, and support to fair recruitment "all women and men migrant workers can access decent work". The evaluation would have found it more realistic to say: "more" rather than "all". In the "because" line of the ToC it also rightly says: "contribute to", this would confirm that the road to Decent Work might be a little longer than indicated in the ToC.

Theory of Change:

IF the capacity of the Government of Sri Lanka is enhanced to implement the National Policy on Migration for Employment

BY enhancing monitoring and coordination, and knowledge management with national and sub-national stakeholders for evidence-based policy, dialogue and action

AND developing sustainable mechanisms to support fair recruitment, skills recognition, employment and economic reintegration

THEN all women and men migrant workers can access decent work, and the Government will implement evidenced-based policy, dialogue and action

BECAUSE, strengthened capacities and processes of the Government and active engagement of civil society will contribute to rights-based and gender-responsive labour migration governance and lead to better living and working standards of migrant workers

The evaluation understands that the project's ToC was used only to a limited extent to guide the implementation of the project. It is found that the ToC is rather ambitious as mentioned above it foresees that the expected change will cover "all women and men migrant workers" the evaluation finds that this would require investments far beyond what the project was foreseen to provide. If the ToC had been less ambitious and indicators more clearly defined describing the changes to be brought about within the framework of the current project. It is more likely it would have been actively used as a guidance during the project implementation. The evaluation finds it important that the ILO always deliver high quality and that all project interventions in the CO contribute to the office strategy. It is therefore recommended to secure that the Planning unit has the possibility to follow all interventions closely.

The project suffered severe delays first because of the pandemic and then next the economic and political crisis in the country. A consequence was the adoption of the political documents which should have been in place during phase III of the project was delayed long into phase IV, which in principle was planned to be the phase where the policies and action plan were being implemented with the support of the Project. Besides the objective reasons for delay it was reported that subjective factors – shifting political priorities – also played a role causing delays.

The project allocated together with partners and other projects a lot of resources in providing emergency support to the thousands of migrant workers who returned under the pandemic. The ILO is praised by partners for its efforts in this regard.

The project management with the understanding and flexibility shown by the donor managed to speed up implementation of planned activities during the last two years of the project – and even secure implementation of more activities than planned.

4.2. Coherence

Three labour migration related projects funded by different donors were implemented in parallel (with different starting and ending dates) in the ILO Colombo CO. They were all physically based in the same office space and developed a close cooperation and coordination and in most cases acted as one towards partners and constituents. The evaluation finds the chosen approach where the physical presence close to each other is valued has been very successful and a good lesson learned. The close cooperation also saves human resources as meeting activities with partners can be conducted jointly. The sharing of resources is also optimized by the constant physical presence. The chosen approach is very much in line with the trend among donors where stronger integration and sharing of resources are in demand.

The project documents have no direct reference to ILS beyond the general contribution to decent work and there is no reference made to ILO Conventions or Regulative Guidelines. There are no references to relevant ILO Conventions on migration and guidelines for private employment agencies, what the evaluation finds would be relevant in the current situation. Sri Lanka has not ratified these Conventions,

and some practises are not living up to ILO recommendations and best practises. The evaluation finds that as the Project is promoting a rights-based approach it would be a natural consequence of the adopted policies that ILO support the Government in developing legislation on migration and private employment agencies based on the adopted policies and in this regard also provide technical assistance during the legislative process. This was however not foreseen in the projects design. The project did beyond what was foreseen in the Project Document support the project started a gap analysis of three migration-related conventions (C97, C143, and C181) to improve advocacy for protecting the rights of migrant workers and private recruitment agencies. The Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labour, and SLBFE are actively working to support ratification of these conventions. The government has also formed a committee to work on the ratification of the conventions, which is to be seen as an unforeseen achievement of the project.

Besides the above-mentioned cooperation with IOM the project aligned on the initiative of the donor with a long list of SDC partners in Sri Lanka mainly CSOs.

The different interventions implemented under the project have been coherent and complementary to activities being carried out by the government of Sri Lanka, UN partners and other multilateral and bilateral organizations. Both in relation to the country' labour migration policy and the wider skills development framework being developed.

The Project was well aligned with the following national policy frameworks of the Government of Sri Lanka:

National Policy on Migration for Employment for Sri Lanka. The policy has four core thematic areas: 1) governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment; 2) secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of their families; 3) promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies; and 4) enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development. The current project was mainly focused on 2) and 3) but also aligned with the two other thematic areas.

The Project contributed to the establishment of a monitoring mechanism as laid out in the policy document by supporting the establishment of a 'Secretariat' at the Ministry to review and monitor implementation of the Policy and the National Action Plan. It was planned that this should be supported by 'Knowledge Hub' and strengthened 'Training of Trainers' Unit within the Ministry.

Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers: The Project aimed to improve implementation of this Sub-Policy and contribute to the policy objective of recognising the contributions of migrant workers and facilitating their return and reintegration economically and socially, through the 'Whole-Of-Government-Approach' with the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment and the Ministry driving the coordination and coherence of government schemes and programmes. Both were developed with the support of the Project.

The National Policy for Decent Work: Envisions peace and prosperity for all Sri Lankans by reducing poverty and deprivation. The policy promotes measures to improve quality of life for women and men 'by promoting productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity'. The Project aligned with these principles through interventions to recognise skills and qualifications and opportunities to access increased incomes and decent working conditions through skilled jobs.

The National Human Resources and Employment Policy: Seeks to promote skilled labour and to bridge the demand-supply gaps in the global labour market. The Project supported the government to strengthen its capacity to negotiate human rights based and gender responsive labour mobility agreements.

TVET Policy: The policy focuses on providing national training and skills development based on demand from different industries and on foreign employment opportunities. This Project aimed to build on work from the past phases and leverage on other ILO Projects to recognise and certify skills gained, including

through use of digitalisation, so that migrants have the choice of securing better quality jobs locally or through re-migrating.

The Project was informed by, and contributed to, international frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Project interventions were designed to assist the Government of Sri Lanka to meet its commitments under international frameworks hereunder the following SDGs:

- SDG Target 5 on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment by mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting theme across interventions
- SDG Target 8 on growth and decent work, specifically Target 8.8. on protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
- SDG Target 10 on reducing inequalities, specifically Target 10.7 on facilitating orderly, safe and regular migration of people, through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
- SDG Target 17 on global partnerships on sustainable development which includes improving data.

Colombo Process (CP): The Colombo Process was established in 2003 and has previously been chaired by Sri Lanka. To contribute to informed and meaningful participation in this regional process of countries-of-origin (countries-of-destination participate as observers); and translate its commitments into action at national-level, this phase of the Project through its capacitation of the 'Training-of-Trainers' Unit prepared Sri Lankan officials to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices on overseas employment and contractual labour; consult on issues faced by overseas workers, and labour sending and receiving states, to offer practical solutions particularly for the wellbeing of the most vulnerable overseas workers; to optimise development benefits from organised overseas employment, and enhance dialogue with countries of destination; and review and monitor the implementation of ministerial recommendations and identify further steps for action. Phase IV of the Project pursued two thematic priority areas of the Colombo Process: Skills and Qualification Recognition Process (Project Output 2.2); and Fostering Ethical Recruitment Practices (Project Output 2.1); with the cross-cutting theme of promoting equality for women migrant workers.

Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD): The Abu Dhabi Dialogue was established in 2008 and is a ministerial forum inclusive of both countries-of-destination (in the Middle East where the majority of low-skilled women and men migrant workers from Sri Lanka are employed) and countries-of-origin (including Sri Lanka). Its objective is to broaden the base for common understanding of issues and to influence practices and policies in the area of contractual labour in the Asian region. Phase IV of the Project was focusing on two of the ADD's action-oriented partnerships: preventing irregular recruitment and promoting welfare and protection measures for contractual workers (Project Outputs 2.1 and 2.3); and developing a framework for a comprehensive approach to managing the entire cycle of temporary contractual work that fosters the mutual interest of countries of origin and destination (Project Outputs 1.3 and 2.3 and 3.3). Overall, the Project interventions directly aligned with ADD priorities on improving migration governance and aimed to build the capacity of Sri Lankan officials to engage in the ADD Process dialogue to influence practices and policies that respect the rights of women and men migrant workers in countries of destination.

The above illustrates how well aligned the project was with the active international policy on labour migration performed by the Government of Sri Lanka over a number of years already. The evaluation was informed that in many senses Sri Lanka is seen as an example for other countries to learn from.

4.3 Effectiveness

In general, the project has been implemented with a good level of effectiveness especially taking in to account the challenges and delays it was confronted with in the first two years of implementation caused by developments beyond the reach of the project.

For the assessment of the extent to which the objectives have been achieved more detailed baseline information would have been helpful.

The objectives of the project have largely been met even due to delays not all outputs have been delivered, some outputs e.g. the Learning Management System is reported to be ready to be launched. It is expected that on the short- and mid-term (after the closure of the project) the government will secure that all initiated activities will be running full scale. The evaluation understands that there is a strong political commitment to see this happen, but some resource issues might be a challenge.

Recommendation 2

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	High	Short-term	High

The current project comes to an end and the donor has indicated that no further funding for financing the activities initiated under the project will be available. Governmental officials indicated to the evaluation that no allocations are foreseen in their budgets for these activities. The GoSL is therefore recommended urgently to initiate fundraising with other donors to secure continuation of the many successful activities. Some actions are budgeted with external financial assistance.

Ownership beyond the Government and implementing partners has not been achieved in full.

It should be noted that due to changes in original outputs some of these have not been met as they were no longer in force in their original design.

The project has worked with Safe Foundation a CSO also involved in recruitment of women for work abroad. Working with this foundation on capacity building, technical training and awareness raising has given the project an outreach to 12 districts in 6 provinces. The Foundation finds that it has benefitted a lot from the cooperation with the project.

Outcome 1: *Outward Labour Migration policies and plans are better monitored for implementation, by the Government of Sri Lanka*

The evaluation finds that the Government now has stronger capacity for implementation and monitoring of the developed policy – based on the Action Plan developed within the project. There is however still long way to go before the policies and practises will reach all women and men labour migrants.

Overall, this Outcome has been met. This even the lacking ownership among social partners.

Output 1.1: *Strengthened human resource and technological capacity to implement, coordinate & monitor outward labour migration related policies & plans*

The project management has been effective in stimulating interest and participation of governmental partners towards strengthening ownership. There is however some way to go still to complete the journey to self-resourcing of the national machinery for implementation of the policy, sub-policy and action plan the evaluation was informed. The project has acted as Secretariat for the Advisory Committee and Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Labour. This has secured a successful and inclusive start of the implementation of the policies.

The expectations in the Ministry to a new labour market data management system turned out to be different from what was foreseen in the project. The Ministry therefore decided to find other funding sources.

The project supported the training of a big group Master Trainers in fact three times more than originally planned as mentioned elsewhere this can be seen as an error in the design of the project that the needs were not clearly defined. It is however positive to note that almost 40% of the participants in training of Master Trainers were women. The evaluation was informed in the period 01.01.2024 to 31.08 24, FEDO master trainers have conducted 446 training programmes and through these trained 15.367 aspiring labour migrants (F:10572 and M: 4795). It is understood that the FEDOs are using the gained skills in their everyday work with potential labour migrants on awareness raising. Some of the Master Trainers are reported to train trainers themselves. The training materials prepared for the FEDOs are however not very practical as they are small size and text not visible at distance – they might however be useful in smaller settings. It is recommended to include the potential users when designing training materials so that the materials are fit for their needs.

Recommendation 3

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO/GoSL	Low	Long-term	Medium

The ILO and GoSL are recommended to involve future users when developing training and awareness raising materials to ensure that the materials meet the needs of the users.

Output 1.2: *Increased engagement in national, regional and global policy dialogues by under- represented district and national-level stakeholders (especially trade unions)*

The Government and some CSOs are working actively in international and regional fora and do here participate in policy dialogue. The LFEAs and especially ALFEA are in close dialogue with the Government and through their clients in destination countries indirectly with authorities in these countries.

The project did not manage to engage the trade unions in the work with labour migrants beyond participation in the design phase, training of trainers and membership of the NAC. The evaluation understands that the needed political and resource capacity is not in place. The unions at this stage do not give priority to working with migrants but to a large extent leave this with CSOs. They therefore suggested to the ILO that the CSOs should be included in the foreseen trade union training.

The developed training materials are consequently mentioning “TU/CSO” even they by nature have different tasks and possibilities for engaging in the work with labour migrants. It is a problem in many countries that it is difficult to engage trade unions in the support to outgoing migrants as they are not seen as potential members and the migrants rarely see the unions as someone who can protect their rights abroad.

The unions could have been supported in developing policy and organizational capacity and engaging in international cooperation with trade unions from other sending countries as well as doing efforts to organize among returning migrants. The evaluation finds this a missed opportunity for engaging trade unions in protecting the migrant workers’ rights both when abroad and after return. That the more that the Sri Lankan labour code opens up for organizing these groups of workers.

Output 1.3: *GoSL is capable of meeting regional and global commitments on safe labour migration; and identify regional and global best practices for adoption in Sri Lanka, including in labour mobility agreements.*

As noted above is Sri Lanka well placed in the international and regional dialogue on labour migration. The Project has strengthened the capacity of the Government in quality participation in international fora. A comparison study of Philippine and Sri Lankan best practises on qualification frameworks was conducted. Pakistan is now using the Sri Lankan qualification framework as model for developing their own framework.

Officials from the MFA have participated in capacity building activities under the project, this has improved their understanding of the need for BLAs with more gender-responsive and rights-based approach. The project has trained a large number of government officials on BLAs. The officials very much appreciate the training which they feel have given them the capacity to improve the negotiation and implementation of BLAs. This includes ability to negotiate fair terms for migrant workers, improving regulatory frameworks and ensure that the BLAs align with international standards. Currently Sri Lanka has signed 26 Agreements including BLAs/MOUs/MOCs with destination countries. Sri Lanka is aiming at sending higher skilled workers abroad rather than low- and semi-skilled. There is therefore a need for a strategic approach to TVET and skills development, this should be in line with the long-term labour/skills requests in the BLAs

Recommendation 4

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	Medium	Long-term	None

Job orders are normally short-term. GoSL is recommended to include strategic sectors where the employment perspectives are 3-5 years giving the TVET system time to prepare potential migrant workers with needed knowledge and skills.

Outcome 2: *Fair and ethical recruitment, skills recognition and certification, and sustainable reintegration is fostered through institutional enhancement and the 'Whole-Of-Government- Approach'*

Through the strengthening of the qualification framework both regionally in South Asia and in Sri Lanka has skills development and reintegration possibilities been improved.

The Outcome has only partly been achieved as even the systems are in place the outreach is still a challenge. Only smaller numbers of workers have till now benefitted from the new systems.

While the RPL system is operational, and complemented by the National Skills Passport, there have been a number of issues impeding its efficiency and effectiveness. There is reported to be scope for improvement in coordination of stakeholders, especially at divisional secretariat level; also, in accessibility to migrant workers who may be on home leave for short periods of time; lower proportion of women to men workers participating in the scheme; expansion of assessment centres. An earlier deficit of qualified assessors is reported to have been solved. There is however still a deficit in spreading awareness of the existence and benefits of the system to migrant workers and employers. Civil society organisations engaged in RPL promotion have also noted challenges in reaching out to migrant workers.

Recommendation 5

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	Medium	Mid-term	Low

The GoSL is recommended to use social platforms (Tik-Tok, Instagram, X, Facebook and others) to raise awareness about e-RPL and RPL. This is to overcome the challenges with low outreach to target groups.

The e-RPL system was planned to be piloted in three sectors previously identified by employers as where there is a shortage of skilled workers in Sri Lanka, as well as opportunities for employment abroad: construction, hospitality and care work. Of these sectors, in both care work and hospitality, there are

evident opportunities for returnee and aspirant women migrant workers to participate and benefit. In construction too, there are functions and roles where women migrant workers could find employment. The acquisition of certified skills, and recognition of non-formally acquired skills, of workers will create opportunities for access to higher skilled jobs abroad, with higher incomes and better conditions at work. In the current phase of the Project and following exploratory discussions in Sri Lanka as part the Colombo Process Thematic Area Working Group on Skills and Recognition, there was alignment between the national vocational qualifications framework and the proposed sub-regional South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework (SAQRF) which is an output of the regional GOALS programme. This promotes mutual recognition of qualification frameworks within South Asia where there is already some labour mobility for e.g. Sri Lanka is a country of destination for Indian, Bangladeshi and Nepali skilled workers (especially in construction) and it is a country of origin for apparel sector supervisory and management workers in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as tourism and hospitality skilled workers in the Maldives. The evaluation was informed.

The skills passport was introduced in 2018 but has difficulties in taking off. At the regional level both Pakistan and India have their own systems. It has been difficult to get both employers and workers to buy the skills passports. The skills passport is by stakeholders seen still to be in its infantile stage and it will take some efforts and time to create an institutional position of the concept.

Output 2.1: *Licensed Foreign Employment Agents (LFEAs) incorporated fair and ethical recruitment practices in their self-regulation; while the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) strengthened monitoring and compliance of LFEAs with fair and ethical recruitment practices*

The evaluation has no data on the development in number of complaints and interventions in relation to possible non-compliance with fair and ethical recruitment practices. A number of consultations have been conducted, but to what extent this has impacted the practises is not documented. A new Code of Ethical Conduct for private foreign employment agencies was developed with the support of the project. The SLBFE has taken over and continues the interventions towards the agencies hereunder the training of Master Trainers.

The project developed several recommendations to SLBFE on improving licensing and monitoring these are to be implemented.

From all interviewed stakeholders it is understood that the ALFEA has become more professional in its approach reflecting a stronger capacity among its members. The evaluation finds this development very positive and over time this can have a positive impact on the compliance with fair and ethical standards in the industry in general.

Output 2.2. *Better access to skills recognition and certification through e-RPL for departing and returning migrant workers, particularly women, improved their decent employment opportunities*

The digitalisation of the RPL is seen to be an important step in making the RPL/e-RPL more effective. It is however reported that the awareness among potential users still is not created in full. A relatively small number around 1.000 persons have accessed the system till now. It would be important to investigate already at this early stage what the reasons are for the limited outreach. What are the pushing and what could be the pulling factors. The activities in this field are reported to have been taken over by other ILO projects and the IOM.

Recommendation 6

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO/IOM and GoSL	High	Short-term	Low

The ILO/IOM and the GoSL are recommended to investigate the reasons for missing outreach of the e-RPL and Skills Passport. This is to mitigate at an early stage if there are any push challenges in the set-up.

The project has with good success worked on capacity building of FEDOs, but the number of FEDOs (almost 1.000) is far beyond what could be shouldered by the project. In possible future intervention the evaluation recommends giving high priority to a further capacity building of the FEDOs as they can play a key role in contributing to safe and fair labour migration through their outreach to communities and families of potential and returned labour migrants. Their work should be coordinated closer with career guidance officer and other officials working on and around labour migration issues at the local level.

Recommendation 7

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	High	Long-term	Medium

The GoSL is recommended to give further priority to the work of FEDOs. This would mean capacity building and providing them with the needed material resources so that they can reach out to potential and returning migrants.

Output 2.3: *Initiate 'Whole-Of-Government-Approach' for strengthened implementation of the Sub Policy on Return and Reintegration (Areas 2 and 5)*

The Whole-of-Government approach seems not to be fully visible at the current stage even progress is noted. A “Secretariat” has been established to coordinate and guide the work on implementation of the policy and action plan. The project is reported to have played a leading role in getting the Secretariat functioning. It is understood that the Ministry will take over the responsibility of securing the functioning of the Secretariat when the project ends. It was however reported that on presence time no funding agreement for the work of the Secretariat is in place within the GoSL.

Many tasks are by the Government allocated to the provincial, district and divisional level covering different aspects of migration and reintegration, but the institutional integration could be enhanced it is reported. The officers working at these levels due to a limited extend only coordinate their efforts.

Recommendation 8

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	High	Long-term	Medium

The GoSL is recommended to give further priority to the whole-of-Government approach to be developed at the provincial, district and divisional level. This is to maximize the benefits of the many efforts made at these levels to ensure fair and safe migration and return. The “Whole-of-Government” approach is appreciated by all stakeholders, but when it comes to funding some parts of the governmental structures have significant funding whereas others are lacking funding. It is therefore recommended to expand the approach also to cover funding.

Outcome 3: *Policy makers, individuals and institutions at national and regional level used evidence base to inform policy dialogues, policy drafting and knowledge exchange*

The project has together with an ILO project for policy dialogue developed eight large scale and Ministry level policy position papers. These have been used both nationally and regionally as basis for evidence-based policy development discussions. The evaluation was informed that that within a short period of time 52 studies, reports and other materials on labour migration have been published by different institutions and agencies creating a huge knowledge base in Sri Lanka.

Even the planned Knowledge Hub did not take off as planned the evaluation finds that the project has met this Outcome by contributing to building up capacity among Governmental officials. It is expected that the strong commitment shown will secure further achievements in this field.

Global employment outlooks and job portals are widely available. However, the Sri Lankan Global Labour Market Supply and Demand study conducted with the support of the project focused specifically on identifying immediate and medium-term job opportunities that Sri Lankans could pursue. The study detailed required skill sets, timelines, salary benefits, and visa requirements. This information is being used by the government to develop short- and medium-term foreign employment strategies and to reform the skills development strategy. General global studies do not provide this level of detailed information specific to Sri Lanka. The study was conducted at the request of the government.

Output 3.1. 'Knowledge Hub' with required human resource skills and systems for generating evidence for policymaking, contributing to national, regional and global dialogues is established

It was planned to establish an open access “Knowledge Hub” on labour migration, this idea turned out not to be workable as most materials already are available on-line. Instead, a Learning Management System (LMS) was established (to be launched by the end of the project). It will be important to follow the LMS user statistics to understand the needs of the users and who they are. It will however be difficult to judge to what extent the data from the LMS are used by stakeholders engaged in developing evidence-based policies. User profiles can give an indication of the aim of the use.

Towards the very end of the project the Ministry has supported by the project decided to go for an AI based Labour Migration Knowledge Hub. Since Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a modern and efficient mode of knowledge dissemination, the project took a step forward and developed an AI-based Knowledge Hub instead of a conventional website. Below are some key advantages:

Personalization: AI tailors content to individual users based on their specific needs.

Scalability: AI-powered platforms can simultaneously reach a large, diverse audience.

Real-time Information: Instant access to the most up-to-date information and responses.

Resource Pool Expansion: Easy enhancement of the knowledge and resource pool as new materials become available.

Accessibility: Available via web and mobile, accessible from anywhere.

Low Bandwidth: Optimized to function even in low bandwidth environments.

Data-driven Insights: AI analyzes usage patterns to continuously improve user experience and resource offerings.

Trilingual Support: Content available in multiple languages to cater to diverse audiences.

Adaptability: The platform can be customized to align with users' preferences and learning needs.

In the first phase, the project has uploaded key documents such as the FEDO training manuals, FEDO operational guidelines, National Policy, SLBFE Act, SLBFE regulations on foreign employment, and the latest migration research relevant to Sri Lanka. A link to the Learning Management System (LMS) will also be linked. The resource pool will be updated periodically based on user demand.

It is the hope that this new initiative can overcome some of the challenges met in this sphere till now. The evaluation finds it positive that both Ministry and the project team are committed to find solutions that can have a long-term impact.

Output 3.2. Data management system analysing data on labour migration for the 'Knowledge Hub' is operationalized

A larger group of governmental officials – 49 in total were trained on data analysis of these 13 were selected for further training by the ILO ITC. This training was conducted on-line and it contributed to a significant capacity increase in the relevant departments in the GoSL.

The planned new data collecting system was not established due to disagreement between the Ministry and the ILO on needs and way forward. A LMS was developed instead and is reported to be ready for operation. The project had set out a target of 500 users including policy makers. There are however no data available on the potential number of users it will be important to establish strong statistical data on users hereunder returning users and also information about who the users are. Statistics of returning users would be of importance to understand the usefulness of the data management system.

Output 3.3. GoSL has improved capacity to generate knowledge share events

Thirty officials from Ministry and SLBFE were trained on conducting research on foreign employment related areas. The training consisted of four three-hour lessons. The officers were trained on various crucial aspects of research methodology, which should equip them to conduct research more effectively. At the end of the training 22 of the participants provided their individual research papers. Some informants however found that it is unlikely that they would be able to conduct research on their own, rather they can assist in collecting data for possible external or internal research experts. Other informants are expressing confidence that they “researcher” will have the capacity to conduct research on their own. Some of the officials trained in migration research methodologies are now reported to have conducted and published five research prepared by themselves.

It is the hope that the long-term effects of the training may include more data-driven policy recommendations, improvements in labour migration management, and a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within foreign employment in Sri Lanka.

The project was foreseen to shift from policy development (goal in earlier phases) to implementation through ownership to the policies and plans by the government and other stakeholders. Due to delays in adopting policies and action plan this shift was delayed. The project has however managed to gain speed in implementation of planned activities and there is reported a growing ownership from the side of the national partners.

Meeting the expected indicators of achievement as laid out in the Project Document has been a moving target as some Outputs have been amended or replaced over time. The evaluation could not find a full overview over all changes and the interim achievements which might be in place with Outputs which have been amended or removed. For a full overview a more detailed reporting on progress would have been beneficiary a such is however not foreseen in the ILO reporting procedures.

In most cases where the project did not deliver or not delivered timely or in full it was rooted in external factors which could not have been foreseen. Some departs from the Outputs are caused by design errors.

Till now only a smaller number of returnees and aspiring labour migrants have benefitted in full from the new pre-departure and reintegration services capacity. It is therefore also too early to call to what extend the results benefit the target beneficiaries i.e. labour migrants and their families. The evaluation however finds it well underway.

The project management is well respected among constituents and partners for its flexibility and high level of delivery, as one official expressed it: “We got all what we asked for”. The institutional set-up was based on a small team (three staff), but the team managed well and a close cooperation and coordination with other ILO projects was established. The project used existing ILO in-house expertise and also a significant volume of external consultants for developing policy papers, reports and training activities.

The project developed a good partnership with ALFEA on capacity building and deepening of its engagement with EFC. It is reported that ALFEA has been strengthened and now works more professional.

Recommendation 9

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO	High	Long-term	High

The ILO is recommended to follow up to plans which were in place before the pandemic on capacity building for private employment agencies and their organization(s). Jointly or separate the Government, trade unions and agencies should be made aware of the ILO guidelines for PEAs and C181 with the perspective of using the guidelines when developing regulations for the industry and to prepare for a later ratification of C181.

The involvement of trade unions has been less, this partly because the trade unions do not have strong presence among migrant workers. The same also for many CSOs claiming to represent migrant workers. Many CSOs have labour migration as an add on to their core activities. The evaluation was informed about attempts to create a coalition called “Voice of Migrants”. The evaluation tried to reach out to this organisation, but it was understood that it does not exist anymore.

The evaluation would have appreciated to meet representatives from the “Migrant Societies” which is a network of more than 5.000 committees all over the country, but this could not materialize. These societies are registered as CSOs and it is understood that the government would like to see these becoming the local entity contributing to creating awareness among potential migrant workers and assisting in reintegration of returned migrants. The evaluation cannot judge about the role of the societies and to what extend these can secure a rights-based approach for solving problems migrant workers can be confronted with. The evaluation understands that the Ministry has high expectations to the role the societies can play. It should also be noted that there exists a very long tradition in Sri Lanka of establishing “societies” on all kinds of issues at the community level to collectively deal with challenges.

The evaluation finds that a critical point would be if the societies which now are 5.000 “voices” could develop to be able to speak with “one voice” through an island wide association.

4.4 Efficiency

Because of a significant gain on the exchange rate between USD and Sri Lankan Rupees, which the project by the donor was allowed to use a number of unplanned activities were initiated hereunder an upscaling of training activities for capacity building of both government officials, constituents and CSO. The evaluation found less documentation in project documents on the justification for the individual activities – 182 trade union and CSO representatives were trained even there was a target of 25, 74 FEDOs were trained - target 25 and 119 were trained on BLA no target was set for this. These relatively big departures from original plans point to a lack of needs assessment when the project was designed or training activities initiated because the funds were available. The evaluation recommends conducting a needs assessment before capacity building activities are initiated. During interviews the evaluation was explained that the number of FEDOs trained was based on the calculation that there according to the Ministry was a need for three FEDOs in each of the 25 districts.

The evaluation finds that the ILO in the design phase could have done more efforts to conduct needs assessments of how many trainers and master trainers the partners needed to be able to implement planned activities. When preparing trainers, it is recommended to ensure that funding either from the partner itself or from the project is in place to secure that the trainers can use and by that further develop

their skills. Experience shows that a trainer that is not “used” within the first 6-9 months very seldom will be using her/his skills at all. Meaning a failed investment.

If funds are not available for wider training activities it can be considered to train “facilitators” rather than “trainers”. Many organisations have great success in using facilitators to reach out to grassroots level as interventions do not need any specific set-up, but the activities can take place in the beneficiaries’ homes or communities.

Originally it was foreseen to train a small group of governmental officials on the signing of BLAs, but in addition were two workshops conducted one with participation of social partners and some CSOs and with inputs from this another workshop for governmental officials conducted. In addition, were local training sessions conducted, this explains the high number of participants in BLA training. It is seen as a very positive exercise to get inputs from social partners and CSO to future negotiations on BLAs. The Evaluation appreciate this inclusive approach.

The evaluation welcome that the project has chosen cost efficient decisions when it comes to training activities e.g. inviting ITC trainers to Colombo rather than sending participants to Turin.

Further did the project not amend the set out targets and a major difference between targets and achievements appeared. The evaluation finds that it would have created stronger transparency if the targets had been amended and a justification for the priorities made for use of the additional funds included in the ILO Progress Reports. Narrative reports however were in place to the donor.

As mentioned above were the delays in implementation caused by external developments (pandemic and political and financial crisis) out of reach of the project. Even the delays placed pressure on the project team to deliver they did as much as possible to follow the frequency of the work plan. The evaluation did not find any examples of unjustified spendings.

The project had no specific allocation of funds for the integration of people living with disabilities. Also, there were no specific efforts for securing their participation in training and other activities no quota was established.

There are big numbers of women going abroad for work, these will benefit from the initiatives taken within the current project. There was however no quota for women participants set out for training and other activities. Even this there were often a majority of women among participants at the different levels. The project could have established minimum quota for women participation in the activities and also promoted these standards among partners. For implementing partners, the gender balance could have been a requirement. It is important that implementing partners stimulate the participation of males in the awareness raising to avoid that the soft issues related to migration does not become a “women only” issue. Males can have a tendency to focus on the hard skills and leaving the soft issues with the women.

Recommendation 10

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO and HQ	High	Long-term	None

The ILO is recommended to ensure that in own activities and in activities implemented by partners a quota of 40% women and 30% male participation is in place. Also, it must be ensured that these quotas are reflected in project design and reporting. Reporting on project progress MUST have gender disaggregated data throughout.

Funds were allocated for a mid-term review and a final evaluation. No formalized evaluation plan was in place except from what was requested by the donor. The monitoring was done based on a detailed

workplan, which was discussed in the project team on a weekly basis, this set-up is reported to have functioned well. It should also be noted that the NPC is an experienced M&E specialist.

4.5. Impact

The project has contributed to lasting changes in norms and policies that strengthen governance, capacity building and skills development related to labour migration.

The policies are now in place this can have a strong impact on the Sri Lankan labour migration on the mid- and long-term

The interventions long-term effects can be expected to be seen in skills qualification frameworks, RPL (e-RPL) and also in further professionalism in the work of the LFEA's in terms of capacitating duty bearers in protecting rights of migrant workers in areas such as governance of labour migration, monitoring and review of implementation of Code of Ethical Conducts.

The evaluation finds that less long-term effect is found in social dialogue and mainstreaming rights-based approaches in the governance of labour migration and boosting civil society participation.

The project did good efforts in building up the capacity of the Governmental officials and employers represented by the LFEAs, but the workers side did not have the same level of capacity building even very much needed. The evaluation finds that more efforts in TU and EO labour migration policy development could have had a positive impact on the social partners quality participation in social dialogue.

The evaluation understood that there was some frustration in the project team that the many good and strong initiatives taken and results achieved by the project did not reach broader layers of the constituents and the public in general. This because of lack of media capacity in the ILO CO and lack of a media strategy for the CO and the project.

Recommendation 11

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO	High	Long-term	Medium

The ILO should consider to have a media strategy in place for all projects and also ensure that the needed capacity for realizing such a strategy is in place in the CO.

4.6. Sustainability

The achievements within policy development are sustainable and are expected to be in place for years to come, if the country's political and economic priorities are stable and no major changes are introduced.

The skills qualification frameworks stand out as a flagship of the project, and it can be expected to develop further as economic integration continues and the mobility of the workforce increases.

The evaluation is however concerned if national budget allocations will be in place to secure the continuation of the activities at the government level. The project has built on the assumption that the government will take over and continue implementation of policies and action plan. There is no formulated transition strategy in place for the handover of project activities. Meaning that the GoSL must be ready to finance the activities (it wants to continue) from day one after the end of the project either from own budget or external donors.

The financial sustainability will depend on the GoSL willingness to invest some of the revenues from labour migration into skills development and RPL.

Sustainability can be challenged by changes in political priorities and/or financial crises.

The implementation of the project was in this phase foreseen to be executed by the national stakeholders, especially by the GoSL, instead of external stakeholders including the ILO, which has provided its technical assistance in the full assumption of ownership by local actors.

This national ownership, as well as the sustainability, of the intervention was reinforced from the inception of the current phase of the Project, through ensuring that all interventions are not dependent on external resources from development cooperation but rather that these resources provide a bridge to continue and complete the journey to self-resourcing of the national machinery for implementation of the policies and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration.

It was foreseen that all external meetings, consultations and events related to the Safe Labour Migration Programme would be driven by the government; with Project partners including the ILO in a supportive but secondary role. The Government would provide resources in kind for the implementation of the Programme such as the working time of its cadre; free venues and technical equipment in state facilities; administrative and logistical support. The Project would work with the government stakeholders to identify where additional resources were required for sustainability of the 'Secretariat', 'Knowledge Hub' and 'Training-of-Trainers' Unit, such that estimates were reflected in the annual work plan and the annual expenditure plan of the Ministry, in the preparation of the National Budget.

The evaluation finds that there is a commitment among involved governmental officials to continue the initiated activities, but it is not clear to what extent funds will be allocated for these activities in the National Budget.

For securing a continued sustainable, safe and fair labour migration many informants raised the issue of social protection of labour migrants and their families. The evaluation finds that it would be a logical next step in further development of the within the current project developed policies to establish a strong social security system including possible pension scheme.

Recommendation 12

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO	High	Long-term	High

The ILO is recommended to give priority to promotion of social protection (incl. pension schemes) for migrant workers in possible future interventions. With migrant workers staying abroad for several years or return into migration time after time it would be fair to include them in social protection schemes.

National policy on social security developed by GoSL should have provisions and measures for migrant workers to contribute.

4.7 Cross-cutting issues

The social partners do not have strong capacity on migration related issues. The EFC however has by the association with ALFEA gained more insight in the sector and it has in natural way become an integrated part of the EFCs agenda.

On the trade union side less, engagement is noticed. The unions involvement is very much limited and when capacity building was offered the unions suggested to include the CSOs in the training activities meaning that no trade union profile was developed. It is reported that a coalition of trade unions on labour

migration was established, but the evaluation did not have the chance to meet with these and there was no reporting on their activities, it is therefore assumed that the importance of this organization is less.

The project did not have a specific gender strategy, but a large number of beneficiaries were women. The project however has influenced the development of the National Migration Policy which places significant emphasis on gender. Gender is a specific core section in the Emergency Evacuation Response Plan for migrants too. The policy commits to recognizing diversity and ensuring gender equality and responsiveness throughout its provisions and strategies. It also highlights the vulnerabilities of migrant workers, particularly women, and acknowledges their vital contributions to the national economy.

People living with disabilities do normally not go into labour migration, therefore inclusion of such was not given priority. The project could as mentioned above have given priority in relation to returning migrants living with disabilities.

The project did not focus on specific ILS (e.g. no reference made to relevant Conventions, Recommendations or Guidelines), social dialogue and tri-partism specifically. When dealing with partners trade unions and CSOs were approached on equal rights with no prerogative for trade unions.

The evaluation finds it disappointing that only in a few cases gender disaggregated data are reported. Not only the project team but also programming and gender officials could have reacted to this both in the design and implementation/reporting phases.

The majority of FEDOs are women and a group of these has been empowered through training activities.

This phase of the Project aimed to address vulnerabilities of women in the recruitment process through gender-responsive trainings for licensed foreign employment agencies as well as state officials responsible for monitoring the recruitment practices of agencies. It supported the Ministry in highlighting the contribution of women migrant workers to the economy and to their households. It supported the Ministry to ensure that women have equal opportunities as men to have their skills recognised and certified, for better quality employment at home or abroad.

Gender Responsiveness

Migration for employment offers new opportunities for many men and women. In Sri Lanka too, labour migration has been a route for women's economic empowerment through their waged labour force participation and access to higher and stable incomes overseas, than available to them at home. However, women and men migrant workers have different experiences in the labour migration cycle that stem from their gender and status in countries of origin and of destination. Women in low-paid jobs are often at high risk of abuse and discrimination.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of states to ensure that labour migration policies and practices are gender-responsive and promote equality and non-discrimination in all aspects and stages of migration; including access to employment overseas, safe migration, and protection of the rights of women migrant workers. Women migrant workers should be actively involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of labour migration governance. Research, data collection and analysis should be gender responsive through disaggregation on the basis of sex and gender, to record the status and conditions of migrant workers who are women vis-à-vis those of men, and of labour migration as experienced by women and men respectively. For instance, male migrant workers are at higher risk of occupational diseases and injuries than most female migrant workers; whereas female migrant workers are at higher risk of violence and harassment in the world of work than most male migrant workers.

The new National Migration Policy developed with the support of the project places significant emphasis on gender. The policy commits to recognizing diversity and ensuring gender equality and responsiveness

throughout its provisions and strategies. It also highlights the vulnerabilities of migrant workers, particularly women, and acknowledges their vital contributions to the national economy.

The FEDO/CSO training programs are aligned with the policy's mission, emphasizing equitable and gender-sensitive service delivery. The majority of FEDOs are women. However, due to cultural and economic factors in the Northern and Eastern regions, Tamil-speaking participants were predominantly male.

The project supported the government in designing, negotiating, and implementing more gender-responsive and rights-based bilateral labour agreements.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy Project – Phase IV has at large met its planned Outcomes and contributed to meet the set out long-term Objective: “All women and men migrant workers in Sri Lanka are ensured safe, orderly and regular employment”. The project’s startup was extremely challenging as the project staff had to coop with the COVID-19 pandemic and when the worst consequences of the pandemic were settled Sri Lanka entered a serious economic and political crisis which again had a negative impact on the projects possibilities for implementing its activities. The project management together with primarily Governmental officials managed to get the implementation on track and speed up activities. The project even managed to implement more activities than originally planned. The current phase of the project was foreseen to be a policy implementation phase, but due to delays in the approval of the policy papers which were developed under phase III of the project. The project spent a lot of effort on finalizing the policy papers and include amendments. This investment in time has proven to be right as there now is a strong ownership in the Government towards the policies. The ownership was developed through a very close day-to-day cooperation between the project team and the governmental officials directly involved with the project. The project has contributed to capacity development within the Government and to some extent among social partners and CSOs. Governmental officials have with success been trained on national as well as district level. The training of trainers unit in the Ministry has been strengthened. The basis for evidence-based decision making has been improved and the already strong international presence of Sri Lanka in regional and sub-regional frameworks has been further strengthened. The strengthened capacity is also reported when it comes to negotiation of Bilateral Labour Agreements.

The project has taken different initiatives to strengthen the Recognition of Prior Learning and a Skills Passport both supported their capacity on the national level and on influence at the regional level. Qualification frameworks are being developed, but still there is some way to go before a strong outreach among users is in place. It will now be up to the Government and other donors to secure the successful further development of these initiatives.

The new policies have strong gender-responsive elements to protect women when working abroad and the majority of beneficiaries are reported to be women, gender disaggregate data is however missing. Little attention was paid to the inclusion of people living with disabilities. This can be explained by the fact that only a few people with such challenges are going abroad for work. It could have been considered to take initiatives on addressing rights for reintegration of migrant workers returning with disabilities, but reintegration is not within the scope of the current project.

The Association of Foreign Employment Agencies is now associated with the Employers Federation of Ceylon. This together with capacity building received through the project is reported to have strengthened the Association significantly. It is now seen as a respected and professional organization representing the industry in various fora.

The involvement of social partners has not led to them developing their own evidence-based policies and positions on labour migration. Both social partners and CSOs have participated in capacity building, but as

the project in its design did not focus on grassroots level, there is no data on the extent to which the capacity has been used at this level.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO	High	Long-term	Medium

The ILO is recommended to investigate with EOs and trade unions the need for developing policies on labour migration to meet the challenges and benefit from labour migration both inwards and outwards. These policies could also be developed in relation to the Just Transition agenda.

Recommendation 2

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	High	Short-term	High

The current project comes to an end and the donor has indicated that no further funding for financing the activities initiated under the project will be available. Governmental officials indicated to the evaluation that no allocations are foreseen in their budgets for these activities. The GoSL is therefore recommended urgently to initiate fundraising with other donors to secure continuation of the many successful activities. Some actions are budgeted with external financial assistance.

Recommendation 3

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO/GoSL	Low	Long-term	Medium

The ILO and GoSL are recommended to involve future users when developing training and awareness raising materials to ensure that the materials meet the needs of the users.

Recommendation 4

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	Medium	Long-term	None

Job orders are normally short-term. GoSL is recommended to include strategic sectors where the employment perspectives are 3-5 years giving the TVET system time to prepare potential migrant workers with needed knowledge and skills.

Recommendation 5

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	Medium	Mid-term	Low

The GoSL is recommended to use social platforms (Tik-Tok, Instagram, X, Facebook and others) to raise awareness about e-RPL and RPL. This is to overcome the challenges with low outreach to target groups.

Recommendation 6

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO/IOM and GoSL	High	Short-term	Low

The ILO/IOM and the GoSL are recommended to investigate the reasons for missing outreach of the e-RPL and Skills Passport. This is to mitigate at an early stage if there are any push challenges in the set-up.

Recommendation 7

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	High	Long-term	Medium

The GoSL is recommended to give further priority to the work of FEDOs. This would mean capacity building and providing them with the needed material resources so that they can reach out to potential and returning migrants.

Recommendation 8

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
GoSL	High	Long-term	Medium

The GoSL is recommended to give further priority to the whole-of-Government approach to be developed at the provincial, district and divisional level. This is to maximize the benefits of the many efforts made at these levels to ensure fair and safe migration and return. The “Whole-of-Government” approach is appreciated by all stakeholders, but when it comes to funding some parts of the governmental structures have significant funding whereas others are lacking funding. It is therefore recommended to expand the approach also to cover funding.

Recommendation 9

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO	High	Long-term	High

The ILO is recommended to follow up to plans which were in place before the pandemic on capacity building for private employment agencies and their organization(s). Jointly or separate the Government, trade unions and agencies should be made aware of the ILO guidelines for PEAs and C181 with the perspective of using the guidelines when developing regulations for the industry and to prepare for a later ratification of C181.

Recommendation 10

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO and HQ	High	Long-term	None

The ILO is strongly recommended to ensure that in own activities and in activities implemented by partners a quota of 40% women and 30% male participation is in place. Also, it must be ensured that these quotas are reflected in project design and reporting. Reporting on project progress MUST have gender disaggregated data throughout.

Recommendation 11

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO	High	Long-term	Medium

The ILO should consider to have a media strategy in place for all projects and also ensure that the needed capacity for realizing such a strategy is in place in the CO.

Recommendation 12

Addressed to	Priority	Time frame	Resources
ILO CO	High	Long-term	High

The ILO is recommended to give priority to promotion of social protection (incl. pension schemes) for migrant workers in possible future interventions. With migrant workers staying abroad for several years or return into migration time after time it would be fair to include them in social protection schemes.



Annex I: Lessons Learned

Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy

DC/Symbol: LKA/20/03/CHE

Name of Evaluator: Sten Toft Petersen

Date: October 2024.

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

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The physical set-up for the current project where this and two other projects were placed physically in one office created a very strong integration between the three projects. Earlier when more projects were implemented in the CO a labour migration hub was established and it functioned well, but with the cooperation among the three current projects the mutual integration has reached a new level.
Context and any related preconditions	Labour migration is a high-profile issue for the ILO in Sri Lanka. A strong partnership is established with the key ministries. The SDC program has been implemented over the last ten years with shifting success, but at the end of the program ILO has reached most of its expected achievements.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	ILO Officials, implementing partners and ILO constituents.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	N/A
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The three projects managed to stand out as “one” in cooperation with partners and planning of joint activities. Also, activities could be transferred from one project to another and carried forward.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The current experience should be taken on board when designing management of possible future interventions.



Template 4.1: Lessons Learned

Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy

DC/Symbol: LKA/20/03/CHE

Name of Evaluator: Sten Toft Petersen

Date: October 2024.

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

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The project has supported the Government of Sri Lanka in developing qualification frameworks, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and even an electronic version of this (e-RPL) and also a skills passport. All these initiatives and ILO support are highly appreciated. It, however, turns out to be difficult to get employers and workers to buy in to these new opportunities. Till now it is small numbers only who have used the new opportunities. The lesson learned is that it is fine to establish the frameworks, but it is not less important to ensure that information about the opportunities reach the stakeholders first of all workers and employers.
Context and any related preconditions	Sri Lanka wants its workers to get higher skilled jobs when going abroad, but most of the workers have uncertified skills gained in often informal settings. There is less tradition among migrant workers to get these skills certified and recognized. Also, the employers are not used to looking for formal certified skills. It has therefore been difficult to “sell” the idea. It will require a lot of effort and also use modern communication platforms to reach out to potential beneficiaries.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	ILO Officials, implementing partners, ILO constituents, employers abroad and workers themselves.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Because of lack of out-reach few workers use the new systems established. The service is paid, and the workers seems not to understand in full, if what they pay for will better their job-situation.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	These will come when ways for out-reach to employers and workers is in place.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The Government will have to allocate significant resources to inform both employers and workers about the benefits of the new skills/qualification recognition initiatives.



Annex II: Emerging good Practices

Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy

DC/Symbol: LKA/20/03/CHE

Name of Evaluator: Sten Toft Petersen

Date: October 2024.

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

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	For establishing principles for signing of Bilateral Labour Agreements (LBA) a workshop was conducted with social partners to provide inputs to negotiators pointing on issues of importance for securing safe and fair labour migration.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The government of Sri Lanka has signed some 30 BLAs. Such agreements are negotiated and signed at a high governmental level. Normally there is little involvement of social partners in the negotiations. Through the workshop the social partners got a chance for directly influencing the content of the BLAs.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	The responsible government officials appointed to conduct negotiations with foreign governments on concluding/renewing BLAs were informed and provided with inputs capacitating them in their negotiations.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Stronger BLAs with a gender responsive approach and workers' rights highlighted meeting concerns of national stakeholders .
Potential for replication and by whom	This inclusive approach can be replicated by all governments signing BLAs.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	A positive example to be included and recommended in possible future revision of the ILO BLA Guidelines.
Other documents or relevant comments	N/A



Template 4.1: Lessons Learned

Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy

DC/Symbol: LKA/20/03/CHE

Name of Evaluator: Sten Toft Petersen

Date: October 2024.

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

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Sri Lanka supported by the current project has developed a number of initiatives in the field of skills recognition and qualification frameworks both at national and regional level. The project has supported a system where migrant workers being home for shorter periods can be fast-tracked and get their skills and qualifications certified (Recognition of Prior Learning) within a short period of time.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This initiative requires that assessors are in place and that tests are conducted on the same high level as those migrant workers going through the normal testing otherwise certificates can lose their “value”.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	Many migrant workers are abroad for long periods of time and only when they are home for holidays or in between contracts they will have the opportunity to get their gained skills recognized. With a certification of their skills they will have access to better jobs.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	This can contribute to Sri Lankan migrant workers having passed certification of skills can get better paid and more decent jobs. The impact will be measurable if large numbers of workers use this opportunity, and remittances increases and also the number of skilled and semi-skilled workers in labour migration will increase.
Potential for replication and by whom	The fast tracking can be scaled to all countries with a systematic and efficient skills/qualification framework in place.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	Migrant workers getting better paid and more decent jobs will contribute to the DWCP and ILO Country Program
Other documents or relevant comments	N/A

Annex III: List of Informants

	Name of the Key Informants/Title and Organization	Position and Institution	Gender	Type of interview
01	Ms. Joni Simpson,	Country Director, ILO Colombo	FM	Face-to-Face
02	ILO Projects – 03 Ms. Pramodini Weerasekera Mr. Asitha Seneviratne Mr. Asmi Musthafa	Program Officer – ILO Program Officer ILO Program Assistant – ILO	FM M M	Face-to-Face
03	SLMP Unit - 03 Mr. Nishantha Warnasooriya Mr. Shevandra Wijemanna Ms. Sharon Wijeyagoonewardena	National Project Coordinator – ILO Project Assistant - ILO SPA – ILO	M M FM	Face-to-Face
04	Mr. Olivier Praz	Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland to Sri Lanka and the Maldives	M	Face-to-Face
05	Ms. Rangitha Balasuriya (Mrs.)	Senior National Programme Officer Section Migration and Forced Displacement (SMFD) Embassy of Switzerland to Sri Lanka and the Maldives	FM	Face-to-Face

06	Ms. Padmini Ratnayake,	ILO Consultant,	FM	Face-to-Face
07	Ms. Sriyani Perera,	ILO Consultant,	FM	Face-to-Face
08	Mr. Padmasiri Ranawakaarachchi,	General Secretary, National Trade Union Federation, Sri Jayewardenepura, Kotte	M	Face-to-Face
09	Ms. Apsara Caldera,	Additional Secretary (Higher Education), Ministry of Education/ Ward Place	FM	Face-to-Face
10	Prof. Gominda Ponnamparuma,	SAQRF Technical Committee Member, University Grants Commission (UGC)	M	Face-to-Face
11	Mr. P.G.G.S. Yapa	Deputy General Manager – Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE)	M	Face-to-Face
12	Mr. S. M. Piyatissa,	Additional Secretary (Foreign Employment), Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment	M	Face-to-Face
13	Mr. K. Nikarilkanth,	Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment	M	Face-to-Face
14	Ms. Amali Kalupahana,	President, Centre for Working Women, Dehiwela	FM	Face-to-Face
15	Mr. Ajith Kaluarachchi,	Programme Officer, HELVETAS Sri Lanka, Colombo 5	M	Face-to-Face
16	Ms. Renuka Rathnayake Mr. Chandrapala Malalagama –	CSO – SESATHA Foundation – Magala North, Urugasmanhandiya CEO – SESATHA	FM M	Face-to-Face
17	Dr. Bilesa Weeraratne	Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Colombo 7	FM	On -line

18	Dr. Ajith Polwatta – Ms. Priyanga –	Director - Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission	M FM	Face-to-Face
19	Ms. Chathurika Ms, W.S. Kumari de Silva and Mr. T.K. Amila Jayantha.	FEDO – Karadeniya DS Office FEDO – Karadeniya DS Office FEDO – Karadeniya DS Office	FM FM M	Face-to-Face
20	Mr. Mohamed Arshad	Secretary, Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agents (ALFEA)	M	Face-to-Face
21	Ms. Amritha Muttiah	Senior Project Coordinator / IOM	FM	Face-to-Face
22	Ms. Sanjika Kammalakanda Ms. Sakunthala Rajamanthri	Legal Officer – Ministry of Foreign Affairs Legal Officer – Ministry of Foreign Affairs	FM FM	On -line
23	Mr. Ravindra Peiris	ACTEMP Specialist, ILO New Delhi	M	On-line
24	Mr. Gabriel Bordona	Skills Specialist, ILO New Delhi	M	On-line
25	Mr. Paul Tacon	Migration Specialist, ILO HQ	M	On-line

Annex IV: List of documents reviewed

Project Documents

- Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Ensuring the effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy – Phase I – September 2010
- Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Ensuring the effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy – Phase II -
- Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Ensuring the effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy – Upscaling & Consolidation - Phase III
-

Evaluation Reports

- Final Project Evaluation - Promoting Decent Work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Ensuring the effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy – Phase III Final Report
- Mid-Term Review Contributing towards implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) – Phase IV

TCPRs

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Policy

- 2008 National Labour Migration Policy-Sri Lanka

Other

- ILO LM Unit 2020 - Concept Note
- DWCP 2018-2021
- Current DWCP

ILO Documents

- ILO Policy Guidelines for evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 4th ed (2020) 3rd ed. http://www.ilo.ch/eval/Evaluationpolicy/WCMS_571339/lang--en/index.htm
- http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206205/lang--en/index.htm
- Checklist No. 3: Writing the inception report
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165972/lang--en/index.htm
- Checklist 5: preparing the evaluation report
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165967/lang--en/index.htm
- Checklist 6: rating the quality of evaluation report
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165968/lang--en/index.htm
- Template for lessons learnt and Emerging Good Practices
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206158/lang--en/index.htm
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206159/lang--en/index.htm
- Guidance note 7: Stakeholders participation in the ILO evaluation h
https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_165982/lang--en/index.htm
- Guidance note 4: Integrating gender equality in the monitoring and evaluation of Projects h
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165986/lang--en/index.htm
- UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/548>

Annex V: Results against Indicators as of October 2024

Objective/Outcomes/Outputs	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Final Evaluation Findings
Outcome 1: Outward Labour Migration policies and plans are better monitored for implementation, by the Government of Sri Lanka	# of key policy decisions taken for monitoring and implementation	National Labour Migration Policy 2008	10	After a long process with many amendments the National Policy on Migration for Employment was approved by the Government.
Output 1.1: Strengthened human resource and technological capacity to implement, coordinate & monitor outward labour migration related policies & plans	# of Steering Committee meetings facilitated	N/A	7	The project acted as Secretariat for three Advisory Committee and four Steering Committee meetings to what extend this has influenced the ownership to the policies and Action Plan will be visible after the ending of the project only.
	Improved data management system is hosted to operationalize	Outdated system in place	A new data management system in place	The Government decided to develop a new large and comprehensive labour market data management system.
	# of Foreign Employment Officers assigned to ToT unit fulfilling Master Trainer qualification	35	25	Reported that 74 Master Trainers trained (28 women), training materials developed, and an on-line course introduced.
Output 1.2: Increased engagement in national, regional	# of stakeholder coalitions for policy dialogue formed	N/A	1	A coalition of trade unions is reported to have been established but not

Objective/Outcomes/Outputs	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Final Evaluation Findings
and global policy dialogues by under- represented district and national-level stakeholders (especially trade unions)				active. A broader coalition “Voice of Migrants” established but not reachable for the evaluation.
	# of trade unionists and CSO representatives demonstrated knowledge enhancement on engagement on engagement of LM policy dialogues	N/A	25	This was originally foreseen as a trade union capacity building activity, but on the request of unions the CSOs were included. 182 Master Trainers trained. No indication of increased TU engagement reported. TU Master Trainers not used for training. CSO engagement depends to a large extent on project funds available.
Output 1.3: GoSL is capable of meeting regional and global commitments on safe labour migration; and identify regional and global best practices for adoption in Sri Lanka, including in labour mobility agreements	# of international commitments analysed for the GoSL	N/A	5	Best practise exchange with Philippines. Support provided for contributions at Colombo Process meetings. Output, indicator of achievement and factual achievement reported are not synchronized.
	# of bilateral agreements/amendments drafted with more gender responsive and rights-based approach	N/A	5	119 officers from government, trade unions, CSOs and ALFEA trained. Plus 8 trained by ITC/ILO. Output, indicator of achievement and factual achievement reported are not synchronized.
Outcome 2: Fair and ethical recruitment, skills recognition	# of actions implemented collaboratively in national	N/A	10	Skills recognition (RPL), certification and reintegration activities

Objective/Outcomes/Outputs	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Final Evaluation Findings
and certification, and sustainable reintegration is fostered through institutional enhancement and the 'Whole-Of-Government-Approach'	and sub-national plans related to fair recruitment, certification and reintegration.			implemented and an Action Plan for fair and ethical recruitment developed.
Output 2.1: Licensed Foreign Employment Agents (LFEAs) incorporated fair and ethical recruitment practices in their self-regulation; while the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) strengthened monitoring and compliance of LFEAs with fair and ethical recruitment practices	# of joint advocacy and action plans developed to institutionalise fair and ethical recruitment practises	N/A	5	Five consultancies conducted and Action Plan developed
	# of master trainers on fair recruitment produced (within the industry)	N/A	40	Covered by SLBFE
	# of actions proposed to SLBFE to improve licensing and monitoring	N/A	10	Eight Recommendations to improve licensing and monitoring provided
Output 2.2. Better access to skills recognition and certification through e-RPL for departing and returning migrant workers, particularly women, improved their decent employment opportunities	e-RPL accepted for launching by EFC and TVET	N/A		e-RPL launched and linked with Skills Passport but still limited outreach

Objective/Outcomes/Outputs	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Final Evaluation Findings
	# of migrant workers assessed by pilot e-RPL testing	N/A	1000	Covered by other ILO and IOM projects
	# of recommendations submitted through TVEC for Regional Qualification Framework	N/A	10	SAQRF developed and approved by Government and national adoption initiated.
Output 2.3: Initiate 'Whole-Of-Government-Approach' for strengthened implementation of the Sub Policy on Return and Reintegration (Areas 2 and 5)	# of actions in sub policy of return and reintegration accepted for implementation by key migration partners	N/A	5	Study on effectiveness conducted and recommendations incorporated into national policy. Emergency Evacuation Response Plan developed (unplanned activity)
	“Whole-of-Government” approach is convened to high level forum (interministerial, administrators, policy and decision makers etc.)	N/A	Approach convened	Mapping of stakeholders conducted, and result submitted to ministry
Outcome 3: Policy makers, individuals and institutions at national and regional level used evidence base to inform policy dialogues, policy drafting and knowledge exchange	# of evidence-based position papers on policy development produced for representatives in national, regional and global	N/A	10	Eight large scale and Ministry level policy position papers developed by the project and in cooperation with the project for policy dialogue
Output 3.1. 'Knowledge Hub' with required human resource skills and systems for generating	Knowledge Hub endorsed by the State Ministry	N/A	Knowledge hub established	A LMS developed instead of the Knowledge Hub

Objective/Outcomes/Outputs	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Final Evaluation Findings
evidence for policymaking, contributing to national, regional and global dialogues is established				
	# of staff demonstrated knowledge enhancement on data analysis and reporting through ILO/ITC online course	35	25	49 governmental officers trained on data analysis and of these 13 were selected to follow ITC on-line course
Output 3.2. Data management system analysing data on labour migration for the 'Knowledge Hub' is operationalized	# of persons including policy makers accessed data management system	N/A	500	The data management system is reported to be in place, but there are no data on number of users hereunder returning users.
Output 3.3. GoSL has improved capacity to generate knowledge share events	# of staff demonstrated knowledge enhancement on evidence-based policy making through ILO/ITC online course	N/A	100	23 officers from the ministry and SLBFE trained on migration research methodologies
	# of research studies published	N/A	5	Five research published

Annex VI: Terms of Reference



International Labour Organization

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Independent Final Evaluation

Project " Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) -Phase IV (LKA/20/03/CHE)

1. Key facts

Title of project being evaluated	"Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Ensuring the effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy Phase IV – consolidation" (LKA/20/03/CHE)
Project DC symbol	LKA/20/03/CHE
Programme Date	18 January 2021 – 31 August 2024
Type of evaluation	Independent Final Evaluation
Date of Evaluation	May– August 2024
Donor	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives (CO-Colombo)
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia, New Delhi (DWT South Asia)
P&B outcome (s) under evaluation	Outcome 7 of the ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B) 2020-21 and P&B 2022-2023: 'Adequate and effective protection for all'. Output 7.5: 'Increased capacity of constituents to develop fair and effective labour migration frameworks, institutions and services to protect migrant workers'. DWCP Outcome 3.2 and LKA 154

SDG(s) under evaluation	The Project supports achievements of SDG Target 5 on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment by mainstreaming gender as a cross cutting theme across interventions; SDG Target 8 on growth and decent work, specifically Target 8.8. on protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment; and SDG Target 10 on reducing inequalities, specifically Target 10.7 on facilitating orderly, safe and regular migration of
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	people, through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Lastly, SDG Target 17 on global partnerships on sustainable development which includes improving data.
External Implementing Partners	Key stakeholders are the Government of Sri Lanka (particularly the Ministry of Labour & Foreign Employment, the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission; the Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies representing recruiters; Migrant Workers associations or societies representing women and men migrant workers and the Employers' Federation of Ceylon; trade unions that are membership organizations of workers in the national labour market; Civil Society Organisations and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
Budget	USD 1,033,932

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACTRAV	Bureau of Workers' Activities
ALFEA	Association of License Foreign Employment Agencies
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Team
EXCOL	External Collaborators
GOALS	Governance of Labour Migration in South & South East Asia
HQ	Headquarters
CO-Colombo	ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Department
ROAP	ILO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific
IA	Implementation Agreement
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LFEA	License Foreign Employment Agencies
MIGRANT	Migration Branch (MIGRANT)
ML&FE	Ministry of Labour & Foreign Employment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises Unit
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF	United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Background information

A developing country, migration for employment in Sri Lanka has played an important role in easing pressure on the domestic labour market by providing alternative opportunities for higher waged work. Migration for employment has also played an important role in easing pressure on the domestic labour market by providing alternative opportunities for higher waged work.

Since the 1980s, overseas employment has been a key contributor to Sri Lanka's economy mainly in the form of foreign exchange remittances. In 2022, private remittances sent to Sri Lanka amounted to USD 3,789.4 million, with over 90 per cent of Sri Lankan employees working abroad were employed in the Arab States.

However, over the past years, the context within which labour migration takes place has also changed. Since 2015, Sri Lanka has witnessed a downward trend in the numbers of those registered temporary migrants for employment overseas, including for women.

The COVID in 2019 further exposed migrant workers to more breaches of rights and protection in the form of unpaid wages, abysmal living and working conditions in countries of destination, and the current issues related to integrating returnee migrants and providing alternatives to aspirant migrants, following the COVID19 crisis.

These developments have underscored the crucial importance of efficient and effective governance mechanisms, which are inclusive of all stakeholders including migrant workers themselves; and the critical role of whole-of-government approaches to the return and sustainable reintegration of migrant workers.

Project “ Promoting decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Contributing towards effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy’ is the International Labour Organisation (ILO) component of the Safe Labour Migration Programme (SLMP) in Sri Lanka, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Global Programme for Migration and Development since 2010.

The three previous phases of the ILO Project supported by SDC, have assisted the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders to implement Sri Lanka's National Labour Migration Policy (adopted in 2008) by strengthening the governance of labour migration to ensure that migration for employment is safe, orderly and regular for women and men workers.

Over Phases I-III, the Project had supported the Government of Sri Lanka to formulate an Operational Manual for Labour Sections of Sri Lankan Missions in Countries of Destination (2012 and revised in 2019); to develop the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Sri Lankan Migrants (adopted in 2015); and to update and strengthen the National Labour Migration Policy National Policy on Migration for Employment (in 2019-2020), among other activities.

In this exit phase of the Project, intervention now shift from policy making to enhanced policy implementation through assumption of ownership of the Safe Labour Migration Programme by the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders.

The four core thematic areas of the National Policy on Migration for Employment are:

- Policy Area 1: Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment
- Policy Area 2: Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of their families
- Policy Area 3: Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies
- Policy Area 4: Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development

Phase IV of the Project aligns itself with these core themes through its three Outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Outward Labour Migration policies and plans are better monitored for implementation, by the Government of Sri Lanka
- Outcome 2: Fair and ethical recruitment, skills recognition and certification, and sustainable reintegration is fostered through institutional enhancement and the ‘Whole-Of-Government-Approach’
- Outcome 3: Improved Evidence Base on Labour Migration to inform knowledge, dialogue, policy and action

The main strategies for implementation in this phase of the Project are to (i) capacitate duty-bearers where necessary for improved governance of labour migration; (ii) focus on process sustainability and institutionalisation of roles and functions in monitoring and review of implementation by duty-bearers; (iii) promote the ‘Whole-Of-Government-Approach’ through dialogue and coordinated interventions; (iv) mainstream rights-based approaches and gender responsiveness in the governance of labour migration; and (v) boost civil society participation in the process and mechanisms of governance, including through recognition and voice for migrant workers and joint actions with trade unions. These approaches are informed by the learnings from previous phases of the Project, and particularly the end evaluation of Phase III.

The Project contributes to Outcome 7 of the ILO’s Programme and Budget (P&B) 2020-21 and

P&B 2022-2023: ‘Adequate and effective protection for all’. Specifically, it speaks to Output 7.5: ‘Increased capacity of constituents to develop fair and effective labour migration frameworks, institutions and services to protect migrant workers’. It contributes to Output 7.5.2 to deliver inclusive, non-discriminatory and gender responsive services to promote decent work for migrants and families by enhancing skills and providing opportunities for women and men migrants. Finally, it contributes to Output 7.5.3 by building capacity to improve bilateral labour migration agreements.

In relation to Sri Lanka’s Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2018-2022, the Project contributes to achieving Country Priority 3: Rights at work for all, Outcome 3.2. Labour market outcomes of (low skilled) migrants are improved and their vulnerability to exploitation (forced labour) reduced.

The Project is aligned with the following national policy frameworks of the Government of Sri Lanka including National Policy on Migration for Employment for Sri Lanka, Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers (NAPRR).

The project took into consideration lessons learned from previous evaluations and reviews, especially from the Phase III’s findings and recommendations of the end of Project evaluation of phase III in its design and implementation; the MTR of phase IV and also drawing on

observations of the State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion & Market Diversification; SDC in Sri Lanka, and within the ILO Country Office in Sri Lanka.

Introduction and rationale for this final independent evaluation

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of technical cooperation activities. Findings and recommendations from evaluations ensure accountability and learning to the ILO constituents and stakeholders and learning for future programming. The findings and recommendations are also to be used as organizational learning to improve the design and implementation of future relevant projects and programmes.

The independent final evaluation of project LKA/20/03/CHE is to be guided by the above and to be built on a mid-term internal review (MTR) of the project which was conducted in August 2023. The MTR reviews the project progress, achievements, and challenges, informs the ILO, project stakeholders, and the donor of key lessons learned, and proposes recommendations for any improvement or adjustment needed for the remaining project implementation period. It had identified (i) gaps to be addressed to fulfil further sustainability of project initiatives beyond phase III; (ii) common gaps in the migration sector for broader intervention; and (iii) replicable good practices in the migration sector. It made key recommendations and areas for improvement, with identification of responsible agencies to move them forward.

This final independent evaluation will adhere to and apply the evaluation criteria established by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) / Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System.

This final independent evaluation follows guidelines on results-based evaluation of the ILO Evaluation Department (EVAL) contained in the “ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation (4th edition)” and, more specifically, the checklist “Preparation of the Evaluation Report”.

Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure accountability and learning. The findings and recommendations are to be used as organizational learning to improve the future relevant projects and programmes.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of proposed outcomes, and test underlying assumptions about contributions to broader economic and social impacts;
- Evaluate the extent to which the project has achieved its planned objectives, and whether there are any factors contributing or hindering the achievement of the project;
- Assess the extent to which the project has addressed the midterm evaluation’s recommendations;
- Assess the ILO cross-cutting criteria (ILS, social dialogue, gender and non-discrimination, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability). In particular, the extent to which

gender equality consideration has been considered in the design, M&E framework (indicators and data collection), and during the project implementation; and

- Document lessons learned and good practices.

In addition, since it is the exit phase of a long-term safe labour migration program since 2010 and there have been many timely initiatives, the focus of evaluation will also be on assessing the sustainability of the investments of the project and to make recommendations to ensure sustainability and highlight the importance of the continuation of ILO interventions which lead to the desired impacts.

Users of the evaluation:

The following are the potential users of the evaluation Internal

- Project team, Colombo CO colleagues, DWT/SA colleagues (migration, skills, ACTEMP, ACTRAV etc.).
- ILO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP)
- Migration Branch (MIGRANT)

External

- Ministry of Labour & Foreign Employment
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment/Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Defence
- Office for Overseas Sri Lankan Affairs
- Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
- Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission
- Employers Federation of Ceylon
- Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies
- Selected Trade Unions
- Selected Civil Society Organizations
- UN Network of Migration
- HELVETAS Sri Lanka
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC- Donor)
- IOM

Evaluation Scope

The evaluation covers activities, outputs and outcomes of the projects for the period between 15 January 2021 to 31 August 2024. It covers all the planned outputs and outcomes under the project to achieve the program goal of the project which is Labour migration in Sri Lanka is well- governed, orderly and regular for all women and men, ensuring decent, safe and productive employment. As the project operates at the national level, with a greater emphasis on policy-level

engagements rather than service delivery, due consideration will be given to national-level deliveries. Further attention is to be paid to assess the sustainability of the investments of the project and to recommend for its sustainability as the project ends.

The evaluation will assess integration of ILO's cross-cutting issues, including norms and social dialogue, gender equality, disability inclusion, other non-discrimination concerns, and medium and long-term effects of capacity development initiatives throughout the evaluation methodology and all deliverables.

In relation to gender equality, where possible, the evaluation must be conducted with gender equality as a mainstreamed approach and concern. This 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 and/or analysis of gender-sensitive strategies and objectives and gender-specific indicators; (iv) inclusion of qualitative methods and utilization of a mix of methodologies; (v) forming a gender-balanced team, and (vi) assessing outcomes to improve lives of women and men. Thus, analysis of gender-related concerns will be based on the ILO Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation, and the Supplementary Guidance Note: integrating gender equality in ILO M&E (Nov. 2023). The evaluation will be conducted following UN evaluation standards and norms.

It will attend to how the intervention is relevant to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels, UNSDCF and national sustainable development strategy or other relevant national development frameworks, including any relevant sectoral policies and programme.

Evaluation criteria and questions

Evaluation criteria:

The evaluation will be based on the following OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation, 2020.

Assessment on coherence is integral to the evaluation. The evaluation also conducts evaluation of cross cutting issues/issues of special interest to the ILO. It will comply with evaluation criteria related to ILO's mandate in cross-cutting policy drivers and pro-poor focus and inclusion issues, namely, project's responsiveness to issues relating to gender equality, non-discrimination and disability inclusion as well as other core ILO cross-cutting priorities, including promotion of labour standards, social dialogue and tripartite processes. .

Indicative main evaluation questions:

The following are indicative main evaluation questions that can be used to guide the evaluation. These questions are not intended to be exhaustive and can be adapted or other questions or aspects of the questions can be added as proposed by the evaluators.

The evaluators may adapt the evaluation questions, but any fundamental changes should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluators, and reflected in the inception report.

Relevance and validity of design (is the intervention doing the right things)

1. To what extent did the project strategies contribute to the promotion of decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers? E.g. through improving monitoring of governance mechanisms, facilitating stronger links between migrant workers' associations, civil society organisations, trade unions and government counterparts; enhancing implementation of critical issues such as skills for employment and sustainable reintegration; and consolidating knowledge production and management.
2. How have the project's objectives been aligned and contributed to the needs and expectations of primary stakeholder?
3. How did the project contribute to the relevant International Labour Organisation Programme & Budget Outcomes, Sri Lanka's DWCP and to the UNSDCF?
4. Does the Theory of change exist? And to what extent it is used to guide project implementation towards the project objectives? Were the indicators clearly defined, describing the changes to be brought about? Were the risks properly identified, assessed and what recommended risks can be added to be mitigated against?
5. To what extent did the political and economic situation of Sri Lanka have adverse impact on the planned achievements and strategy etc. and the extent to which the project has been able to adapt and to respond to the unexpected consequences of the above events and whether the project adjusted its design to respond to the challenges?

6.

Coherence (The extent to which ILO strategy and actions have been coherent and complementary to the related efforts and creating synergies and interlinkages)

1. To what extent have the strategy and interventions created synergies and interlinkages with other interventions being carried out by ILO?
2. Were the strategy and interventions consistent with the relevant international norms and standards to which the ILO adheres to?
3. To what extent have the interventions been coherent and complementary to activities being carried out by constituents, United Nations (UN) partners, and other multilateral and bilateral organizations?
4. What are the contributions of the project to National Development framework and other relevant policies and strategies, and the donors' programme strategies? E.g. synergies / indirect alliances / networks developed through the SLMP Programme.

Effectiveness (is the intervention achieving its objectives, and effectiveness of project governance)

1. To what extent have the project objectives been achieved, including skilling migrants for employment and transferring ownership of the Programme to the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders including licensed foreign employment agents, Employers'

Associations, civil society organisations, and migrant workers societies?

2. What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the project's shift from policy making to enhanced policy implementation

through the assumption of ownership of the Safe Labour Migration Programme by the Government of Sri Lanka and other stakeholders?

3. To what extent did the results benefit the target beneficiaries i.e. returnees and aspiring migrant workers, and their families?
4. To what extent were the institutional set-up, capacity for project implementation, coordination mechanisms and the use and usefulness of management tools effective?
5. What are the constraints/limitations in various types of partnerships that the project had made use of?
6. Have the project partnership strategies been appropriate and effective towards achieving the expected results? E.g. how has the project contributed to deepening the role and inclusion of non-state stakeholders especially migrant workers societies; the private sector (recruitment agencies and employers’; and trade unions and civil society organisations, in the governance of labour migration?
7. How effective was the project in stimulating interest and participation of partners towards strengthening ownership? E.g. partners continues and completes the journey to self-resourcing of the national machinery for implementation of the National Policy on Migration for Employment and the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration.
8. How has the M&E strategy that the project developed enhanced accountability, learning and fed into management? Including how the behavioural change anticipated vs. achieved to contribute to the effectiveness.

9.

Efficiency (how well are resources being used)

1. To what extent did the project leverage resources (financial, partnerships, expertise) to achieve outcomes and outputs? Could resources have been allocated in a more cost-effective manner ?
2. Was the project implemented as planned, what have been the factors that affected timely delivery of activities and finance? How did the project adapt to challenges to project implementation?
3. Does the project allocate sufficient resources to integrate gender, gender disability and for M&E?

Impact (what differences does the intervention make?)

1. To what extent did the project bring lasting changes in norms and policies that strengthen governance, capacity-building and information and data management on labour migration?
2. Have the interventions made a difference in providing key beneficiaries with appropriate mechanisms, where missing, to expedite monitoring and review of implementation of the Government of Sri Lanka’s own national policies and plans? If so, how have the interventions made a difference? (explicitly or implicitly)

3. What were the intervention's long-term effects in terms of capacitating duty-bearers in protecting rights of migrant workers in areas such as governance of labour migration,

monitoring and review of implementation, dialogue and mainstreaming rights-based approaches and gender responsiveness in the governance of labour migration and boosting civil society participation.

Sustainability (will the benefits last?)

1. What are institutional sustainability and policy level sustainability premised on?
2. What is financial sustainability premised on?
3. What are the factors that may hinder sustainability?
4. How effective are project activities and interventions in building and sustaining institutional ownership of project interventions?
5. How likely will the results of the intervention be owned and carried forward by existing cadre of state officials and existing institutions?
6. To what extent the project has exit strategy to ensure that the project's benefit will be sustained after the project ended?
7. To what extent targeted public and private institutions have changed institutional level practices, system, approaches, and targeting, in order to govern the labour migration in Sri Lanka in a well-governed, orderly and regular manner of all women and men, ensuring decent, safe and productive employment.

Cross-cutting issues (Gender equality, non-discrimination, disability inclusion, International Labour Standards, social dialogue and tripartism)

1. To what extent did the project design identify and integrate specific targets and indicators to capture:
 - i. Gender equality and non-discrimination concerns?
 - ii. Concerns regarding persons with disabilities?
2. What are the key achievements of the project on gender equality and women's empowerment so far?
3. Within its overall objectives and strategies, what specific measures were taken by the project to address issues relating to:
 - i. Gender equality and non-discrimination?
 - ii. Inclusion of persons with disabilities?
4. To what extent did the project bring lasting changes in norms and policies that favour/promote:
 - i. Gender equality and non-discrimination?

ii. Inclusion of persons with disabilities?

5. How has the project been able to leverage the ILO contributions, through its comparative advantages including ILS, in social dialogue and tripartism?

Project's responsiveness to SDGs

1. To what extent did the project consider relevant SDG targets and indicators?
2. To what extent did the project increase stakeholders' awareness on SDG targets, objectives of Global Compact of Migration (GCM) and indicators relevant to Decent Work Agenda? (explicitly or implicitly)
3. To what extent did the project leverage partnerships (with constituents, national institutions and other UN/development agencies) that enhanced projects relevance and contribution to priority SDG targets and indicators? (explicitly or implicitly)

Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation will follow the [EVAL evaluation policy guidelines](#) and the ILO/EVAL checklists. The methodology will include multiple methods, with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, and be able to capture intervention's contributions to the achievement of expected and unexpected outcomes.

The methodology will ensure involvement of key stakeholders in the implementation as well as in the dissemination processes, including through meetings, interviews, validation workshops, etc.

The Consultant will develop the final evaluation methodology in consultation with the evaluation manager. The methods will be selected for their rigor and their ability to produce empirical evidence to meet the evaluation criteria, answer the evaluation questions, and meet the objectives of the evaluation.

- During the data collection process, the Consultant will compare and cross-validate data from different sources (project staff, project partners and beneficiaries) to verify their accuracy, and different methodologies (review documentary, field visits and interviews) that will complement each other. The Consultant will ensure that women's views and perceptions, as well as those of persons with disabilities are also reflected in databases, interviews and that gender-specific questions are included in the questionnaires. All efforts are made to ensure conflict-sensitivity in the methodology (e.g. making sure informants and focus group discussions include representatives from different ethnic, religious, returnee/host community groups, and that interviews are conducted in a respectful way).
- In particular, the gender dimension will be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report. The evaluation is required to meet the UN SWAP requirements as follows:
 - The background section of the draft and final evaluation reports must include: Intersectional (gender) analysis of the specific social groups affected by the issue; Normative frameworks, and; Specific objective on gender.
 - The methodology should have: mixed-methods approach with clear integration of gender equality; Stated ethical standards; Appropriate sampling framework (include sample of both men and women beneficiaries); include interview questions that

explore how the project address gender, e.g. how had the project considered/addressed

issues of concerns and interest of women end beneficiaries and strategic gender needs for women

- The findings and recommendations should have: Discussion of unintended effects on gender equality; conclusions addressing GEWE issues; Specific recommendation that includes gender equality.

Desk reviewⁱ: desk review of all relevant documents, including but not limited to project document and its theory of change. The Consultant will examine the intervention's Theory of Change with particular attention to the identification of assumptions, risk and mitigation strategies, and the logical connection between levels of results and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at the global and national levels, as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets and objectives of Global Compact of Migration (GCM). Consultant will also evaluate the logical framework, funding agreement, relevant minute sheets, implementation plan, performance evaluation plan, progress reports, mid term evaluation report, other relevant documents and studies.

Meetings with the ILO Country Director (CD), NPC and project staff in Colombo: upon suggestion by project, Consultant will meet the CD, NPC and relevant project staff to secure a thorough common understanding, support and engagement for the evaluation of the project.

Meetings with backstopping units and the donor: upon suggestion by project, the international Consultant may meet with the relevant regional technical backstopping units and, if necessary, relevant units in HQ virtually. These meetings aim to reach a common understanding in relation of the technical and financial status of the project.

Field visits, collection of data, and interview with stakeholders: the Consultant can visit selected districts to meet field level government officers and if necessary. Locations are to be advised by the project team. Long-distance communications with relevant ILO staff based in Colombo, Delhi and Geneva can be made, if necessary.

The Consultant will meet with relevant project beneficiaries and organize interview or focus group discussions with them. Interpretation will be arranged by the project team.

To the extent possible, the data collection, analysis and presentations should be responsive to and include issues relating to ILO's normative work, social dialogue, peace and resilience, diversity and non-discrimination, including disability issues. The data and information will be collected, presented and analyzed with appropriate gender disaggregation.

Validation Workshop will be conducted at the end of the data collection phase. The Consultant will present preliminary findings to the ILO project team and relevant stakeholders in sessions to clarify, discuss, refine and validate the findings and fill information gaps.

Main Deliverables

The international Consultant will produce and deliver in English the following:

Deliverable 1

Evaluation inception report: provides the Consultant's plan of action and timeline for conducting the evaluation based on the TOR. The quality of the Evaluation inception report and

its adherence to ILO guidance and formatting requirements will follow guidance in the Checklist 4.8 writing the inception report Date: Feb 2021, v. 3 (v.1 -2012). The

evaluation inception report will, among others:

- describe the conceptual framework planned for undertaking the evaluation in line with the scope and purpose described in the evaluation TOR;
- describe the way that the chosen data collection methods, data sources, sampling and indicators will support the evaluation questions
- review evaluation questions in the TOR, add and/or modify based on the initial review of documents and briefings through the use of Evaluation Question Matrix (EQM);
- Interview guides and other data collection tools
- Identify a list of key stakeholders to be interviewed and the tools to be used for interviews and discussions;
- Set the outline for the final evaluation report; and
- contain a work plan, which indicates the phases of the evaluation, the timing, key deliverables and milestones.

The ILO will review the draft Evaluation Inception Report and provide inputs for incorporation and finalization by the consultant.

Deliverable 2

Draft evaluation report: The draft evaluation report reflects the evaluative reasoning and critical thinking that were used to draw values-based conclusions following the evidence. It answers the questions related to the evaluation criteria, including the recommendations, lessons learned, good practices, technical recommendations for the key stakeholders.

The Consultant will submit the first draft of the report to the evaluation manager, who will circulate it to the EVAL, REO, backstopping units, the donors, the key national partners, and relevant stakeholders for comments. The Evaluation Manager will collect the feedback on the first draft, consolidate and send it to the Consultant.

Deliverable 3

Validation workshop: The workshop is to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation. At the end of the data collection, the Consultant will present a draft report and preliminary findings for validation with key stakeholders. The project team will provide necessary administrative and logistic support including interpretation to the organisation of this Validation Workshop.

Deliverable 4

Final evaluation report: completes the draft evaluation reports according to the TOR and the work plan agreed upon in the inception report. Components of the final evaluation include:

- Cover Page with key intervention and evaluation data
- Executive Summary
- Brief background

- Purpose, Scope and Clients of evaluation
- Methodology
- Review of implementation

- Presentation of findings
- Recommendations
- Lessons learned and Good practices
- Annexes: TOR, Questionnaires, list of informants etc.

A summary of the final evaluation report will be sent, together with the final report, to the Evaluation Manager following ILO template. The template is accessible through this link: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746811.pdf

A power point based on the summary will also be made and sent to the Evaluation Manager together with the summary.

Lessons learnt and good practices will be sent, together with the final report, to the Evaluation Manager following ILO template. Template for lessons learned is accessible through this link https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746820.pdf;

and Template for good practices can be found in https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746821.pdf

The final evaluation report will ensure full rigor in the method, quality of the data, credible evaluation findings and valid evaluation conclusions as specified in the ILO Evaluation Management Handbook – 3rd Edition 2021.

The report and all other outputs of this evaluation must be produced in English. All draft and final reports, including other supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data will be provided in electronic version compatible with Microsoft Word for Windows.

Management Arrangements and Work plan

Management arrangements

The evaluation is adhered to and respect the technical and ethical work standards, and the main criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility.

Evaluation Manager

The evaluation manager is responsible for executing the evaluation processes in accordance with the ILO Policy for Evaluation, the ILO Evaluation Policy Guidelines for Evaluation and the UNEG Norms and Standards. The evaluation manager encourages internal communication among the evaluation team and is responsible for promoting participatory processes that lead to the achievement of the common-value goals.

The evaluation manager has the role and function as specified in the [Guidance Note 4.1: The Evaluation Manager: Role and Function Date: June 2020, v. 4 \(v.1 – 2012\)](#), including:

- Planning the evaluation and drafting and finalizing the TOR

- Selecting and contracting evaluators
- Managing the consultant
- Approve inception report

- Support and facilitate in finalizing the evaluation

The evaluation will be managed by Mr Nguyen Ngoc Nguyen (ngocn@ilo.org) who has no prior involvement in the project, will manage this evaluation with oversight provided by the Regional Evaluation Officer -ROAP, and final approval by Senior Evaluation Officer, ILO Evaluation Office. The consultant reports to the evaluation manager.

Project Team

The National Project Coordinator (NPC) and the project staff facilitate and support the implementation of the evaluation at the national level, including:

- Provide inputs to draft TOR, draft evaluation reports and final report.
- Assist in providing data and information within the purview of the project team to facilitate the smooth and effective conduct of the evaluation.
- Coordinate and arrange validation workshop.
- Provide transport for the Consultant only for outstation missions and pay a daily subsistence allowance to cover food and lodgingⁱⁱ.
- Introduce the Consultant to partners/Key Informants for meetings and exchanges between the Consultant and partners, and arrange interpretation.
- Provide additional information and comments to the evaluation manager and consultant.
- Co-ordinate follow-up plans.

After the evaluation, the NPC is responsible for developing management response, preparing a plan for follow-up, taking appropriate action, and disseminating the evaluation outcomes together with the ILO responsible official.

Evaluation Focal Point in the region

As the Evaluation Focal Point in the region, the Regional Evaluation Officer provides support in evaluation oversight, approves the final version of the TOR for independent evaluations and the choice of Consultant. The Evaluation Focal Point may also provide methodological inputs to the evaluation process. At the end of an independent evaluation, the evaluation focal point reviews the final evaluation report prior to submission to EVAL for approval.

Consultant

Role and responsibilities of the Consultant:

The Consultant is responsible for delivering the main deliverables as written in “Main Deliverables” of this TOR, including in the development and application of the evaluation’s methodology, the evaluation approach used, description of evaluation methods and data collection instruments; description of the sources of information/data used is described; and type of analysis (qualitative data analysis, descriptive statistics).

Expected expertise and qualifications

- Advanced university degree in economics, social sciences, business management or related qualifications.
- A minimum of 10 years of proven track record as evaluator (or in a similar capacity) in projects and programme.

- Extensive experiences in labour migration governance and in fair and ethical recruitment, skills recognition and certification, and sustainable reintegration.
- In depth knowledge of rights-based approach to migrant workers and their families, international commitments on governance of labour migration; including reporting on relevant Sustainable Development Targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as on implementation of the Global Compact on Migration.
- Track record in producing relevant reports for large international organizations, preferably with the UN and ILO for a diverse audience of development entities, government authorities, private sector actors, etc.
- Knowledge of Sri Lanka's Labour Migration Governance and ILO's roles and mandate and its tripartite structure as well as UN evaluation norms and its programming is desirable.
- Knowledge and expertise on gender and non-discrimination will be an advantage.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.
- Be flexible and responsive to changes and demands.
- Be client oriented and open to feedback.

Indicative Work Plan

Activities	Responsible	Number of working days for Consultant	Timeline (activities to be completed by the below date, indicative)
Complete recruitment of a consultant, including obtain approval for their recruitment from the Evaluation Focal Point, and request a contract based on the ToR.	Evaluation Manager	0	End of May
Inception phase: briefing with the Evaluation Manager, Project Manager on the ILO policy and other relevant internal documents to ensure a smooth evaluation process, documents review and development and approval of the inception report	Evaluation Manager, NPC, Consultant	4	1-14 June (Inception report approved by 14 June)
Data collection phase (fieldwork as per agreed itinerary, interviews)	Consultant	10	17-28 June
Debriefing and Validation Workshop	Consultant, Evaluation Manager	2	04 July

Report writing submitted to the evaluation manager for review and approval (Consultant prepares Final Evaluation Report, full draft with annexes, a summary of the final evaluation report (ILO/EVAL template) and a power point based on the summary, lessons learnt and good practices	Consultant and Evaluation manager	7	Submission of draft report by 19 July
Circulating the draft report for comments from stakeholders	Evaluation Manager	0	22 July to 2 August
Consolidate feedback from stakeholders and send feedback to the consultant.	Evaluation Manager	0	5 Aug
Submission of revised report incorporating inputs from key stakeholders	Evaluators	2	12 August
Submit the final evaluation report to the REO for final review (EVAL provides final approval).	Evaluation manager	0	Mid August
Once the approved final evaluation report is sent by EVAL to the ILO project responsible official, send copies to all other relevant evaluation stakeholders, including national partners.	Evaluation Manager	0	By end of Aug
TOTAL		25	

2. Legal and ethical matters

The evaluation will be conducted in full alignment with ethics, respect for human rights and cultural sensitivity as written in accordance with the International Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation UNEG, 2020.

The evaluator will abide by the EVAL's Code of Conduct for carrying out the evaluations, should not have any links to project management, or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.

Ownership of data from the evaluation rests exclusively with the ILO. All raw data files, consent forms and relevant documentation must be returned to ILO before the release of final payment.

The copyright of the evaluation report will rest exclusively with the ILO. Use of the data for publication and other presentations can only be made with the written agreement of the ILO. All deliverables will be paid for on satisfactory completion and certification by ILO evaluation manager and in line with the ILO Evaluation report checklist.

Attachments

Annexes

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

[Microsoft Word - Evaluators_code%20of%20conduct_Final_EVAL_7.11.18.doc \(ilo.org\)](#)

- 2- EVAL's Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through decentralized evaluation https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf

- 3- Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation, Date: June 2020 v.3 (v.1 - 2013) [wcms_746716.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

- 4- Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate Date: June 2020 (v.1) [wcms_746717.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

- 5- CHECKLIST 4.8 WRITING THE INCEPTION REPORT X Date: Feb 2021, v. 3 (v.1 -2012) [wcms_746817.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

- 6- Checklist 4.4: Preparing the Evaluation Report Summary X Date: April 2021, v.2 (v.1 2012) [wcms_746811.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

- 7 - Template 4.1: Lessons learned X DATE: MARCH 2021 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746820.pdf;

- 8- Template 4.2: Emerging good practices X DATE: MARCH 2021 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746821.pdf

- 9- SDG related reference materials [Evaluation & SDGs \(Evaluation Office\) \(ilo.ch\)](#)

- 10- Rating the quality of evaluation report http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165968/lang--en/index.htm

- 11- Guidance note 4.5 Stakeholders participation in the ILO evaluation https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746724.pdf

- 12- [Guidance note 3.1. Integrating gender equality in M&E](#) https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_165

13- Template for evaluation title page

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

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

15- UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation
<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/548>

ⁱ Key documents reviewed at the Desk Review for the Inception Phase include, but not limited to, following documents;

- Project proposal (PRODOC) and related annexures
- NLMP Policy 2008
- SLBFE Corporate Plan
- National Action Plan
- TVEC Agreement
- Progress reports
- SLMP Mid-term TOR and
- Other relevant Reports

ⁱⁱ Notes for consultant: For field mission of local consultant- The project will pay an agreed daily subsistence allowance for outstation visits. The consultant should manage food and lodging within the DSA. Transport- Only for outstation districts, the project will provide a vehicle. Within Colombo, no transport provided.