

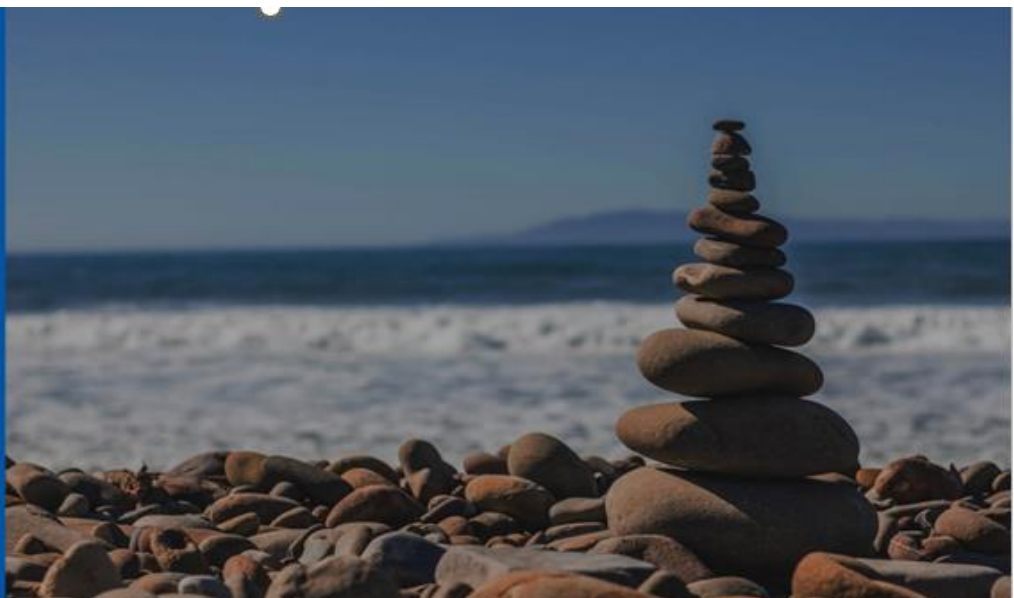


International
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Evaluation Title: Final Evaluation - New Industrial Relations System (NIRS Canada) Support to the state management agencies of labour's role as mediator and promoter of collective bargaining and social dialogue

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

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
List of Abbreviations.....	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
I. INTRODUCTION and PROJECT DESCRIPTION	8
I.1 Introduction.....	8
I.2 Project Description	8
Project Context.....	8
Project Theory of Change.....	10
Project Partners and Target Groups.....	11
II. EVALUATION BACKGROUND	11
II.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Final Evaluation.....	11
II.2 Scope of the Final Evaluation	12
II.3 Users of the Final Evaluation	12
III. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS.....	12
IV. METHODOLOGY	14
Data collection methods	14
The Evaluation Scale.....	15
Limitations.....	15
V. FINDINGS.....	17
5.1. Relevance	17
5.1.1 The Project's alignment with and support for national priorities and the country's international commitments.	17
5.1.2 Relevance to Constituents' Needs and Capacity.....	20
5.1.3 Relevance to ILO's strategy	23
5.2. Coherence.....	25
5.3. Effectiveness.....	27
Key Outcome 1: State management agencies of labour and social partners collaborate effectively in assessing, forecasting IR development trends and in proposing, implementing IR development models and solutions, including those to promote workplace dialogue.	28
Key Outcome 2: Collective bargaining becomes an effective mechanism in setting standards for working conditions through the role of tripartite institutions; enterprise-	

level collective bargaining models are established and operated genuinely with the effective support of state management of labour.....	31
Key Outcome 3. The system of labour dispute mediation and arbitration institutions is consolidated and operated effectively in accordance with the new requirements of the Labour Code	35
5.4. Efficiency.....	38
5.5. Orientation to Impact.....	41
5.6. Sustainability	43
5.7 Cross cutting issues: Gender mainstreaming in project implementation.....	47
VI. CONCLUSIONS.....	47
6.1 Conclusion	47
6.2 Recommendation	50
VII. LESSON LEARNED AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE	54
ANNEXES	55
Annex 1: Terms of Reference (TOR)	55
Annex 2: Evaluation Timeline	55
Annex 3: Project Performance Matrix.....	56
Outcome Achievement	56
Output Achievement.....	60
Annex 4: List of Persons Consulted	64
Annex 5: Documents Consulted	65
Annex 6: Lesson Learned and Emerging Good Practice	67

List of Abbreviations

AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CIRD	Centre for Industrial Relations Development
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
DIRWA	Department of Industrial Relations and Wages
DOHA	Department of Home Affairs
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWTs	Decent Work Technical Support Network
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
EU	European Union
EU TfdW	EU Trade for Decent Work
EVAL	Evaluation Office
EVFTA	European Union-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILS	International Labour Standard
INWORK	Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions
IR	Industrial Relations
IZTU	Trade Union of Industrial Zones
LDRS	Labour Dispute Resolution System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCMR	Mediation Case Management Record
MECBA	Multi-Employer Collective Bargaining Agreement
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan
NIRC	National Industrial Relations Commission
NIRF	New Industrial Relations Framework
NIRS	New Industrial Relations System
ODA	Official Development Assistance

P&B	Programme and Budget
RBC	Responsible Business Conduct
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMA	State Management Agency
ToC	Theory of Change
UKVFTA	United Kingdom-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
VCCI	Vietnam Federation of Commerce and Industry
VGCL	Vietnam General Confederation of Labour
WRO	Worker Representative Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction:

This Independent Final Evaluation assesses the "New Industrial Relations System (NIRS): Support to Government's Role as Mediator and Promoter of Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue Project" a comprehensive five-year initiative funded by Employment and Social Development Canada and managed by the International Labour Organisation (The NIRS Canada project). Launched on March 16, 2020 and concluded on March 15 2025, the NIRS Canada project aligns with Vietnam's adoption of a reformed Labour Code as of January 2021, marking a pivotal period for transforming the industrial relations landscape in the country. The project has three specific objectives/key outcomes, aimed at enhancing the role of the state labour agencies in fostering effective social dialogue, collective bargaining, and mediation of labour disputes through robust tripartite mechanisms.

- Objective 1: The multi-stakeholders social dialogue frequently and effectively organised through the central role of tripartite Industrial relations mechanisms and institutions./Key Outcome 1: State management agencies of labour and social partners collaborate effectively in assessing, forecasting Industrial Relations development trends and in proposing, implementing Industrial Relations development models and solutions, including those to promote workplace dialogue.
- Objective 2: The standardised collective bargaining taken up more widely, genuinely and becomes an effective, common process in determining standards for working conditions based on the full recognition of workers' rights to organize and the role of labour authorities and relevant agencies as supporter and promoter./Key Outcome 2: Collective bargaining becomes an effective mechanism in setting labour standards and working conditions through the role of tripartite institutions; enterprise-level collective bargaining models are established and operated genuinely with the effective support of state management agencies of labour.
- Objective 3: The system of labour dispute mediation and arbitration institutions is established and operated effectively to support the development of harmonious, stable and progressive Industrial Relations in the context of the full recognition and respect of workers' right to organize and collective bargaining./Key outcome 3: The system of labour dispute mediation and arbitration institutions is consolidated and operated effectively in accordance with the new requirements of the Labour Code.

Department of Industrial Relations and Wages under Vietnam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs is the Project Owner, with the Centre for Industrial Relations Development and other units implementing specific project activities. Its key targeted beneficiaries include the National Industrial Relations Commission, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, the Vietnam Federation of Commerce and Industry, and provincial partners involved in labour management in Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai Province, and Binh Duong Province.

The Independent Final Evaluation

The final evaluation was conducted from February to May 2025 by an independent evaluator, coinciding with the project's conclusion on March 15, 2025. This final evaluation aims to be forward-looking, assessing achievements and documenting best practices and lessons learned. The specific objectives of the evaluation include assessing the project's intended results, analyzing implementation strengths and weaknesses, and providing recommendations for improvement. Stakeholder perceptions regarding the project's effectiveness are also solid foundation of the

evaluation findings. Additionally, it aims to analyze contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Decent Work Country Programme, and national priorities. Findings and recommendations from this evaluation will guide the ILO Country Office in Hanoi for future programming related to industrial relations systems in Vietnam.

The scope of the final evaluation includes an assessment of the project's entire timeline from its launch in March 2020 to March 2025, incorporating a gender-focused perspective. The evaluation adheres to ILO standards and United Nations ethical guidelines. Key evaluation criteria encompass the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project, focusing on how well it has aligned with national priorities, agencies' needs and capacity and ILO mandates, Sustainable Development Goals.

The evaluation employs qualitative data collection methods (key informant interviews) and desk reviews. A specific emphasis is placed on the project's lasting impacts on industrial relations systems and labour market governance in Vietnam, as well as the sustainability of its initiatives and mechanisms.

FINDINGS

Project's Relevance: The NIRS Canada project demonstrates a high relevance to national priorities, effectively aligning with Vietnam's Directive No. 37-CT/TW, which aims to enhance Industrial Relations management. The project's objectives and outcomes complement key measures outlined in the directive, including improving legal frameworks for dialogue and negotiation, as well as enhancing mechanisms for collective bargaining and dispute resolution. Specifically, Key Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 support collaborative efforts among state management agencies and social partners, fostering workplace dialogue and establishing effective systems for labour dispute mediation and arbitration.

Furthermore, the project is strongly aligned with the 2019 Labour Code, which mandates significant changes in the roles of stakeholders in labour relations and focuses on promoting collective bargaining processes inclusive of gender equality and worker rights. Output initiatives, such as developing periodic National Industrial Relations Reports and International Labour Standard-conforming options, are designed to facilitate adherence to these new regulations, thereby reinforcing the project's contribution to the evolving labour landscape.

The project also integrates well with other legal frameworks, including revisions to the Trade Union Law and the National Action Plan for Responsible Business Conduct, ensuring cohesive support for sustainable labour practices in Vietnam. Such alignment underscores the project's significance in addressing the country's labour management challenges and actively contributing to the fulfillment of international commitments related to labour rights and social protection.

Project Coherence: The NIRS Canada project is strategically aligned with various initiatives aimed at enhancing industrial relations in Vietnam, recognizing that collaborative efforts can lead to significant benefits despite challenges in project delivery. It operates alongside several ILO-executed projects, including the New Industrial Relations Framework project, which among other things focuses on improving labour dispute resolution systems in compliance with international labour standards, and the European Union Trade for Decent Work project, which supports the implementation of International Labour Organisation Convention No. 98. By collaborating with the VNM/20/02/APL project, which pilots social dialogue in the electronics sector, and leveraging

feedback from other initiatives, the NIRS Canada project aims to refine its outputs effectively. Remarkably, it shares a strong partnership with the USDOL -funded NIRF project, contributing to the development of local labour dispute resolution models through capacity building and training programs. Overall, the synergy between the NIRS Canada project and other ILO interventions fosters a comprehensive approach to enhancing labour relations, dispute resolution mechanisms, and collective bargaining practices in Vietnam.

Project Effectiveness is evaluated as above moderate as all three key outcomes are partly achieved.

The performance under Outcome 1 highlights both notable progress and areas where growth is still needed. Foundational elements, such as reports and capacity-building initiatives, have been established, which provide a solid base for future development. However, operational challenges—like the need for a more effective labour information system and additional support for social dialogue events—present opportunities for enhancing the establishment of productive tripartite mechanisms. While there have been challenges in obtaining necessary approvals, particularly concerning the National Industrial Relations Commission's operations and the continuation of problem-solving dialogues beyond the project's conclusion, these are recognized as important areas for progress. The evaluation of Outcome 2 confirms that some progress has been made toward the standardization of collective bargaining as the primary process for determining wages and working conditions. The recognition of freedom of association and the independence of the parties involved is essential to this process, but it has been partly translated into effective practices thanks to the NIRS Canada Project in collaboration with other ILO projects. However, the achievement of full outcomes remains in a partial state. The outcome 3 related to effective mediation systems and services show some progress, particularly with the development of action plans and pilot programs. However, significant challenges remain, particularly regarding the establishment of a national information system for labour mediators and the need for broader implementation of mediation systems across provinces.

The delivery of the expected outputs under Key Outcome 1 is considered above moderate. Two out of four outputs have been fully delivered, while the other two have experienced delays. The outputs under Component 2 present a generally positive picture of progress towards the outcome of standardized collective bargaining. While several outputs have been completed, delays in publication and finalization highlight the bottlenecks that can occur due to organizational changes and dependencies on other processes. The successful piloting of a collective bargaining model indicates that foundational work has been established, setting the stage for wider uptake of collective bargaining practices. The outputs under Key Outcome 3 demonstrate a mix of achievement and ongoing challenges. The successful development of the Mediation Case Management Record indicates strong progress in enhancing labour mediation systems, while delays in the establishment of the national information system for mediators and arbitrators highlight areas where more focused efforts are needed. The delays in 3.1 could potentially hinder the overall effectiveness of the mediation system if not addressed promptly, especially given the reliance on stakeholder engagement and practical case experience.

Project Efficiency: The NIRS Canada Project has achieved a total disbursement rate of 66.1%, reflecting moderately efficient financial resource management within a budget of USD 1,124,002.03. However, there is notable underutilization across all three key outcomes, with rates of 54.8% for Key Outcome 1, 44.5% for Key Outcome 2, and a particularly low 29.0% for Key Outcome 3. Factors contributing to these low disbursement rates include a prolongation in the approval process and

COVID-19 impacts. In contrast, project management activities have achieved a disbursement rate of 91.4%. The project is synergized with other ILO initiatives, optimizing resource use, although the challenges in disbursement raise concerns about how resources are utilized across projects.

Human resources management has been effective due to the strong coordination of the Department of Industrial Relations and Wages and the ILO, with activities primarily outsourced to qualified external experts, enhancing local capacities despite recruitment challenges. Comprehensive management and reporting mechanisms are in place, ensuring accountability and transparency while responding to the needs of stakeholders. However, complex administrative procedures and communication barriers have hindered efficiency. A no-cost extension was proposed in response to ongoing challenges, although regulations limited the project's duration, leading to missed opportunities for vital outputs. Despite numerous obstacles, the NIRS Canada Project has shown resilience and adaptability, continuing to foster collaboration with partners to improve its overall efficiency.

Orientation to impact: the NIRS Canada Project has made remarkable strides in advancing industrial relations systems and labour market governance in Vietnam. Through the establishment of an Industrial Relations database and the production of national industrial relations reports, the project has significantly enhanced the capabilities of state management agencies, enabling them to conduct thorough research and foster informed decision-making. Furthermore, the cultivation of national experts and the collaboration with international specialists have enriched the technical expertise available to key stakeholders, thereby improving the overall quality of social dialogue and collective bargaining. While the project has successfully shifted attitudes toward the benefits of collective bargaining, challenges remain, particularly in fostering genuine employee engagement and addressing the low participation of large enterprises in collaborative frameworks. Additionally, ongoing efforts to develop a labour dispute resolution system and the involvement of women underscore the project's commitment to inclusive labour practices. The potential for future collaboration and training initiatives, as well as the establishment of multi-employer dialogue networks, promises to enhance the impact of the project further.

Recommendations

1. *The focus of future interventions on IR and on supporting the development and operation of the Labour Dispute Resolution System information system remains valid.* Despite the challenges encountered, there is a consensus that the groundwork related to Industrial Relations development laid by the project could have led to positive impacts if continued support had been provided. Furthermore, the effectiveness of mediation relies heavily on accessible information that enables stakeholders to navigate the mediation and arbitration landscape. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that future support and interventions initiated by the ILO and its partners emphasize the creation of a centralized system that ensures all parties can easily find suitable mediation and arbitration resources, ultimately leading to more effective dispute resolution.

2. *The future Project on Industrial Relations should continue to prioritize and integrate gender-specific topics in all future discussions, reports, and training activities.* This should include a focus on the ongoing development of gender-responsiveness, such as support for maternity and childcare, within collective bargaining agreements. By systematically incorporating gender considerations into stakeholder engagements and ensuring equal representation of female participants in training

sessions, the NIRS Canada project can foster a more inclusive and equitable environment for all workers, thereby strengthening the overall impact of its initiatives on female workers in particular.

3. *Continuous Stakeholder Mapping*: Given the significant relevance of this project, its successful implementation—particularly with respect to the execution of activities and delivery of outputs—hinges on the active engagement of key agencies such as NIRC who is the vital beneficiary of the Key Outcome 1 and the provincial Departments of Labour which involves implementing the pilot mechanisms for resolving labour disputes through the use of mediators or arbitrators. Ongoing stakeholder mapping is essential to develop a robust engagement strategy for all partners involved and for revision of the expected key outcomes bought in by each partner/beneficiary especially in the context of administration reform and merging agencies.

4. *Adjustment of Performance Indicators for Key Outcomes*: Building on recommendation 3, it is suggested that adjustments be made to the performance indicators related to the key outcomes of the project. Such adjustments should have been considered earlier, particularly in light of the challenges associated with engaging key beneficiaries at the central level. Key Outcome 1 of the project relied on a critical prerequisite for success: the necessity for the National Industrial Relations Commission to hold formal meetings. These meetings would have provided an opportunity for the project's generated National IR Reports and recommendations to be presented as policy recommendations to the Government, thereby facilitating a tripartite mechanism for addressing the issues highlighted in the Industrial Relations Report. Unfortunately, the NIRC did not hold any meeting during the project implementation phase. Given this context, it may be necessary for the project to recalibrate its expectations regarding this key outcome by adjusting the corresponding performance indicators and targets. This recommendation is valuable not only for the current project but also for managing similar initiatives aimed at improving Industrial Relations in the future.

5. *Adjustments to Participating Localities*: This recommendation aligns with recommendation 3 and advocates for adjustments in the localities participating in the project. A thorough evaluation of the involvement of southern pilot localities in Outcome 3 activities could have been conducted at the end-of-term assessment. While the project has yielded successful lessons in Key Outcome 2 through its implementation in Bac Ninh province, there is a significant opportunity to engage northern localities with dynamic labour markets—such as Hanoi, Hung Yen, Bac Giang, Hai Phong, and Bac Ninh—in Key Outcome 3. Alternatively, instead of concentrating on labour dispute resolution cases within the three southern provinces as initially designed, expanding to include northern localities could enhance the number of cases addressed through mediation and/or arbitration. This approach would ensure that the templates developed by the project are utilized by a broader group of labour arbitrators and mediators, thereby facilitating the gradual establishment of a case management system. In summary, expanding the number of provinces participating in similar future projects focused on labour dispute resolution is highly recommended.

6. *Coordination Among Linked Projects*: When a project coordinates activities with other initiatives, it is vital to create and communicate a diagram that illustrates the connections between these projects or establish a common Theory of Change. This visual representation should be shared with all partners and donors, as it not only facilitates effective management of human and financial resources across projects but also enhances transparency in demonstrating their collective impact. Such collaborative practices have already been exemplified in Component 3 (Key Outcome 3) with

the leadership of the NIRF Project and the participating localities in the pilot. It is recommended that this approach be expanded and upgraded to encompass the entire project.

7. The reporting cycle between the project and the donor and the regular update meeting with the donor: For a project on a challenging topic like Industrial Relations, the reporting mechanism between the project and the donor may be shortened to six months instead of one year, as is currently the case. Prior to submitting the narrative report and/or following its submission, debriefings should occur between the project team (ILO Viet Nam Office) and the donor's project management team. This approach will allow flexibility in adjusting the key outcomes or the outcome-level indicators of the project. Linked to the recommendation on stakeholder mapping above, if there is a risk of State Management Agencies being unable to engage in the project as expected—for example, if the NIRC cannot hold meetings in accordance with the operation principles of this Committee—it may be necessary to adjust the key outcomes. This adjustment requires the donor's understanding and approval. Therefore, a reporting mechanism that is shorter than one year between the donor and the project management team or setting up the regular update meeting with the donor to solve this issue is strongly recommended.

8. Establishment and Maintenance of an Expert Network in Industrial Relations: To address the shortage of experts in Industrial Relations in Vietnam, it is essential to establish and maintain a dedicated pool of professionals who have contributed to this Project and other IR initiatives implemented by the ILO. The limited availability of IR experts underscores the importance of building a robust network that can facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among practitioners. It is crucial for existing experts, particularly those serving on the NIRC's Technical Sub-Committee, to dedicate additional time and resources to investigate relevant issues in greater depth and with more substantive evidence. Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop the capacity of this committee further, alongside the engagement of external researchers to enrich the pool of expertise. Moreover, the channels for communicating and disseminating research findings should be strengthened, given the absence of a dedicated academic journal for IR in Vietnam. The ILO could collaborate with the CIRD to establish this network by sponsoring research studies on various Industrial Relations topics to support the activities of the expert group. Case studies, which can be conducted with minimal budgets, represent a valuable method for research. Notable successes in challenging areas—such as wage issues and labour regulations aimed at preventing sexual harassment in the workplace—can serve as significant case studies. These findings could be shared in forums with social partners, including the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, thus enabling continued contributions from the Industrial Relations expert group. Furthermore, it is advisable to fund national experts to participate in international conferences where empirical studies on Industrial Relations in transitioning economies, such as Vietnam, China, and other ASEAN countries, are presented. This initiative will not only enhance the expertise of local professionals but also help prepare a skilled network of experts for future Industrial Relations projects, facilitating the rapid implementation of upcoming initiatives through the availability of a team of national IR specialists.

9. Regarding capacity building for tripartite partners: There is a need for more dedicated programmes focusing on development of research capacity to provide reliable evidence and suggestions of effective mechanisms for promoting IR. The network of the experts and specialists on Industrial Relations as in the recommendation 8 can be utilized for these capacity building support. Within Outcome 3, an incentive mechanism may be considered in the beginning of application. In addition

to assisting to establish a database of case management, it is necessary to provide capacity building to different partners to use it to ensure quality data input. This activity should include customised training courses (i.e. according to scales of business or forms of industrial relation/social dialogue).

10. *Enhancing Document Creation on Common Topics*: The project has been instrumental in developing three manuals focused on the same overarching theme: collective bargaining. These manuals target specific audiences— State Management Agencies, employers, and workers. While partners appreciate having manuals tailored to their unique contexts, it is essential that they include a common section to foster a shared understanding among all stakeholders. Following this common foundation, each manual should then expand with tailored sections for workers, employers, and government entities.

I. INTRODUCTION and PROJECT DESCRIPTION

I.1 Introduction

This Independent Final Evaluation assesses the ‘New Industrial Relations System (NIRS): Support to Government’s Role as Mediator and Promoter of Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue Project.’ In alignment with the evaluation policy of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the NIRS Canada project is required to undergo two evaluations: one internal mid-term evaluation and one final independent evaluation. The mid-term evaluation was conducted in the 34th month following the project's initiation, aimed at assessing its performance after more than two and a half years of implementation (March 2020 – December 2022). The final evaluation was carried out from the end of February to mid-May 2025, coinciding with the project’s conclusion on March 15, 2025.

The final evaluation is expected to be forward-looking while taking stock of the achievements of the ILO's support and documenting good practices and lessons learned from the intervention. The specific objectives of the final evaluation include: (1) Assessing the extent to which the NIRS Canada project achieved its intended results, as agreed upon during the design stage of the interventions, as well as its impact, efficiency, and prospects for sustainability; (2) Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses in implementation and providing necessary recommendations at both strategic and operational levels to relevant stakeholders for improvement; (3) Identifying and documenting success stories, good practices, and lessons learned to contribute to organizational learning and future programming for similar interventions and strategies in Vietnam; (4) Analyzing how the NIRS Canada project contributed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), Programme and Budget (P&B), and national priorities; (5) Evaluating the perceptions and feedback from project beneficiaries and partners regarding the project’s implementation, effectiveness, and impact, including their level of satisfaction and any suggestions for improvement; (6) Identifying and analyzing the synergies and collaborative efforts between this project and other ongoing projects or programs in the same area, and examining how these synergies have enhanced the project’s outcomes and contributed to overall development goals.

The evaluation findings and recommendations will help guide the ILO and in particular the ILO Country Office for Viet Nam in its future direction and provide organizational learning to inform better ILO programming on the promotion of effective industrial relations (IR) systems in Viet Nam, in line with fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW). This will also provide input for the tripartite constituents in their future prioritizations for collaboration with ILO projects in the area of IR.

This final evaluation is managed by an ILO Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer based in the ILO Regional Office in Bangkok. Key stakeholders, key partners, ILO Country Office – for Viet Nam, technical backstopping unit as well as collaborating ILO Units, have been consulted throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation process and report follow ILO guidelines and the ILO Evaluation Office will approve the final evaluation report. The evaluation complies with the [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\)’s Evaluation Norms and Standards](#).

I.2 Project Description

Project Context

Viet Nam faces a significant renewal of its IR frameworks with the adoption of the reformed Labour Code in November 2019, which came into effect on 1 January 2021. Reforms have implications for the government, employers and workers and their organization, as well as civil society, to adapt the roles they play in social dialogue and IR. This adaptation and changes will bring them into closer conformity with international standards, in the context of Vietnam's efforts to align with international labour standards, in particular the 10 Conventions covered within the ILO's 1998 Declaration on FPRW and as Vietnam moves forward with global integration, including joining a number of new-generation free trade agreements.

In recent years, Vietnam has been increasingly active in regional and global trade agreements, entering into initiatives such as the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), the U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement, the United Kingdom-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (UKVFTA), the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and the European Union-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA), among others. A key requirement for accessing these international markets, particularly in Europe and America, is that enterprises commit to upholding corporate social responsibility, including compliance with the aforementioned labour standards.

Enhancing the role of state management agencies (SMAs) of labour in promoting dialogue, collective bargaining and labour dispute mediation in the new context while maintaining socio-political stability and the attractiveness of investment environment requires further efforts in Viet Nam.

In order to assist SMAs of labour to overcome challenges and to successfully reform the current IR system, ILO has worked closely with its partners to seek resources and technical assistance to help state agencies and social partners to take their newly established role, making sure that project activities are carried out effectively and create positive impact on the social security and order, with the collaboration, monitoring, examination, supervision and evaluation of the NIRS Canada project owner.

As a member of the CPTPP, Canada has been engaged with Vietnam since 2013. ESDC supports the project, which is one of the ESDC's largest and longest-funded initiatives, aiming at helping Vietnam advance toward compliance with fundamental labour rights and principles, including freedom of association and collective bargaining. This initiative is especially important given Vietnam's status as a relatively new CPTPP partner.

To enhance the role of State Management Agencies (SMAs) in labour, particularly in fostering dialogue, collective bargaining, and labour dispute mediation, further efforts are required to maintain socio-political stability and an attractive investment environment. The ILO is collaborating with partners to provide resources and technical assistance to help these agencies and social partners effectively execute their newly defined roles. This support is crucial for ensuring that project activities make a positive impact on social security and order, while also involving collaboration, monitoring, supervision, and evaluation by the NIRS Canada project owner.

The ILO's IR Report 2019 - Towards Genuine Collective Bargaining sheds light on the labour landscape in Vietnam, highlighting both opportunities and challenges for advancing IR:

- The increasing size of the waged labour force, predominantly consisting of unskilled workers earning near minimum wage.
- A rising union density rate among workers, which presents management challenges due to limited staffing within unions.

- Engagement in social dialogue at the enterprise level, often occurring in a formalistic manner that lacks genuine input from workers on critical issues such as wages and workplace safety.
- A modest increase in collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), with a low proportion arising from effective negotiations. A promising solution piloted by Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) and partners is the implementation of multi-employer bargaining events based on a sectoral approach, which have proven to encourage genuine bargaining and benefit workers.
- A rise in individual labour disputes and interest-driven strikes, primarily linked to wage issues, indicating a deficiency in effective collective bargaining, particularly in industrial regions like Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Binh Duong, and Dong Nai.
- A shortage of quality mediators, leading to ineffective dispute resolution mechanisms.

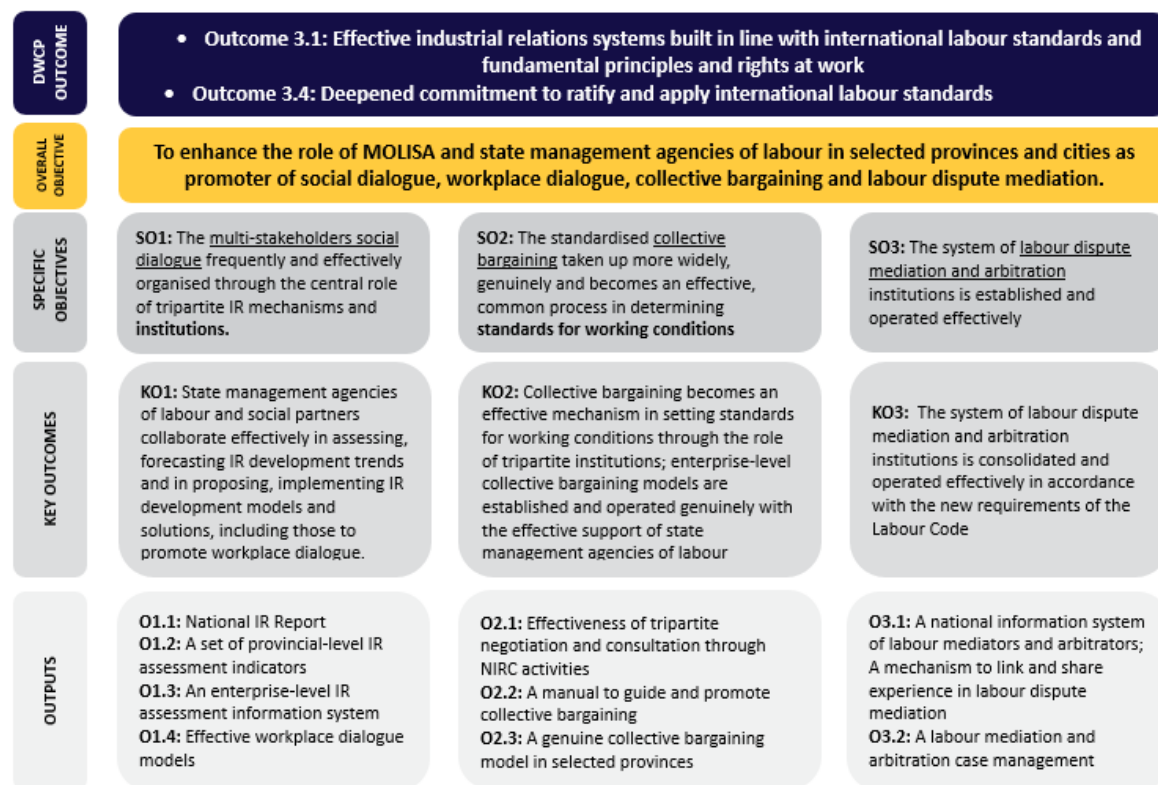
These conditions necessitate addressing critical issues in IR, particularly enhancing the effectiveness of tripartite mechanisms and the roles of SMAs.

Project Theory of Change

The NIRS Canada project The New Industrial Relations System (NIRS): Support to Government's Role as Mediator and Promoter of Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue project is designed to be implemented over 5 years (16 March 2020-15 March 2025) funded by ESDC, managed by the ILO in Viet Nam. The NIRS Canada project aims to respond to the needs of the Vietnamese state administration of labour in effectively promoting IR through tripartite mechanisms. It is part of a broader programme of the ILO Country Office in Hanoi, which has been implemented in consultations with tripartite constituents.

The NIRS Canada project is expected to contribute to two DWCP outcomes (for the period 2017-2021 and 2022-2026), having three specific objectives, three key outcomes, and nine outputs, which are diagrammed in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Project's Theory of Change (Result Chain)



Source: Summarized from TOR

Project Partners and Target Groups

The Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) is the NIRS Canada Project Managing Agency, the Project Owner is the Department of Industrial Relations and Wages (DIRWA), an agency of the MOLISA, which has recently merged with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) as part of the administrative restructuring process initiated in Vietnam. The Centre for Industrial Relations Development (CIRD) and other units under the DIRWA implement specific project activities.

The primary target group of this intervention consists of state labour management agencies in Vietnam responsible for IR management, particularly in their roles in mainstreaming and promoting social dialogue, capacity building, and providing mediation services. Key targeted beneficiaries include the National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC), the VGCL, the Vietnam Federation of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), and provincial partners involved in labour management in HCMC, Dong Nai Province, and Binh Duong Province.

Other target groups include employers and workers, as well as their organizations, particularly in relation to collective negotiation, bargaining, and dispute resolution.

II. EVALUATION BACKGROUND

II.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Final Evaluation

The primary purpose of the independent final evaluation is to ensure accountability to donors and ILO constituents while facilitating organizational learning. The evaluation assesses the significance of the NIRS Project by evaluating its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and orientation towards impact and sustainability. This assignment aims to provide stakeholders with a

comprehensive understanding of the project's performance, including the reasons behind its successes and failures. Additionally, it will highlight successes, best practices, and lessons learned, while also identifying challenges and barriers faced throughout the NIRS Canada project lifecycle. Recommendations based on the findings will be provided to inform strategic improvements for future interventions.

Specific objectives of the evaluation include:

- Assessing the extent to which the NIRS Canada project achieved its intended results as outlined during the design stage, including its impact, efficiency, and sustainability.
- Analyzing strengths and weaknesses in implementation, and providing relevant stakeholders with recommendations for both strategic and operational improvements.
- Documenting success stories, good practices, and lessons learned to inform future programming in Vietnam.
- Evaluating the project's contributions to the SDGs, the DWCP, the ILO's P&B, and national priorities.
- Gathering perceptions and feedback from project beneficiaries and partners regarding project implementation, effectiveness, impact, satisfaction levels, and suggestions for improvement.
- Identifying and analyzing synergies and collaborative efforts between this project and other ongoing initiatives, assessing how these interactions have enhanced project outcomes and contributed to overarching development goals.

II.2 Scope of the Final Evaluation

The evaluation encompasses the entire timeline of the NIRS Project, designed to run from March 16, 2020, to March 15, 2025, officially began after the approval by the Government Master Plan in September 2021 and completed its activities in March 2025, addressing components and planned results. A cross-cutting emphasis on gender is essential throughout the evaluation methodology and final report. This includes reviewing data disaggregated by sex, where appropriate and assessing the effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes. The evaluation will adhere to the ILO Guidance Note on Integrating Gender Equality in M&E and will follow United Nations (UN) evaluation standards and ethical guidelines.

II.3 Users of the Final Evaluation

The primary users of the evaluation findings include ILO constituents, relevant government institutions, the donor, the ILO Country Office, the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), the ILO's Decent Work Technical Support Team, Bangkok (DWTs) and headquarters (INWORK/LABGOV). These stakeholders will utilize the evaluation results to inform decision-making, enhance accountability, and improve future programmatic interventions.

III. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation assesses the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability addressing the questions detailed below to the extent possible.

Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives, and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partners/Institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

- To what extent and how did the NIRS Canada project objectives and activities align with and support the national priorities, and country's and constituents' needs and capacity while being responsive to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, as well as the cross-cutting issues (i.e. gender equality, environmental sustainability, and disability inclusion)? Does the design address challenge the constituents are facing?
- How should a future project in the thematic area adapt to remain relevant to the needs and priorities of the constituents in Vietnam?

Coherence: The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution

- How well the NIRS Canada project interventions synergized and complemented other ILO projects' effort and other work of relevant national and international agencies working for social dialogue and right to collective bargaining for improved IR systems and labour market governance? How have these synergies enhanced the project's achievement of outcomes?

Effectiveness: The extent to which the interventions achieved, or are expected to achieve, their objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups?

- To what extent has the NIRS Canada project achieved the intended outputs, key outcomes and the specific objectives?
- Were the partner and constituent satisfied with the established models, system and mechanisms (e.g. collective bargaining mechanism, and etc.) supported by the project? Were they effective? What were the partners' view about the quality and usefulness of the technical support, capacity building, and outputs produced by the project?
- What are the unintended results of the NIRS Canada project – positive and negative that are observed but are not explicitly articulated in the NIRS Canada project design?
- What challenges and barriers were encountered in the implementation of project activities, including considerations for tripartism, gender equality and social dialogue? What were the possible mitigation measures to overcome these barriers and to address unforeseen challenges?

Efficiency:

- Were resources (human resources, time, expertise, funds etc.) allocated strategically and efficiently to provide the necessary support and to achieve the expected results in line with the ILO's normative mandate, tripartism, gender equality and social dialogue? (Specific sub-questions can be: (i) To what extent did the NIRS Canada project management capacities and arrangements put in place, support the achievement of the expected results? (ii) were the project's activities/operations in line with the schedule of activities as defined by the work plans?
- Has collaboration and cooperation from and between the NIRS Canada project partners been efficient? How can this be improved?

Orientation to Impact

- What changes has the NIRS Canada project made in terms of promoting effective IR systems and labour market governance in Vietnam? How responsive have these changes been to the ILO's normative mandate?
- To what extent did the intervention advance strategic gender-related needs, which can have a long-term positive bearing?
- To what extent and how have the Role of the NIRC, MOLISA and SMAs of labour in the targeted provinces and cities, as well as the targeted social partners, been enhanced as Promoter of social dialogue, workplace dialogue, collective bargaining and labour dispute mediation? What could have been done or done more to enhance the Role?
- To what extent has the NIRS Canada project interventions' results/achievement – had an effect distributed across different groups (marginalised groups, men and women, non-discrimination, and inclusion of persons with disabilities)?

Sustainability

- To what extent would the NIRS Canada project results, promoted activities, and mechanisms be maintained or even replicated or scaled up?

IV. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is conducted in accordance with ILO standard policies and procedures, adhering to international evaluation norms as defined by the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards and the UNEG standards.

The evaluation methodology includes 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, SDGs and related targets, national and ILO country level outcomes. The evaluation considers that the NIRS Canada project has used M&E approaches and systems with a special focus on the response of the NIRS Canada project to evolving project context.

Data collection methods

To gather comprehensive insights, the evaluation employ the following data collection methods:

- **Key Informant Interviews:** Conduct semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders, including the Country Director of the ILO for Vietnam, ILO specialists, project staff, and representatives from national partners and project donors. Interviews took place online and offline in March and April 2025. The list of the key informants consulted is annexed in this report. (Annex 4). Key informant characteristics disaggregated by sex and organization type are summarized below:

Organization	Male	Female	Total
Donor	3	0	3
Government organization (MOLISA)	1	1	2
Worker Organization (VGCL and Bac Ninh IZTU)	2	0	2
Employer Organization (VCCI)	1	1	2
ILO (Hanoi and Bangkok)	2	3	5
Total	9	5	14

- **Desk Review:** A systematic review of existing project data and records is conducted by analyzing project documents, including the revised project proposal, technical progress reports, the mid-term evaluation report and other relevant documents. The list of the consulted documents is provided in the Annex 5.

The methodology ensures that all categories of project participants/stakeholders are represented. The evaluation pays particular attention to ILO's cross-cutting issues, including gender equality based on the ILO's guidelines for M&E and will assess the project's contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Additionally, ethical safeguards are ensured throughout the evaluation.

The Evaluation Scale

Each of the evaluation criteria is assessed according to the following scale:

- High: met or exceeded most targets for the period evaluated, with mostly positive feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
- Above-moderate: met or exceeded most targets for the period evaluated, but with mostly neutral or negative feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
- Moderate: missed most targets for the period evaluated, but with mostly positive feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
- Low: missed most targets for the period evaluated, with mostly neutral or negative feedback from key stakeholders and participants.

Limitations

This evaluation faces several limitations as follows:

The evaluation questions related to the sustainability of the project are difficult to answer definitively at this time. The uncertainty surrounding the continuity of certain agencies due to the restructuring of Vietnamese regulatory bodies raises concerns regarding the sustainability assessment at this stage. Although the maintenance of state management functions is mandated by the Vietnamese Government during the merger process, the operational dynamics of various collective bodies—whose members hold concurrent positions, such as the NIRC, chaired by the Minister of MOLISA, and the Technical Sub-Committee—remain unclear.

Interviews with the leadership of DIRWA could not be conducted. Due to the merger of various agencies, the project's primary partner, DIRWA, is currently undergoing restructuring. Consequently, the leadership of the agency that previously oversaw the project has transitioned, rendering them unable to consent to interviews. Instead, this assessment utilises opinion notes from the mid-term review, which remain relevant. To overcome these limitations, interviews conducted by key personnel within DIRWA regarding other projects in collaboration with this project have been explored, particularly focusing on the quality and utility of the technical support provided by the linked ILO projects, such as the recent review of a series of initiatives within the electronics sector completed at the end of 2024.

Interviews with local authorities involved in Output 3 were not arranged, as the implementation of Outputs 3.1 and 3.2 has only progressed to the development of preliminary format templates. Since Output 3.2: Develop a Labour Mediation and Arbitration Case Management System and pilot it in selected provinces introduces further uncertainty regarding future continuity, this complicates the

sustainability assessment of this output. These templates represent the initial step in systematising cases related to labour dispute resolution through conciliation and arbitration mechanisms. However, the transfer of these processes to local agencies has not yet been implemented, largely due to the non-approval of the extended phase of the project. Additionally, Output 3 of this Project was conducted in conjunction with a Project funded by the USDOL), which has recently been terminated following changes in the United States government policy regarding official development assistance ODA). Consequently, the observations related to Key Outcome 3 and its subordinate outputs in this Final Evaluation Report are predominantly derived from secondary data sources, supplemented by a limited number of interviews with officials involved in the implementation of this project and the associated USDOL-funded project.

V. FINDINGS

5.1. Relevance

The Relevance is explained by the extent that the NIRS Canada project objectives and activities align with and support the national priorities, constituents' needs and capacity while being responsive to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, as well as the cross-cutting issues (i.e. gender equality, environmental sustainability, and disability inclusion). Overall, the Project can be assessed as highly relevant based on following evidence and observations.

5.1.1 The Project's alignment with and support for national priorities and the country's international commitments.

(a) With regards to national priorities

The NIRS Project is well-aligning with Directive No. 37-CT/TW dated September 3, 2019 of the Central Party Secretariat on strengthening leadership and direction to build harmonious, stable and progressive IR in the new situation (Directive No. 37-CT/TW).

All three specific objectives, accompanied by three key outcomes, seamlessly align with many of measures to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of IR management as outlined in the Directive No. 37-CT/TW. Specifically:

Section 2.1 of the directive specifies solutions aimed at refining the legal framework, including enhancing mechanisms for dialogue, negotiation, and agreement among stakeholders concerning employment, wages, working conditions, and welfare systems. Key Outcome 1 emphasizes effective collaboration between SMAs and social partners to assess and forecast IR trends, manage disputes, and implement innovative IR development models to promote workplace dialogue. Concurrently, Key Outcome 2 focuses on establishing and strengthening collective bargaining as a definitive mechanism for setting labour standards and working conditions, facilitated by the participation of tripartite institutions. This ensures the effective establishment and functioning of enterprise-level collective bargaining models, supported by state labour management agencies.

Moreover, Section 2.1 addresses the solution of "Improving mechanisms, institutions, and procedures for resolving labour disputes," ensuring that disputes are managed swiftly, efficiently, and in accordance with legal standards. Key Outcome 3 aligns fully with this solution by asserting that a system for labour dispute mediation and arbitration is effectively established and maintained. This system is designed to foster harmonious, stable, and progressive IR while recognizing and respecting workers' rights to organize and participate in collective bargaining.

In Section 2.2, which emphasizes enhancing state management of labour relations, the effective implementation of supportive policies is highlighted. Bullet 3 articulates the need for "Improving the effectiveness of the IR Committee to enhance its advisory role to the Government and the Prime Minister regarding the development of IR in enterprises." To align with this solution, Output 1.1 includes the development of the Periodic National IR Report(s) with active engagement from social partners, underscoring the central role of the NIRC. Additionally, Output 2.1 seeks to enhance the effectiveness of tripartite negotiation and consultation through NIRC activities, aiming to develop recommendations on labour standards and working conditions and ultimately supporting the IR Committee in its advisory role.

Bullet 5 of Section 2.2 states: “Developing a database system and criteria for evaluating IR in enterprises.” Correspondingly, Output 1.2 focuses on developing and piloting a set of provincial-level IR assessment indicators, while Output 1.3 aims to develop and pilot an enterprise-level IR assessment information system, thereby ensuring full compliance with this directive solution.

Section 4 emphasizes the need for “State agencies, trade unions, and employers’ representative organizations to guide and support dialogue, negotiation, and the conclusion of collective labour agreements to ensure substance.” In response, Output 2.2 aims to create International Labour Standard (ILS)-conforming options—a manual to guide and promote collective bargaining per the new provisions of the Labour Code and ILO Convention No. 98. Additionally, Output 2.3 involves piloting a genuine collective bargaining model, supported by a technical assistance mechanism and a monitoring system under the oversight of SMAs in selected enterprises, ensuring alignment with this directive solution.

Finally, Section 5 of the Directive outlines solutions for effectively resolving labour disputes and strikes, including the promotion of labour conciliation and arbitration institutions to support IR development and minimize disputes. In line with this, the Project emphasizes Output 3.1, which includes the development of a national information system to support, manage, and coordinate labour mediators and arbitrators, as well as piloting a mechanism to share experiences in labour dispute mediation through a core group of mediators and arbitrators in targeted provinces. Additionally, Output 3.2 includes the establishment of a labour mediation and arbitration case management system to be piloted in select provinces, aligning fully with the outlined solutions.

The NIRS Project is highly aligned with the Labour Code which was approved by the 14th National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam at its 8th session on November 20, 2019, taking effect from January 1, 2021.

First and foremost, the 2019 Labour Code introduces significant changes compared to its predecessor, fundamentally altering the responsibilities of SMAs, employers, and workers’ organizations in promoting effective IR. The outputs of both key outcomes 1 and 2 are designed to enhance the capacity of these stakeholders to fulfil their new responsibilities. For example, Output 1.1 aims to develop periodic National IR Reports with the engagement of social partners and the central role of the NIRC. Similarly, Output 1.4 focuses on piloting effective workplace dialogue models in accordance with the new provisions of the Labour Code. Additionally, Output 2.1 seeks to promote and improve the effectiveness of tripartite negotiation and consultation through NIRC activities to develop recommendations on labour standards and working conditions.

The 2019 Labour Code also introduces many changes related to collective bargaining, particularly in Article 67, which outlines the subjects that negotiating parties may choose to address. These subjects include meals and other benefits, labour standards, employee representative organizations, the relationship between employers and these organizations, methods for preventing and resolving labour disputes, and ensuring gender equality, maternity protection, and annual leave. The specificity of these regulatory provisions is intended to make the collective bargaining process more substantive while helping to limit and manage labour disputes effectively.

Furthermore, Article 68 of the 2019 Labour Code amends and supplements provisions regarding the rights of organizations representing workers at the enterprise level, allowing for the possibility of multiple organizations representing workers within a single enterprise. It is evident that the Project's Output 2.2, which involves developing ILS-conforming options—a manual to guide and promote collective bargaining in accordance with the new provisions of the Labour Code and ILO Convention

No. 98—and Output 2.3, which entails piloting a genuine collective bargaining model supported by a technical mechanism and monitoring system from state labour management agencies in selected enterprises, are designed to facilitate the implementation of these new collective bargaining regulations.

Additionally, the 2019 Labour Code provides specific guidelines for addressing collective labour disputes regarding rights (Article 179) and stipulates that mediation by a labour mediator is mandatory if the parties cannot resolve the dispute themselves (Clause 2, Article 191). The outputs under Outcome 3 of the Project have been designed and implemented to support the adherence to these regulations (see more analysis in Box 1).

Box 1: An Analysis of the Project's Relevance in Supporting the Implementation of New Regulations on Resolving Collective Labour Disputes over Rights According to the 2019 Labour Code

Article 179 of the 2019 Labour Code stipulates: "A right-based collective labour dispute of rights means a dispute between one or several representative organizations of employees and the employer or one or several representative organizations of employees in case of: a) Discrepancies in interpretation and implementation of the collective bargaining agreement, internal labour regulations and other lawful agreements; b) Discrepancies in interpretation and implementation of labour laws; or c) The employer's discrimination against the employees or members of the management board of the representative organization of employees for reasons of establishment, operation or participation in the organization; the employer's interference or influencing the representative organization of employees; the employer's violations against amicable negotiation.

The 2019 Labour Code stipulates that the competent entities to resolve collective labour disputes over rights are the Labour Mediators, the Labour Arbitration Council, and the People's Court (Clause 1, Article 191 of the 2019 Labour Code). Thus, an important change is the addition of authority to resolve collective labour disputes over rights to the Labour Arbitration Council and the abolition of the authority to resolve such disputes by the Chairman of the District People's Committee¹. The Labour Mediators is a person appointed by the Chairman of the Provincial People's Committee (Article 184 of the 2019 Labour Code).

In the civil and commercial fields, conciliation is an optional method of dispute resolution; however, according to the provisions of labour law, conciliation conducted by a Labour Mediators is a mandatory method if the parties cannot resolve the dispute themselves. Collective labour disputes over rights must be resolved through the conciliation procedure of a Labour Mediators before requesting the Labour Arbitration Council or the Court to intervene (Clause 2, Article 191 of the 2019 Labour Code). Thus, the role of labour conciliators has been enhanced compared to previous labour laws. Key Outcome 3 (especially Outputs 3.1 and 3.2) is designed and implemented in full compliance with the new provisions of the 2019 Labour Code regarding methods of resolving collective labour disputes over rights. (Compiled from interviews)

Additionally, the Project is considered to align well with other legal arrangements, including: the Trade Union Law No. 12/2012/QH13, dated June 20, 2012, and approved by the 13th National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam during its 3rd session on June 20, 2012, which took effect on January 1, 2013. This law is currently being revised to align with the Labour Code 2019 and other development requirements; the Plan No. 480/DA-TLD, dated June 6, 2019, from the VGCL on "Improving Capacity for Dialogue and Collective Bargaining in the Period of 2019-2023"; and the National Action Plan (NAP) for Law and Policy Improvement to Promote Responsible Business

¹ <https://khoaluat.neu.edu.vn/vi/tin-tuc-900/diem-moi-trong-co-che-giai-quyet-tranh-chap-lao-dong-tap-the-ve-quyen-ts-nguyen-thu-ba>

Conduct (RBC), which was enacted on July 14, 2023, alongside the Government's efforts to promote the implementation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) related practices.

(b) With regards to the country's international commitments

In terms of Vietnam's commitment to the international standards, the interventions of this project strongly support the implementation of the ILO Declaration 1998, especially the protection of freedom of association and collective bargaining. Key Outcome 2 directly facilitates collective bargaining at three levels, i.e., enterprise, multi-employers, and sectoral levels. They are also relevant to DWCP to which an additional Memorandum of Understanding (2021) was made to support the implementation and reporting on already ratified Conventions and to consider ratifying fifteen further Conventions over the period towards 2030. The NIRS Canada project, together with other ILO projects, is designed with a focus on strengthening the capacity of parties to better comply with international labour standards. That means the NIRS Canada project supports Vietnam to comply with the conventions that it has ratified and assists the application and gathers evidence for what has not been ratified.

Vietnam has ratified nine of its ten fundamental conventions, cf. the FPRW Declaration specifically covering:

- Convention No.29 – Forced Labour Convention (1930) and Convention No.105 – Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957)
- Convention No.98 – Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (1949)
- Convention No.100 – Equal Remuneration Convention (1951) and Convention No.111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958)
- Convention No.138 – Minimum Age Convention (1973) and Convention No.182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999)
- Convention No.155 – Occupational Safety and Health Convention (1981) and Convention No.187 – Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (2006)

Currently, Vietnam is considering ratifying Convention No.87 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention. As a member State of the ILO, Vietnam is obliged to uphold all five fundamental principles and rights at work in the ILO Declaration of 1998, including the freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

5.1.2 Relevance to Constituents' Needs and Capacity

Overall, the NIRS Canada project is assessed by partners as highly relevant to constituents' needs and capacity. Primarily, the NIRS Canada project was designed to support Vietnamese SMAs of labour in effectively performing their new role in promoting IR in accordance with recent regulations, particularly the revised Labour Code of 2019 and Directive 37-CT/TW dated September 3, 2019, from the Party's Secretariat on building harmonious, stable, and progressive IR. It has been found that the project's interventions are highly relevant to this purpose, as the NIRS Canada project focuses on enhancing practices of social dialogue, genuine collective bargaining, and dispute resolution, which are among the core pillars of IR and have been reported as ineffective and formalistic in Vietnam. Additionally, the NIRS Canada project aligns closely with the priorities of the tripartite partners in executing the task group focused on "propaganda, dissemination to raise awareness, and promoting the construction of harmonious, stable, and progressive labour relations" as stipulated in Decision

No. 416 of the Prime Minister, dated March 25, 2020, which outlines the implementation plan for Directive No. 37-CT/TW.

First and foremost, the NIRS Canada project responds well to the current needs of NIRC. This body was initially established not based on the nature of IR, but to assist state management of labour in resolving labour-related issues. Later, it was realized that IR must be based on a tripartite mechanism. Therefore, the NIRC needs to be transformed into a representative body for all three parties and to become more inclusive, functional, and capable of delivering better advisory services (see Box 2). Output 1.1 [Develop the Periodic National IR Report(s) with the engagement of social partners and the central role of the NIRC] and Output 2.1 [Promote and improve the effectiveness of tripartite negotiation and consultation through NIRC activities in order to develop recommendations on labour standards and working conditions] are designed and implemented to directly contribute to NIRC activities.

Additionally, the NIRS Canada project was able to identify and support the key sub-committee of NIRC that is considered the backbone of the technical advisory capacity of the NIRC, namely the Technical Sub-Committee (see further below). This expert group functions based on a tripartite mechanism, with the representation and contribution of 18 members from key stakeholders: MOLISA, VGCL, VCCI, etc. (see Box 2) to provide technical advice to NIRC leadership. Therefore, improving the work of this committee will have a fundamental impact on the work of NIRC in promoting effective IR in Vietnam.

Box 2: Functions, Task and Organizational Structure of the NIRC

Decision No. 1413/QĐ-TTg dated August 18, 2021, on the Consolidation of the Functions, Tasks, Organizational Structure, and Operation of the National Industrial Relations Committee

Article 2. Duties of the Committee

- 1. Advise the Prime Minister and relevant agencies and organizations on the directions, mechanisms, policies, and measures to guide and implement policies on labour relations; propose solutions to build and develop harmonious, stable, and progressive labour relations.*
- 2. Research, propose, recommend, and provide opinions to relevant agencies and organizations on solutions for the effective implementation of the Party's guidelines and policies and the State's policies and laws regarding labour relations; suggest measures to address complicated issues arising in labour relations.*
- 3. Develop and publish periodic and ad hoc reports on labour relations.*
- 4. Support provinces and centrally run cities in researching, establishing, and operating a tripartite mechanism for Industrial Relations in accordance with the specific requirements and conditions of each locality.*
- 5. Perform other tasks related to Industrial Relations as requested by the Prime Minister.*

Article 3. Organizational Structure of the Committee

The Committee consists of 09 members, including: a) The Chairman of the Committee is the Minister of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs; b) There are 03 Vice Chairmen of the Committee, including the Deputy Minister of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs; the Vice Chairman of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour; and the Vice Chairman of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry; c) The remaining members of the Committee include: 01 representative of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs; 02 representatives of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour; 01 representative of the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance; and 01 representative of the Vietnam Association of Small and Medium Enterprises.

Second, the NIRS Canada project outputs (such as Output 1.1, Output 2.2, and Output 2.3) are assessed as being suitable to the needs of DIRWA² in performing a number of state management tasks on labour relations, notably: (1) assisting the Minister in fulfilling the state management function on IR and wages in accordance with the law (it is noted that wages and benefits are challenging topics in collective bargaining and the main reasons for strikes in Vietnam) and (2) fulfilling the functions of a key member of the NIRC sub-technical committee, being responsible for preparing professional and technical reports related to the Committee's tasks, which requires the Department to take stewardship in implementing specialized assessments/research on contemporary IR issues to provide reliable and evidence-based inputs for well-informed recommendations made by the NIRC. An important product that the NIRS Canada Project has supported is the implementation of 'The Institutional Gap Assessment for DIRWA in the New Context of Enforcing the Labour Code 2019 for the Organizational Review and Restructuring of DIRWA, Phase 2022–2025.' This activity aims to help improve the organization of DIRWA to effectively meet the challenges of state management of labour relations. This document, as reflected in the Interim Report, is highly appreciated by DIRWA leadership for its relevance to DIRWA's organizational capacity development needs.

Output 1.2 is also consistent with an important task of DIRWA, which is to guide/support localities (provinces) in the process of developing and implementing the Project on the Development of IR and the Guidelines for implementing the task of supporting IR development, in order to implement Resolution No. 109/2023/QH15 dated November 29, 2023, from the National Assembly and Decision No. 416/QĐ-TTg dated March 25, 2020, from the Prime Minister. The development of the Project on the Development of IR at the local level is considered very necessary, especially in the context of international integration, the implementation of labour commitments in new-generation FTAs, and effective implementation of the provisions of the Labour Code³. However, by the end of 2024, only 12 out of 63 provinces had developed and implemented IR master plans/projects ("projects") as called for. To support these efforts, a number of tools, including a set of provincial-level IR evaluation criteria, were to be developed (Output 1.2), with DIRWA serving as the technical focal point for this work.

A product that the NIRS Canada project, in collaboration with the GLO/20/40/EUR project and the VNM/20/02/APL project, has contributed to is advancing MOLISA's efforts in promoting digital transformation. This support was provided to DIRWA to conduct a research report on the regulations governing electronic labour contracts (labour contracts established via digital means) in the business sector⁴.

Third, the NIRS Canada project is deemed to align with the tasks of the VGCL which includes coordinating with SMAs, local authorities, and enterprises to ensure compliance with labour laws, as well as promoting the attainment of elevated labour rights for workers, surpassing legal

² The establishment of DIRWA in 2017, according to Decision No. 736/QĐ-LĐTBXH, which stipulates the functions, tasks, powers, and organizational structure of the Department of Labour Relations and Wages, also marks the state's recognition of the significance of industrial relations (IR) and wage issues. DIRWA was established as one of 23 units under the LabourMOLISA in accordance with Decree 14/2017/ND-CP, demonstrating the Vietnamese Government's strong commitment to promoting labour relations. After MOLISA merged into the MOHA in early 2025, DIRWA became the Department of Wages and Social Insurance under MOHA. The Department includes the following divisions: Wages Division, Social Insurance Division, Labour Relations Division, and the Office and Center for Supporting the Development of Labour Relations. Thus, the state management function of labour relations remains unchanged after this merger.

³ <https://quanhelaodong.molisa.gov.vn/?p=12790>

⁴ See the Electronics Cluster Final Evaluation Report

requirements, and guaranteeing the harmonious interests of employers. VGCL is mandated to promote IR with a range of functions from policy formulation at national level (i.e. to work with MOLISA in formulating and amending laws related to IR, typically the revision of the Labour Code in 2019) to directing and instructing provincial and grassroots trade to carry out IR-related activities. In accordance with Resolution No. 02-NQ/TW dated June 12, 2021, from the Politburo on the innovation of the organization and operation of the Vietnam Trade Union in the new situation, as well as the Resolution of the 13th Congress of the Vietnam Trade Union for the 2023-2028 term, starting from 2023, the VGCL has identified priority industries for advancing collective bargaining activities and signing collective labour agreements with various participating enterprises. The VGCL is actively implementing the program "Improving the Effectiveness of Dialogue and Collective Bargaining for the Period 2023-2028." This initiative seeks to facilitate collective bargaining across multiple levels with various stakeholders, including enterprises, corporations, and international organizations, to broaden coverage and enhance both the quantity and quality of collective labour agreements. The VGCL and the grassroots trade union is currently the workers' representative to engage in IR activities including within the project: (i) conducting dialogues and bargaining with employers; (ii) training for trade union officials on social dialogue and bargaining; (iii) working with employers' associations or directly with enterprise-level employers to support parties to enhance dialogue and bargaining; and (iv) developing supporting technical documents to facilitate dialogue and bargaining for trade union officials at all levels. *(See the Midterm Review Report)*. To conclude, the support that the NIRS Canada project provided jointly with other ILO Project as VNM/20/02/APL is evaluated to be in line with the priorities of the VGCL.

Fourth, the engagement of VCCI in this project is pivotally relevant because VCCI represent the employers and lead the process of social dialogue and collective bargaining at all levels.

On the other hand, VCCI, or more specifically the Bureau for Employer's Activities, represents (registered) employers in IR. The Bureau is responsible for advising the Standing Committee of VCCI and implementing representative work to promote the development of activities relating to IR in Vietnam. Among a wide range of activities, it provides support to enterprises in implementing policy and regulation, capacity development, and so on. Both the VCCI and VGCL are represented in NIRC with an even ratio of members with MOLISA (5 representatives from each organisation). *(Midterm Review Report)*.

Finally, at the provincial level, the selection of pilot locations in HCMC, Binh Duong, and Dong Nai appears to respond effectively to actual circumstances, as these areas host a high concentration of industrial parks and have reported the most cases of strikes. The evaluation report on the implementation of provincial IR plans has contributed to this process. The involvement of local trade unions, such as the Que Vo Bac Ninh Industrial Park Trade Union, in activities to promote the Multi-Employer Collective Agreement—which the Project coordinated with other ILO-managed initiatives, such as the VNM/20/02/APL project, EUTfDW project—is considered highly suitable for the needs of localities with developed electronics industries⁵.

5.1.3 Relevance to ILO's strategy

⁵ Previously, in 2022, Multi-Employer Collective Agreements were promoted by VGCL in textile sector (Hung Yen province and Ho Chi Minh City) and seafood (in Ca Mau and Kien Giang), but only in Bac Ninh, Multi-Employer Collective Agreements was promoted in 2023 in electronics sector and especially, focused on only wage issue.

The assessment presented in the Midterm Review on this regard remains accurate which confirmed that: The NIRS Canada project aligns well with the ILO's portfolio and various country programs in Vietnam. It fits seamlessly into the five-year tripartite cooperation program between the ILO and the Government of Vietnam, as outlined in the DWCP for the periods 2017-2021 and 2022-2026. Specifically, the NIRS Canada project is expected to contribute to achieving two key outcomes within Priority Area No. 3: "Building effective labour market governance compliant with fundamental principles and rights at work." These outcomes are: (i) Outcome 3.1 - Effective IR systems established in accordance with international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; and (ii) Outcome 3.4 - Strengthened commitment to ratifying and applying international labour standards.

The NIRS Canada project's contribution to the ILO Flagship Report on Social Dialogue (ILO Social Dialogue Report 2022) and the translation, publication, and dissemination of the flagship reports in Vietnam—including the Social Dialogue Report 2024 and the Global Wage Report 2024–25—demonstrates the project's relevance to the ILO strategy.

Furthermore, the NIRS Canada project aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, contributing to Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 8.8.2, which aims to increase national compliance with labour rights (specifically, the freedom of association and collective bargaining) as informed by ILO textual sources and national legislation, disaggregated by sex.

The table below summarizes the alignment of the NIRS Canada project with specific outcomes from the ILO P&B for the biennium 2022–23, along with the DWCPs for the periods 2017-2021 and 2022-2026, as follows:

ILO P&B Outcome	• Main Contribution to Outcome 1: Strong tripartite constituents and influential, inclusive social dialogue. • Secondary Contribution to: Outcome 2 - International labour standards and authoritative, effective supervision; Outcome 7 - Adequate and effective protection at work for all. Additionally, the Project contributes to the P&B 2024-2025: • Outcome 2: Strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents and effective social dialogue. • Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all.
Viet Nam DWCP	DWCP 2017-2021: Contribution to the third priority area: "Build effective labour market governance compliant with fundamental principles and rights at work." DWCP 2022-2026: Contribution to the following outcomes: • Outcome 3.1: Reformed labour market institutions utilized to improve labour standards for all types of workers and to formalize informal employment. • Outcome 3.4: Strengthened social dialogue and dispute resolution mechanisms to enhance labour market governance, workers' rights, and IR.
Country Program Outcome	• VNM 107: Increased capacity of member states to ensure safe and healthy working conditions. • VNM 101: Effective IR systems established in line with international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work. • VNM 801: Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organizations.

	VNM 802: Enhanced institutional capacity of the VGCL and grassroots trade unions.
UN SDG	Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 8.8.2: Increase in national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on ILO textual sources and national legislation, disaggregated by sex.

5.2. Coherence

The coherence within the NIRS Canada project structure: It is confirmed that the NIRS Canada project design allows each Specific Objective/Key Outcome to support and enhance the others, promoting a holistic approach to IR that leads to improvements across all three areas of intervention.

Specific Objective 1/Key Outcome 1 focuses on enhancing the role of tripartite IR institutions, particularly the NIRC. This objective establishes a foundation for effective multi-stakeholder social dialogue, organized through robust tripartite mechanisms and institutions, enabling collaboration among central and provincial labour management agencies and social partners.

Specific Objective 2/Key Outcome 2 aims to strengthen collective bargaining as a standardized and common process that genuinely reflects workers' rights and influences working conditions. By fostering effective communication between workers and employers, this objective ensures that both parties understand the key challenges the other faces. It also channels this information to policymakers and the NIRC, highlighting issues that necessitate higher-level policy changes. In this way, Key Outcome 2 directly contributes to the effectiveness of Key Outcome 1 by informing the tripartite institutions about the realities of the workplace and enhancing their collaborative efforts.

Specific Objective 3/Key Outcome 3 establishes and operates a system of labour dispute mediation and arbitration institutions that supports the development of harmonious, stable, and progressive IR. This framework is designed in acknowledgment of workers' rights to organize and engage in collective bargaining. Information related to dispute resolution is funneled into national discussions, allowing the NIRC to stay informed about emerging disputes and current policy challenges. This feedback loop not only strengthens Key Outcome 3 but also reinforces Key Outcome 1 by ensuring that tripartite institutions, informed by real-time data and trends, can make relevant and effective policy recommendations within a changing environment.

The coherence of the NIRS Canada project with other interventions:

The NIRS Canada project is designed to complement various initiatives aimed at promoting the development of IR in Vietnam. While this setup can complicate project delivery due to the influence of other interventions on its outputs and outcomes, it also offers significant benefits. Specifically, it enables different projects, each addressing distinct aspects and challenges of the complex IR landscape, to be mutually supportive. This collaboration helps pool resources and efforts toward achieving a comprehensive goal, ultimately leading to a more significant impact.

The NIRS Canada project is closely interconnected with several other ILO-executed initiatives supported by different donors. These include the USDOL-funded New Industrial Relations Framework (NIRF) project, which focuses on developing a new labour dispute resolution system in accordance with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; the EU Trade for Decent Work (EU TfdW) project; and the Public-Private Partnership for international labour standards compliance in the electronics sector of Vietnam (VNM/20/02/APL project as known as the APL

project). Additionally, the NIRS project has ties to the NIRS Japan project, which concluded on June 30, 2022. This project promoted innovative practices of collective bargaining and social dialogue among employers, workers' organizations, and government entities, aligning with the new labour code as well as ratified Conventions No. 98 and 144.

Among the projects which the NIRS Canada Project has synthesized with, the most notable is the NIRF project, which focuses on supporting Vietnam in completing its legal framework related to labour relations. First, after the NIRF Project facilitated the issuance of Decision 1413-QD-TTg-2021⁶, which aimed to refine the functions and tasks of the NIRC, the NIRS Canada Project supported the development of the Working Regulations of the NIRC, the NIRC Orientation plan towards 2025 and provided capacity building for NIRC's technical sub-committee, such as the conduction of "the study on rapid review of IR under the new regulations of the Labour Code 2019 in selected enterprises in the recovery period after Covid-19" and "the institution gap assessment for DIRWA in the new context of enforcing of the Labour Code 2019 implementation for organizational review and restructure of DIRWA phase 2022 – 2025".

Furthermore, the NIRF Project also provides technical assistance to build institutions related to key investments for developing a labour dispute resolution system, as outlined in the new provisions included in the 2019 Labour Code. Following this support, the NIRS Canada Project was tasked with building a labour dispute resolution case management system (under Key Outcome 3). Thus, while the NIRF Project focuses on institutional improvements of local labour dispute resolution models—including mediation and labour arbitration—to comply with the provisions of the Labour Code, as well as capacity building and the development of training programs for localities, the NIRS Canada Project concentrates on developing a national information system to support, manage, and coordinate labour mediators and arbitrators (Output 3.1) and creating a labour mediation and arbitration case management system, which will be piloted in selected provinces (Output 3.2). These arbitration cases, when systematically recorded through the creation of case files, are expected to serve as reliable references for future labour conciliators, contributing to an effective system of labour dispute resolution through conciliation, mediation and arbitration. (See the comments below for an illustration of the cohesion between the NIRS Canada Project and the NIRF Project).

The NIRS Canada project and the NIRF Project, along with other initiatives in the areas of IR and collective bargaining, collaborate with the same partner, DIRWA, specifically the Department of Labour Relations. DIRWA has established a technical team of five members who regularly engage with these projects. In 2022-2023, we organized numerous technical meetings between the technical team of the Department of Labour Relations and Wages and the coordination groups of these projects. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online meetings were also held regularly.

The Department is tasked with providing technical guidance to three pilot provinces in developing projects to promote local labour relations, which includes solutions for resolving labour disputes through conciliation and arbitration in the pilot provinces: Binh Duong, Dong Nai, and HCMC. The analysis and selection of these three pilot provinces were conducted with the support of the NIRF Project, and the implementation of Output Canada was based on this existing relationship.

In developing the framework for the pilot on labour dispute resolution, we had to create a comprehensive plan outlining what we were piloting, the expected outcomes, and the specific needs of the provinces. We developed a joint Logframe to ensure that each project achieved its outputs according to that framework.

⁶ <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Lao-dong-Tien-luong/Quyiet-dinh-1413-QD-TTg-2021-kien-toan-chuc-nang-va-nhiem-vu-cua-Uy-ban-Quan-he-lao-dong-485236.aspx>

The second project that the NIRS Canada project closely cooperates with is the EU-funded Trade for Decent Work (TfDW) Project, which focuses on supporting Vietnam in implementing ILO Convention No. 98. Within the NIRS Canada project, Output 2.2 aims to develop options that conform to international labour standards—a manual designed to guide and promote collective bargaining in accordance with the new provisions of the Labour Code and ILO Convention No. 98. This output is the area where the NIRS Canada project and the TfDW project collaborate closely.

Similarly, the NIRS Canada project faces challenges in achieving comprehensive improvements in collective bargaining due to constraints in resources and the scope of its activities. To address this, it collaborates with the VNM/20/02/APL project, which focuses on piloting social dialogue in the electronics sector, as well as with the EU TfDW project to develop a manual that guides and promotes collective bargaining in line with the new provisions of the Labour Code and ILO Convention No. 98 [The guideline on developing effective Internal Work Rules at workplace level] This partnership enables the NIRS Canada project to benefit from valuable input, allowing its products to be tested and refined by other initiatives.

5.3. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is defined as the extent to which the interventions achieve, or are expected to achieve, their objectives and results, including any differential outcomes across groups. This section begins by providing an assessment of the project's achievement of the intended specific objectives, key outcomes, and outputs, using the scales as provided in Section IV.

High	Met or exceeded most targets for the period evaluated, with mostly positive feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
Above-moderate	Met or exceeded most targets for the period evaluated, but with mostly neutral or negative feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
Moderate	Missed most targets for the period evaluated, but with mostly positive feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
Low:	Missed most targets for the period evaluated, with mostly neutral or negative feedback from key stakeholders and participants.

This section addresses whether partners and constituents are satisfied with the established models, systems, and mechanisms (e.g., collective bargaining mechanisms, etc.) supported by the project. Additionally, the quality and usefulness of the technical support, capacity building, and outputs produced by the NIRS Canada project are discussed in parallel with the assessment of achievement levels. The challenges and barriers encountered during the implementation of project activities, as well as the mitigation measures taken to overcome these barriers and to address unforeseen challenges, are mentioned as appropriate.

Although this section presents an assessment of the achievements of the designed Specific Objectives/Key Outcomes and the subordinate outputs as of the end of the project, it is important to note that the NIRS Canada project is designed to ensure that the three outcome areas interact and mutually strengthen one another, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the interventions (see Section 5.2, Coherence).

Key Outcome 1: State management agencies of labour and social partners collaborate effectively in assessing, forecasting IR development trends and in proposing, implementing IR development models and solutions, including those to promote workplace dialogue.

The outcome has been **partially achieved**. The performance under Outcome 1 highlights both notable progress and areas where growth is still needed. Foundational elements, such as reports and capacity-building initiatives, have been established, which provide a solid base for future development. However, operational challenges—like the need for a more effective labour information system and additional support for social dialogue events—present opportunities for enhancing the establishment of productive tripartite mechanisms. While there have been challenges in obtaining necessary approvals, particularly concerning the NIRC's operations and the continuation of problem-solving dialogues beyond the project's conclusion, these are recognized as important areas for progress.

(a) The Achievement of Key Outcome1 as demonstrated by the Performance Indicators

Analyzing the indicators that measure Key Outcome 1 (see Annex 3) reveals insights into the ongoing efforts to enhance multi-stakeholder social dialogue through the effective functioning of tripartite IR mechanisms and institutions and it highlights both progress and areas for improvement that can guide future initiatives. Below is a detailed analysis of each indicator measuring Key Outcome 1.

Indicator 1: “Quality of Labour Information System and Database”: The baseline value of this indicator indicates that the IR database was developed with previous project support. The current situation as of the project's end shows that the quality of the labour information system and database has made some progress. The aim was to establish a labour information system capable of collecting essential data on various IR indicators, including the number of worker representative organizations (WROs), CBAs, and instances of labour disputes. Although the framework for data collection at central, provincial, and enterprise levels has been developed and piloted, the operationalization of these systems is still a work in progress. The necessary administrative approvals for wider deployment have not yet been secured, which indicates that while a solid foundation has been built, further efforts are needed to ensure that these systems are fully functional and utilized.

Indicator 2: “Quality of Social Dialogue Events Organized”: The baseline value of this indicator was that there were “some existing criteria for social dialogue.” By the end of the project, it was recorded that the NIRS Canada project aimed for supporting a well-functioning NIRC to engage in evidence-based dialogue that influences policymaking. The project successfully produced studies for use in social dialogue, specifically within NIRC technical committee, such as “The study report on rapid review of IR under the new regulations of the Labour Code 2019 in selected enterprises in the recovery period”. However, it is noteworthy that such dialogues have not occurred within the plenary sessions of the NIRC, and the convening of the NIRC outside the mandates of the NIRS Canada project remains a hopeful prospect. The potential reconstitution of the DIRWA within the MOHA has been identified as a path forward that could enhance the process of engaging stakeholders in collective discussions.

Indicator 3: “Availability of Plans to Continue Problem-Solving Dialogue After the Project”: Initially the baseline value indicating that no plans were available., An attempt was made to draft a plan outlining the NIRC's focus for 2022-2025; however, this plan remains unapproved, raising concerns

about the sustainability of dialogue following project completion. Despite plans to implement numerous activities, the delay in organizing the official meeting of the NIRC, alongside the redefined functions stemming from MOLISA's decision, highlights both the challenges and opportunities in ensuring that dialogue remains effective and sustainable in addressing IR issues.

Indicator 4, which focuses on the “Recommendations and Documents of the National IR Committee,” initially reflected a baseline value where the National IR Report 2019 was available. By the end of the project, the development of the National IR Report for 2022, updated in 2023, has provided a foundational evidence base for IR policy discussions. However, the inability to convene the NIRC has severely limited its effectiveness in consulting on and recommending policies. Despite these challenges, the recommendations and documents produced for the NIRC signify a growth in available evidence for policy discussions. The National IR Report for 2022 and its update for 2023 serve as vital frameworks for evidence-based policy recommendations. However, the NIRC's inability to convene has hampered its potential to effectively consult and contribute to the decision-making process. The recent directives that reinforce the NIRC's implementation role highlight an urgent need for a renewed focus on enhancing its consultative capacities, which would enable it to meaningfully influence policy discourse.

It is unfortunate that, despite the high quality of the draft recommendations developed based on the National IR Report 2022 and its update regarding the prevention of sexual harassment and recommendations to employers on employee shift meals, these drafts have not received approval from the NIRC, which has yet to hold an official meeting so far. This situation underscores the need for renewed engagement and action to capitalize on the valuable insights generated by the reports and to support the establishment of effective and consultative IR mechanisms.

Indicator 5: Measures to Improve the Effectiveness of Tripartite Mechanism Practice at Provincial Levels: Baseline: None provided. By the end of the project, tools to enhance tripartite consultations at the enterprise and provincial levels have been developed; however, the pilot results remain unfinalized, and no tools have been approved for broader implementation. This stagnation indicates a lack of progress in translating theoretical frameworks and pilot studies into actionable, widespread practices that could foster effective social dialogue at the local level.

(b) Outstanding Results/Successes under the Key Outcome 1

The National IR Report 2022 presents (i) the current IR situation in Vietnam; (2) general evaluation; and (3) recommendations that are developed by tripartite partners. This reporting mechanism is crucial to provide tripartite partners, especially NIRC and policy makers, with evidence-based situation analysis of emerging IR challenges in the country and proposed responses to those challenges. The development of a well analysed report is considered essential for effective recommendation making and consistent implementation of the NIRC and tripartite partners and should be carried out annually or every two years. Furthermore, through the development of this report, NIRC was able to build a network with qualified independent IR experts and researchers and construct the capacity of its Technical Sub-Committee in data analysis and trend prediction in IR. As one key informant from the VGCL remarked regarding the quality of the report:

"I highly appreciate the reports on IR that the ILO has supported in developing. For about five years now, these reports have carefully assessed trends, results, shortcomings, limitations, and recommendations. They can be used effectively for research, reference, and information gathering. When VGCL reports to competent authorities or participates in conferences, I can cite the results and

comments from the report. The most recent report includes quite accurate observations on IR trends, which VGCL can utilize to plan activities, programs, and medium- to long-term strategies." (Interview with key-informant from VGCL)

Capacity building was also regarded as an effective practice under this Key Outcome. The training courses on social dialogue & collective bargaining skills (2021) were considered useful and effective because they incorporated the changes of the Labour Code 2019 and provided guidance to enterprises who had been paying limited attention to labour relations, particularly dialogue and bargaining.

The sets of IR evaluation criteria at enterprise levels, despite being at initial stage, receive great attention from MOLISA and the Party's Secretariat. The purpose of IR evaluation is to support the management and promotion of IR and inform mediators to make recommendations to the enterprise. It has been stressed that IR evaluation should be implemented at enterprise level and then provincial level (bottom-up approach), including consultation with local stakeholders and enterprises to gather information and piloting and guidance for enterprises to implement the criteria.

(c) Challenges in Actualization of the Key Outcome 1:

A primary issue relates to the current structure of the NIRC, which relies heavily on the NIRC and its chairperson - Minister of MOLISA for decision-making. This reliance presents both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it is reasonable for a committee like the NIRC to be chaired by the Minister, as this role encompasses overarching responsibilities across all facets of labour affairs. The Minister's direct involvement ensures that the committee remains well-informed and engaged, often resulting in high attendance at meetings concerning IR. On the other hand, this structure can lead to challenges in scheduling meetings and obtaining approvals, which can cause delays in the committee's work. The delay of the NIRC in organizing official meetings with high-level leaders is an issue that has been evident since 2022 and has hindered the formal adoption of project contributions. Although the MTR has recommended recognizing the need for flexibility in the NIRC's operations—such as in topics, methodologies, and meeting frequencies—to better address emerging issues, these challenges persist.

(d) The achievement of the Outputs under Key Outcome 1

By the end of the project, the delivery of the expected outputs is considered above moderate. Two out of four outputs have been fully delivered, while the other two have experienced delays. Details of the delivery of the four outputs associated with this outcome are as follows:

Output 1.1: National IR Report Development has been completed. The National IR Report was successfully developed with the engagement of social partners and the NIRC's technical sub-committee. This report serves as a factual basis for tripartite discussions regarding the direction of IR under the Labour Code of 2019. By the conclusion of the project, the IR report for 2023 was produced and updated, providing insights into the IR situation from 2021 to 2023. The report's contents were informed by consultations and meetings aimed at gathering inputs for the drafting process. The draft was developed and refined by the Technical Sub-Committee of the NIRC, with input gathered from committee members. It is now awaiting the NIRC's official meeting for review and finalization before being formally approved and publicly announced.

Output 1.2: Provincial-Level IR Assessment Indicators. The delivery of this output is behind schedule. As of the close of 2024, progress has been slow in developing and piloting a set of

provincial-level IR assessment indicators. Out of 63 provinces, only 12 have successfully developed and implemented IR master plans or projects. Provincial administrations are expected to complete a variety of tasks, supported by national-level coordination and ILO assistance. However, partners require additional time to finalize this output, as its completion is contingent on other interrelated tools that were not approved for use until late in the project.

Output 1.3: Enterprise-Level IR Evaluation Information System has been completed. The enterprise-level IR diagnostic tool was developed and piloted in five selected enterprises located in HCMC, with plans for broader implementation. This tool is designed to assist stakeholders at the enterprise level in assessing their IR situation and health, allowing for the formulation of joint action plans for improvement. Additionally, the diagnostic tool is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of the overall health of IRs. It is anticipated that mediators, labour administrative officials, and enterprises can utilize the tool to identify IR issues and propose viable solutions.

Output 1.4: Effective Workplace Dialogue Models. The development of effective workplace dialogue models has experienced delays. A situational assessment was conducted regarding the implementation of the Labour Code of 2019 concerning the establishment of internal work rules at the enterprise level. While guidelines for developing effective internal work rules have been created, they have not yet been finalized or piloted in enterprises. Plans for field visits and pilot implementations across eight provinces and cities have been established, but these activities remain unexecuted. Despite these setbacks, some communication initiatives were undertaken, including the launch of the Social Dialogue Report for 2024, the publication of the Global Wage Report 2024-25, and collaboration with the TfdW project to produce a video clip aimed at raising awareness about responsible business conduct and human rights due diligence for decent work.

Key Outcome 2: Collective bargaining becomes an effective mechanism in setting standards for working conditions through the role of tripartite institutions; enterprise-level collective bargaining models are established and operated genuinely with the effective support of state management of labour

The evaluation of Outcome 2 reveals that some progress has been made toward the standardization of collective bargaining as an important process for determining wages and working conditions. The updated data on the outcome indicators shows a combination of progress and persistent challenges within the realm of collective bargaining. While there are positive indicators, such as improved content in CBAs and the initiation of discussions aimed at developing a promotional strategy, notable obstacles still exist. Specifically, the inactivity of the NIRC and the limited availability of data represent significant barriers. In summary, the achievement of full outcomes remains only partially realized.

(a) The Achievement of Key Outcome 2 as demonstrated by the Performance Indicators

Indicator 1: Improved Content of CBAs. The baseline shows that there was a need for improved content in multiple-employers CBAs within Bac Ninh province. By the project's end selected working conditions have been incorporated into the multi-CBAs that have been produced. This development represents a significant step forward in enhancing the specifics of what is covered in CBAs. The inclusion of issues related to working conditions signifies a direct attempt to address real labour concerns. However, it is important to note that the focus remains limited to Bac Ninh province. To enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives, it would be beneficial to replicate this improvement

across different provinces or sectors. Doing so would help ensure broader applicability and impact, effectively raising the standard of working conditions for workers in various locations.

Indicator 2: Availability of Strategy for Collective Bargaining Promotion. Initially, there was no formalized strategy for promoting collective bargaining when the project commenced. By the project end, preliminary discussions have been held, laying the groundwork for the NIRC to address challenges and strategies related to the implementation of collective bargaining. Nevertheless, sophisticated strategies have not yet been developed or adopted. The initiation of these discussions represents progress in forming a strategy for promoting collective bargaining. The lack of a fully developed strategy reflects ongoing uncertainty regarding how to effectively turn these discussions into actionable plans. This situation underscores the necessity for a more structured approach that can harness the potential of these early conversations and address previous gaps.

Indicator 3: Engagement and Activity of the NIRC. The status by the end of the project, states that the effectiveness of collective bargaining has somehow been hindered due to the fact that the NIRC has not been active since 2022. The NIRC's delay in organizing official meetings poses a critical barrier to advancing collective bargaining initiatives. Without regular engagement and structured dialogue among various tripartite partners, the potential for effective negotiation diminishes.

Indicator 4: ILS-Conforming Options for a National Approach to Collective Bargaining. At the end, relevant manuals and materials from the ILO regarding collective bargaining are available, but only the one for employers have been published⁷, while the two for the Government and the VGCL, respectively, have not yet been published, though the latter has been used for training. The endline status indicates that, despite the development of initiatives aimed at promoting collective bargaining in alignment with the Labour Code of 2019 and ILO Convention No. 98, and best practices can be gleaned from produced manuals, the lack of publication for all three partners restricts accessibility and practical implementation.

Indicator 5: Technical Support Mechanisms and Monitoring Systems. The baseline notes that there is currently no clear statistical data available regarding the needs and requirements of tripartite partners. The status at the project end shows that the planned establishment of a core team to support pilot collective bargaining processes has not taken place. The absence of a technical support mechanism limits the capacity to pilot and implement effective collective bargaining initiatives.

Indicator 6: Workers Covered by CBAs. According to the baseline, a library of CBAs exists within the VGCL. The outcome summary indicates that data on the number of workers covered by CBAs is available, but it has not been included in the reporting. Although there are CBAs that provide coverage for workers, the lack of reported data hampers a comprehensive understanding of how many workers are directly benefiting from these agreements. This information is essential for assessing the impact of collective bargaining efforts on worker welfare and for developing future strategies to enhance coverage.

(b) Outstanding Results/Successes under the Key Outcome 2

Evidence of significant improvements in the content of CBAs emerged within Bac Ninh province, where specific working conditions *[including: Diligence Bonus; Shift Meal Support (minimum value of a main shift meal): When market prices change, the union and the enterprise will discuss and adjust*

⁷ [Ấn phẩm](#)

the meal allowance appropriately, ensuring proper nutrition for workers; Monthly Travel Support (Gasoline); Monthly Housing Support; Monthly Support for under 6-year-old Children; Marriage Benefits; Sightseeing and Vacation] have been addressed through multi-CBAs. This enhancement reflects progress in addressing key workplace issues, including gender issues such as childcare support.

The NIRS Canada project has actively assisted constituents and various social partners in developing more effective and genuine collective bargaining processes. The delivery of this key outcome has been particularly effective in capacity building, developing recommendations on labour standards, and supporting studies related to collective bargaining.

Through capacity development initiatives, officials from MOLISA, selected Departments of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (DOLISAs), VGCL, VCCI, enterprises, and workers have gained a better understanding of collective bargaining principles and practices. The development and piloting of collective bargaining training manual, which involved all tripartite partners, represents a significant advancement in promoting genuine collective bargaining. This initiative has been highly valued by enterprises that, while required to engage in collective bargaining, often lack the necessary skills and experience.

In response to this need, the NIRS project has supported MOLISA in creating a Manual on Promoting Collective Bargaining (particularly concerning wages), aligned with the new provisions of the Labour Code and ILO Convention No. 98. This activity reinforces other ILO initiatives that support tripartite partners in developing manuals for collective bargaining. Notably, the ILO has collaborated with VCCI to create a Manual aimed at enhancing employers' capacity for collective bargaining, as well as working with VGCL to develop a Manual focused on collective bargaining for wage negotiations by trade union officials. Collectively, these efforts have resulted in a set of three comprehensive manuals for all tripartite partners.

Based on these manuals and training materials, the NIRS Canada project, in collaboration with other ILO initiatives, has facilitated pilot training sessions on collective bargaining, followed by the finalization and publication of the manuals.

(c) Challenges in Actualization of the Key Outcome 2:

Despite these successes, the engagement of the NIRC has been notably lacking, significantly hindering effective guidance and endorsements of manuals, and in turn hindering progress in effective collective bargaining. Although the NIRC has not held official meetings since 2022, its Technical Sub-Committee has continued to research and develop recommendations on collective bargaining—a relatively new field in Vietnam. However, the delay in organizing official meetings presents a major obstacle to advancing collective bargaining efforts. Regular and structured engagement from all parties is essential to foster an environment conducive to effective negotiations. The NIRC's delay in organizing official meetings underscores the urgent need to revive these discussions to build on the progress that has been made.

Regarding a national approach to collective bargaining that aligns with ILS, manuals and materials from the ILO have been developed but remain unpublished, beyond the manual for the employers. Although initiatives have aimed at promoting collective bargaining in conjunction with the Labour Code 2019 and ILO Convention No. 98, shifts in government policy have altered the roles of social partner organizations, diminishing their capacity to implement solutions independently.

Consequently, the foundational work accomplished by the NIRS Canada and related projects has been compromised by these changing governmental priorities, impeding social partners' ability to effectively address labour market issues. For a genuine national approach to collective bargaining to be realized, social partners must be empowered to assume more proactive roles.

Regarding technical support mechanisms and monitoring systems, there is currently no reliable statistical data available related to the needs of tripartite partners. The anticipated establishment of a core technical group intended to support pilot collective bargaining processes has not yet taken shape. This lack of a technical support mechanism constrains the potential for effective piloting of collective bargaining initiatives, highlighting a significant gap in capacity development that must be addressed to facilitate practical implementation in various localities.

Furthermore, while a variety of CBAs exist within the VGCL, the report currently lacks data on the number of workers covered by these agreements. Access to this information is crucial for assessing the impact of collective bargaining efforts, and its absence in reports could hinder both evaluation and strategic planning for future initiatives.

The project has succeeded in raising awareness among employers and workers about the significance and benefits of genuine collective bargaining. However, a large portion of Vietnam's labour force consists of unskilled workers whose high work intensity—driven by low income—compels them to prioritize working hours over participation in union activities and collective bargaining. For employers, particularly in small and micro enterprises, genuine collective bargaining remains underappreciated, despite increased awareness, partly due to cost-saving mentalities and lack of market pressure. It is only when external pressure from buyers encourage businesses to engage in collective bargaining that they will do so effectively.

(d) The achievement of the Outputs under Key Outcome 2

The outputs under Component 2 present a generally positive picture of progress towards the outcome of standardized collective bargaining. While several outputs have been completed, delays in publication and finalization highlight the bottlenecks that can occur due to organizational changes and dependencies on other processes. The successful piloting of a collective bargaining model indicates that foundational work has been established, setting the stage for wider uptake of collective bargaining practices.

Output 2.1 Promote and Improve Effectiveness of Tripartite Negotiations and Consultations has been completed indicating that several research studies were conducted as planned. These studies were reviewed by a NIRC technical sub-committee, which highlights an organized approach to evaluate labour standards and working conditions. However, it is noteworthy that most of the studies await action from a convened plenary meeting of the NIRC. The anticipation of future plenary meetings suggests that while progress has been made, there are still critical discussions and decisions pending that could advance these initiatives further.

Output 2.2 Develop a Manual to Guide and Promote Collective Bargaining. This output has been almost completed. Three manuals have been developed, indicating a substantial effort to create resources aligned with the new provisions of the Labour Code and ILO Convention No. 98.

- **MOLISA Manual:** This manual, which was validated in 2022, aims to guide and promote collective bargaining based on the Labour Code 2019. However, its publication is stalled due to organizational restructuring within the partner institution (DIRW). This delay reflects the

challenges that can arise from administrative changes, impacting the timely dissemination of crucial resources.

- Wage Bargaining Manual for VGCL The VGCL manual has been completed and used in its draft for 11 training/capacity development events, now the manual needs the outstanding validation workshop. This step is critical for ensuring that the manual meets the needs of stakeholders before publication. -.
- Employer Capacity Manual by VCCI: This manual has been completed and published, signifying a successful outcome that could enhance employer participation in collective bargaining.

Output 2.3 Pilot a Genuine Collective Bargaining Model has been completed. This output is marked completed by the project's end. The piloting of a genuine collective bargaining model marks a significant achievement for this component. The collaborative effort of the NIRS Canada project with other projects led to a successful MECBA among seven enterprises in the electronics sector along with the provincial Federation of Labour in Bac Ninh. This illustrates not only the effectiveness of support from SMAs but also the practical application of collective bargaining principles. The pilot activity serves as a valuable case study that can be used to further promote collective bargaining practices across other sectors and regions.

Key Outcome 3. The system of labour dispute mediation and arbitration institutions is consolidated and operated effectively in accordance with the new requirements of the Labour Code

This Outcome is designed to build on the Labour Dispute Resolution System (LDRS) which is also an outcome of the NIRF Project (being piloted in HCMC, Dong Nai and Binh Duong) and develop a mechanism and templates for collecting, processing and sharing information on dispute settlement cases. In collaboration with the NIRF project, and while the NIRF project has focused on the development of the arbitration and mediation organisation capacity (Strengthening/activating the established labour dispute resolution system (LDRS) in exiting pilot provinces/city to demonstrate its results: for all mechanisms including the focal point units, mediation and arbitration and possible replication into other provinces), the NIRS Canada project is expected to benefit the LDRS nationwide to have reference for future labour dispute cases.

(a) The Achievement of Key Outcome 3 as demonstrated by the Performance Indicators

Indicator 1: Existence of a Mediation System with a National Information System for Labour Mediators and Arbitrators: The baseline assessment reveals that the current mediation system is classified as very weak. By the end of the project, some progress has been made, as action plans [to implement the task of perfecting the system of mediation and arbitration mechanisms in labour conflict resolution] have been developed by the DOLISAs in several provinces. However, the lack of a comprehensive national information system remains a significant gap. The effectiveness of mediation relies heavily on accessible information that allows stakeholders to navigate the mediation landscape. Thus, further steps are necessary to create a centralized system that ensures all parties can find suitable mediation resources, leading to more effective dispute resolution.

Indicator 2: Mediation Interventions Yielding Acceptable Results for Parties with Labour Mediation and Arbitration Case Management System. The baseline status indicated that the existing system currently yields acceptable results for the parties involved. By the end of the project, a labour case management record has been developed and successfully piloted in three provinces: Binh Duong,

Dong Nai, and HCMC. This development represents a positive step toward the systematic management of labour disputes.

Indicator 3: Strengthening Mediation as a Labour Dispute Resolution Mechanism. The baseline indicated that efforts to strengthen mediation as a mechanism for resolving labour disputes have not yet been realized. By the end of the project, it was determined that while the labour Mediation Case Management Record (MCMR) was planned for wider pilot testing in other provinces, such efforts have not yet commenced.

(b) Outstanding Results/Successes under the Key Outcome 2

The successful pilot of the labour case management record indicates an advancement in the practical application of mediation and arbitration processes. The fact that these interventions are yielding acceptable results illustrates the potential for an effective mediation mechanism. However, to maximize impact, wider dissemination and implementation of this case management system are essential, ensuring that best practices are shared across more provinces.

(c) Challenges in Actualization of the Key Outcome 3:

Although the NIRS Canada project has developed a template for recording dispute cases in the database achieving change at the user level—that is, encouraging mediators and arbitrators to utilize the case management templates developed by the NIRS Canada Project—depends on several critical factors: (1) the actual number of mediation and arbitration cases in the pilot provinces, (2) the interest and willingness of mediators and arbitrators to use these templates for case documentation, and (3) the ongoing implementation of the NIRF project to support the development of local mediators and labour arbitrators in the pilot provinces. Unfortunately, none of these conditions (except to a certain extent mediation cases) were met during the implementation of the NIRS Canada Project, particularly in its final years when the case management templates were completed. [It is noteworthy that the NIRF project has recently been announced for discontinuation due to shifts in U.S. government foreign aid policy].

The limited number of mediation and in particular arbitration cases also reflect a prevailing tendency in Vietnam to rely on local labour management agencies—at the district or provincial level—or courts for resolving labour disputes. Below are comments from key informants, a labour arbitrator affiliated with the VCCI and the labour official, DIRWA:

“Although I am a labour arbitrator for Hanoi city, since being appointed, I have never been invited to handle any labour dispute case.” This statement suggests that there is currently no substantial demand or established practice for utilizing mechanisms beyond the court system and public administrative agencies to address labour disputes in Vietnam. (Interview with a key informant from VCCI)

“Observations indicate that a prevalent habit persists in Vietnam of approaching state labour management agencies, such as the district-level Labour Department or the provincial-level Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, when labour disputes arise. There are two common scenarios for resolving these disputes between individual workers and employers: (1) Workers in factories often choose to leave their jobs and seek employment elsewhere; (2) Individual workers in senior management or expert positions typically opt for court litigation due to the significant salaries and benefits provided by their employers, as labour disputes tend to have a considerable impact on their interests. In cases of collective labour disputes, state labour management agencies and labour inspectors frequently receive complaints from groups of workers. At this juncture, these agencies initiate discussions and work with businesses and grassroots unions to encourage dialogue between

the parties to resolve these issues. Although the Labour Department or the Department of Labour may also conduct conciliation efforts, this process remains largely under the control of the SMA. Consequently, labour conciliators are rarely selected by the disputing parties, particularly individual workers. It may take additional time for the conciliation mechanism to gain traction as a preferred method for resolving labour disputes in Vietnam.” (Interview with a key informant from DIRWA)

The database and system are expected to be the tools to help labour mediators and local labour management officials to focus their oversight on the issues of IR, including the IR content that the provisions of the law have not yet mentioned/guided. There are existing resources and systems such as National IR indicator set, National IR reports, LDRS (Mediation and arbitration), enterprise database on IR or assessment tools, especially Better Work. It is recommended that when designing the output under this outcome, the NIRS Canada project considers the existing resources and systems and puts effort in coordination with relevant projects to be complementary and contribute to a consolidated system for Vietnam.

The absence of a robust mechanism for strengthening mediation shows a critical area for further development. While there is a plan in place to pilot the mediation case management system more extensively, the delay in implementation suggests a need for increased focus and resources. Building a stronger mediation framework is essential for enhancing IR and ensuring that disputes can be resolved swiftly and effectively. To achieve this, stakeholders must prioritize the rollout of these initiatives beyond the initial pilot provinces to address the broader landscape of labour disputes. The digitalisation of such a database is deemed practically necessary to link existing records and data that can be accessed across provinces, and at the same time contribute to enhancing the capacity of mediators.

Although the change outlined in Outcome 3 can be considered an extremely significant shift in the mechanisms for handling labour disputes, Directive No. 37-CT/TW [dated September 3, 2019, from the Secretariat on strengthening leadership and direction in building harmonious, stable, and progressive labor relations in the new context] has clearly identified it as one of the important solutions for building harmonious, stable, and progressive labour relations in the current context. Efforts should continue to promote and disseminate forms of labour dispute resolution to workers, particularly the mediation and arbitration mechanisms, so that these options become the preferred choices for both workers and employers when disputes arise, rather than resorting to the courts or approaching SMAs such as the Labour Department.

(d) The achievement of the Outputs under Key Outcome 3

The outputs under Outcome 3 demonstrate a mix of achievement and ongoing challenges. The successful development of the MCMR indicates strong progress in enhancing labour mediation systems, while delays in the establishment of the national information system for mediators and arbitrators highlight areas where more focused efforts are needed. The delays in 3.1 could potentially hinder the overall effectiveness of the mediation system if not addressed promptly, especially given the reliance on stakeholder engagement and practical case experience.

Output 3.1 Develop a National Information System of Labour Mediators and Arbitrators. The Status by the end of project is behind Schedule. The development of a national information system of labour mediators and arbitrators has encountered delays. Although three provinces (HCMC, Binh Duong, and Dong Nai) are working to implement a new labour dispute resolution system (LDRS) as stipulated in the Labour Code of 2019, progress has been hampered by several challenges:

- **Implementation Status:** The NIRS Canada has contributed to the design of an information system intended to facilitate communication and data exchange at various administrative levels. However, the main operational work to establish and strengthen the LDRS has largely fallen under the purview of a sister project, the NIRF Project, highlighting a collaborative, but perhaps uneven, share of responsibilities.
- **Templates and Consultation:** Draft templates for the system have been prepared and are ready for stakeholder consultation, which indicates that the planning stages are advancing. However, the effectiveness of these efforts remains contingent on obtaining stakeholder buy-in and feedback, suggesting that engagement with local actors will be vital in moving forward.
- **Challenges in Arbitration:** A significant snag in the process has been the scarcity of cases suitable for arbitration, which limits the full operationalization of the LDRS. This has necessitated a greater focus on mediation, where piloting has proceeded under limited circumstances. Notably, arbitration piloting has been constrained to the Dong Nai Arbitration Council from late 2022 to 2024, implying that broader testing of arbitration mechanisms is still pending.

Output 3.2 Develop a Labour Mediation and Arbitration Case Management System. This output is recorded completed, representing a key achievement in enhancing the mediation framework:

- **MCMR:** By the end of 2023, the MCMR was researched, developed, piloted and finalized by CIRD. The implementation of this standardized recordkeeping tool is significant, as it allows mediators to systematically document, archive, and share information about their cases. This capability is essential for establishing best practices and improving the overall efficiency of mediation services.
- **Training and Implementation:** The integration of the MCMR into the workflow of mediators in the three piloting provinces establishes a practical foundation for mediation case administration. Training for MCMR usage has been piloted using MOLISA guidance, indicating a proactive approach toward building mediator capacity. However, training for further implementation of the LDRS and MCMR has yet to be conducted, reflecting an interdependence in the timelines of components.
- **Data Analysis and Publication:** While training activities and data analysis are planned, progress will continue to depend on more extensive piloting of the LDRS and MCMR. The ability to analyze and publish findings from this data will be vital for informing stakeholders and improving practices.

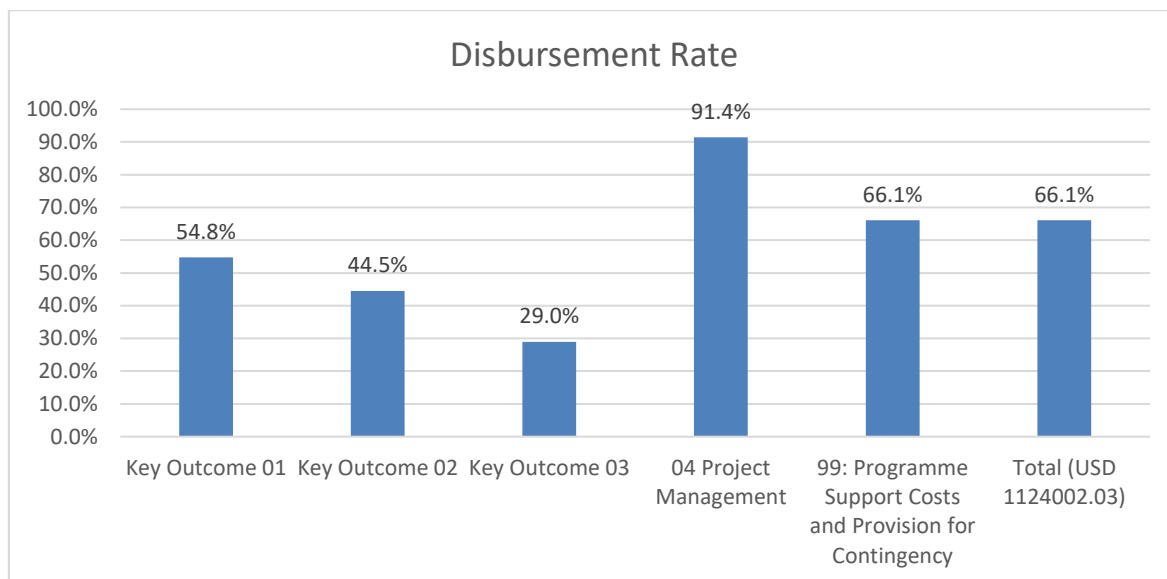
5.4. Efficiency

Disbursement Rate: The below Figure outlines the disbursement rates for components of the NIRS Canada Project, reflecting the percentage of allocated funds that have been utilized for each key outcome as well as project management activities.

Overall, the total disbursement rate across the project is **66.1%**, based on a total budget of **USD 1,124,002.03**. This total indicates moderately efficient financial resource management. The underutilization in all three key outcomes suggests that there may be areas where greater efficiency and allocation of resources could enhance project impact. Key Outcome 01 has a disbursement rate of 54.8%. Key Outcome 02 shows a disbursement rate of 44.5%, and Key Outcome 03 has a notably low disbursement rate of 29.0%, reflecting significant unutilized funds. In contrast, Project Management demonstrates a high disbursement rate of 91.4%. The category Programme Support

Costs and Provision for Contingency has a disbursement rate of 66.1%, indicating a reasonable utilization of funds allocated.

Figure 2: Disbursement Rate (five years of implementation)



Source: Project Finnane Monitoring Data

The key reasons for the low rate of spending include the slow approval process of the MOLISA of the project per se and its activities as well as the impact of COVID-19 outbreaks, and towards the end of the project lengthy and complex approval procedures for activities. Moreover, the underspending in Key Outcome 2 is because the Decree on representative organisation and collective bargaining has not been issued yet. For Key Outcome 3, the dispute settlement system is in completion (led by the NIRF Project); and the NIRS Canada project only supports building a database to support that system once it has been put into operation. Besides, implementation of several activities was supported by the co-funding of other projects. .

Although the NIRS Canada project is considered to be highly synergized with various other ILO projects (see Section 5.2), one benefit of this synergy is the optimal use of resources, including financial resources. However, the low disbursement rate of the project raises questions about the utilization of resources from other projects, such as budgets, in implementing activities. Coordination among projects that are implementing similar activities often requires additional human resources, and the approval procedures for work plans and budgets, along with the implementation of activities, tend to take longer.

Human Resources: DIRWA is the Project Owner, CIRD is the main coordinating agency and partner in implementing specific activities of the Project, while the ILO plays a crucial role in connecting stakeholders and providing technical assistance to support implementation, promoting the work of the NIRC's Technical Sub-Committee and DIRWA. Project activities are primarily outsourced to external experts, whose products are then evaluated and validated by relevant government partners to ensure high-quality outputs that meet stakeholder needs. Despite facing challenges in recruitment from a limited talent pool and logistical constraints (including scheduling and pandemic-related restrictions), the NIRS Canada project successfully identified qualified experts and coordinated their substantive efforts in Vietnam. Feedback from partners indicates that these national and

international experts possess extensive expertise and contextual knowledge, enhancing the capacity of project staff and government officials.

Management and Reporting: Project implementation is closely coordinated between the NIRS Canada project team and DIRWA and CIRD. This collaboration spans the development of the project document, master plan, and annual work plans to specific activity implementation in alignment with annual plans approved by MOLISA's leadership. Specific activities are proposed by CIRD or other DIRWA units, upon which the Project Office drafts the terms of reference (TOR) and works with the proposing agency to reach an agreement, followed by contract signing and implementation. This mechanism ensures that project activities are pragmatic and responsive to the needs of state partners.

Regarding reporting, the NIRS Canada project directly informs the ILO Director while the Head of the Programme Unit oversees the coordination of technical aspects and addresses issues arising during project execution. This structure enhances efficiency by clearly delegating responsibilities and promptly keeping leadership informed of progress. However, the efficiency was somehow hampered by the challenges to meet and discuss progress with DIRWA, which already from early-mid 2023 became virtually impossible due to the new policy directions. The NIRS Canada project team submits annual progress reports to CIRD, maintaining transparency and accountability in its operations. Additionally, the project has successfully met its reporting commitments to the donor.

It is clear that the NIRS Canada project demands significant coordination and reporting efforts due to its focus on complex and challenging subject matters involving multiple partners at different levels. In response to findings from the Midterm Review, which indicated potential gaps in staffing for effective coordination, reporting, and communication, the NIRS Canada team has demonstrated renewed efforts during the project's latter half.

Administrative and Budgeting Procedures: Partners have noted that the administrative and financial procedures required by the ILO can be complex and time-consuming. Additionally, the current (ODA) management of internationally funded projects in Vietnam presents barriers to efficiency, for example, the procedures that must be completed to organise a conference/workshop with the participation of international experts and guests.

Communication with Partners: Fostering a shared understanding of the project's objectives among partners is essential and presents an opportunity for enhancement. The project explores the intricate topic of IR, characterized by its ambitious goals and complex outputs and activities. Involvement from multiple partners means that some may not yet have a complete grasp of the project's approach, objectives, and the potential benefits of its outcomes. By addressing this gap in understanding, the mutual support and collaboration can be enhanced, fostering more effective contributions to the project as a whole.

No-Cost Extension: As indicated in the Midterm Review, a no-cost extension was proposed in light of progress and potential challenges in the project's remaining phases. Stakeholders were well-informed well in advance, and partners proactively engaged in fulfilling the necessary procedures for this extension in Vietnam. However, due to the donor's regulations, committing to a project duration beyond five years was not feasible. Consequently, opportunities to complete critical outputs—such as the provincial-level IR diagnostic tool—were missed, along with delays in the approval of essential reports, recommendations, and handbooks. [See also Annex 3: The Project Performance Matrix.]

The project has encountered several challenges that have slowed its efficiency in implementation:

- Due to the COVID-19, the severe restrictions on the entry of foreign personnel from March 22, 2020, to November 17, 2021, and quarantine requirements in place to early 2022 limited face-to-face engagement with expert resources. Lockdowns and social distancing measures further delayed domestic project activities.
- Although the project aimed to commence in 2020, formal approval was granted only in September 2021, 18 months after funding approval, due to new Official Development Assistance (ODA) requirements implemented in May 2020. This delay impacted on the initiation and delivery of project activities.
- Changes in government policy during the project's lifespan presented challenges in achieving full project outputs and intended outcomes. The lack of clear communication regarding these changes to the project team created complications, though the effects were evident.
- The unfortunate passing of the ILO Senior Specialist in IR and Social Dialogue in July 2023 profoundly affected project momentum. As a pivotal international expert who had dedicated extended time in Vietnam, his contributions were invaluable to the ILO's IR projects in the country.

To overcome the difficulties, with the recommendation of Midterm evaluation report on specialist involvement, ILO Vietnam hired very experienced international and national specialists⁸ to provide project with technical assistance.

In summary, while the NIRS Canada Project has faced various challenges, it has also demonstrated resilience and a commitment to adapting in a dynamic context, working collaboratively with partners to ensure the highest possible efficiency in its implementation.

5.5. Orientation to Impact

By the conclusion of the NIRS Canada Project, several significant initial impacts have been achieved, particularly in contributing to the process of perfecting the working mechanism of the NIRC, promoting effective IR systems and labour market governance in Vietnam, as outlined under Key Outcome 1. The project has substantially bolstered the capacities of SMAs by facilitating the development of an IR database and the production of evidence-based national IR reports. These improvements empower SMAs to conduct in-depth research, evaluate the functionality of the IR system for tripartite partners, and anticipate emerging trends. Consequently, they are better equipped to propose informed recommendations to address challenges and dysfunctions within the system. The emphasis on enhanced reporting practices is expected to foster robust social dialogue by providing compelling evidence that instills confidence and encourages active participation among all stakeholders, ultimately leading to a more efficient IR system throughout Vietnam.

Furthering this goal, the project has been instrumental in cultivating a cadre of national experts and researchers in IR, thereby enhancing the capabilities of specialists from organizations such as MOLISA, NIRC, VCCI, and VGCL. Collaboration with international experts has significantly deepened the knowledge and skills of these national specialists, emphasizing the importance of expert engagement in policymaking. This shift not only enriches technical discussions but also promotes

⁸ Alan Boulton, David Tajgman, , Ian Nicole Austria Generalao, Tong Thi Minh and Nguyen Thi Kim Thoa

nuanced analysis and comparison of diverse ideas and options, thereby strengthening the roles of SMAs and relevant stakeholders in IR management.

Moreover, the project has supported the government's initiative to generate knowledge conducive to social dialogue on IR development at both national and provincial levels. Initiatives include the creation of a triennial national IR report and the establishment of indicators and evaluation criteria for data collection at the enterprise level. The impact of the NIRS Canada project is further exemplified by the issuance of Decision 1413/QĐ-TTg, which reinforced the functions and organizational structure of the NIRC, thereby facilitating more effective project support for its operations in alignment with Outcome 1. Overall, these changes reflect a comprehensive effort to enhance the governance and functionality of IR in Vietnam.

The role of the NIRC, MOLISA, and SMAs in targeted provinces and cities has been elevated as promoters of social dialogue, workplace dialogue, collective bargaining, and labour dispute mediation. Partners have reported that the NIRS Canada project has successfully shifted employer and worker attitudes regarding the benefits of collective bargaining, paving the way for effective and genuine bargaining at the grassroots level. Key Outcome 2 has fortified the institutional capacity of SMAs and social partners while stimulating enterprises' interest in conducting collective bargaining in a more pragmatic and voluntary fashion. Following training courses on collective bargaining provided to selected enterprises, VCCI has received requests from numerous businesses to replicate the training in two regions: Da Nang and HCMC. These courses yield co-benefits for VCCI, enabling access to valuable enterprise information that informs more relevant capacity-building activities, a core function of VCCI. Recommendations also include introducing best practices of collective bargaining in these training sessions and widely disseminating the collective bargaining manual across tripartite partner systems, particularly within VCCI's network. However, the relatively low participation of large and foreign-invested enterprises in employer associations presents a challenge that necessitates the design of alternative channels for broader dissemination of these outcomes to maximize impact.

Another noteworthy impact of the NIRS Canada project under this key outcome is the development of a robust pool of national experts and researchers in IR throughout Vietnam. Collaborations with highly qualified international experts have significantly enhanced the knowledge and skills of national specialists from MOLISA, NIRC, VCCI, and VGCL. Additionally, SMAs have become more cognizant of the importance of nurturing and engaging experts and researchers in policymaking, recognizing that researchers can contribute diverse perspectives and analyses that enrich technical discussions and facilitate comparison and evaluation of ideas and options. This change in awareness and capacity is poised to reinforce the roles of SMAs and other relevant stakeholders in the realm of IR management.

While awareness has grown, a general reluctance to engage in collective bargaining remains prevalent. Genuine collective bargaining is only achievable when workers, along with their organizations, can assert their influence over employers. As evidenced by several labour disputes and strikes—primarily concerning wages—issues of remuneration and benefits, including supplemental meals, are of critical importance to stakeholders. The NIRS Canada project aims to enhance IR by building capacity and raising awareness among tripartite partners. It is particularly crucial for employers to understand how social dialogue and collective bargaining can foster healthy competition among enterprises, attract investment, and create a harmonious environment for both employers and workers. Demonstrating how effective social dialogue and collective bargaining yield win-win situations for both parties is paramount. One approach to promoting this is through social

dialogue and collective bargaining at multi-employer and sectoral levels. On a broader scale, collaboration between VGCL and ILO is set to connect trade unions within the electronics sector, establishing a network for experience sharing and mutual support for effective social dialogue and collective bargaining. This initiative is currently being piloted in Bac Ninh province, with plans to expand to Hai Phong, Binh Duong, and other regions over the next decade. This initiative has significantly enhanced the benefits package within a specific sector, notably among enterprises with a substantial female workforce, such as those in the electronics industry. Moreover, this collaborative effort has acted as a catalyst for transformative change within local businesses. A key informant from the Provincial Trade Union of Bac Ninh and Que Vo Industrial Park shared insightful observations:

“Que Vo Industrial Park in Bac Ninh province is home to over 200 enterprises, with grassroots unions established in almost 90% of them. Bac Ninh province stands out for having the highest concentration of electronics companies. Participation in the ILO Project afforded us the opportunity to engage in intensive training on collective bargaining. This experience deepened our understanding of the necessity for multi-employers collective agreement.

Following the training, we are resolute in advancing the signing of such agreements. The successful establishment of a multi-employers collective agreement with seven other electronics firms carries profound implications: (1) Workers recognize a shared commitment to welfare among these electronics enterprises, reducing the tendency to compare working conditions and switch jobs, thereby stabilizing the workforce; (2) Employers within Que Vo Industrial Park and other nearby industrial zones—especially those offering less competitive welfare packages—will be motivated to enhance their benefits in response, even if they are not participants in this collective agreement.”
(Interview with a key-informant in Bac Ninh).

The NIRS Canada project has significantly impacted various groups, including marginalized populations, men and women, and persons with disabilities. Under the provisions of the 2019 Labour Law, collective labour disputes concerning rights, such as discrimination, must initially be resolved through labour mediation. The project, particularly through its activities under Outputs 3.1 and 3.2, is poised to contribute to this impact. However, as discussed in Section 5.3, the process of establishing a labour dispute resolution system through mediation and arbitration (Key Outcome 3) has yet to realize substantial progress. Furthermore, the suspension of the NIRC Project has hampered the project’s ability to achieve this intended impact. [Refer to Section 5.4 for further details].

5.6. Sustainability

The sustainability of the NIRS Canada Project is reflected in various generated results and their potential for continued impact in Vietnam's IR landscape. Notably, the National IR Report, which is awaiting final review and adoption, demonstrates high sustainability as stakeholders are already leveraging its analysis in workshops and training initiatives, ensuring that the insights derived from the report continue to be utilized. The development of enterprise-level IR diagnostic tools also shows medium sustainability; while piloted in five enterprises, the lack of a clear plan from partners like MOLISA and VCCI for broader implementation raises concerns about wider adoption.

The promotion and improvement of tripartite negotiations through NIRC’s technical sub-committee activities were marked as high in sustainability, with multiple research studies generating recommendations on labour standards and working conditions that stakeholders confirm will be used in the future. Additionally, three manuals aimed at guiding collective bargaining have been

completed, with high expectations for their future application, particularly once the ongoing organizational restructuring is finalized. The successful pilot of a MECBA in Bac Ninh indicates strong sustainability in that model and demonstrates collaboration between various initiatives.

When the manual for local SMAs on collective bargaining is published, VGCL and MOLISA (DIRWA and CIRD) will inform their respective units at the local and grassroots levels to utilize it in the future. This is financially sustainable because DOLISAs have annual financial and human resources to propagate laws and regulations and promote IR. Similarly, VGCL and VCCI have been active in using the documents, manuals, and studies produced by the project in their daily activities to build capacity for enterprises and grassroots trade unions.

Nevertheless, some outputs face challenges; for instance, the national information system for labour mediators and arbitrators remains at a low sustainability level due to incomplete implementation and uncertainties about the usage of prepared templates. In contrast, the MCMR that was designed and implemented in piloting provinces reflects a high sustainability level, as it has been finalized and is currently in use. Collectively, these results highlight the ongoing relevance of the project's contributions to IR in Vietnam and suggest that many outputs have the potential for lasting impact, contingent upon further support and commitment from relevant partners.

See the below table for the assessment of sustainability of each of the NIRS Canada project results.

Output code	Results generated	Level of Sustainability	Remark/Explanation
1.1	Develop the National IR Report with the engagement of social partners and the central role of the NIRC.	HIGH	By the end of the project, the annual report for 2023 was produced and updated. The National IR Report has been developed and refined by Technical Sub-Committee, and reviewed for feedback by the of the NIRC member. It is currently awaiting the NIRC's official meeting for review, approval, and public release.. Stakeholders have confirmed that, despite this report being pending final approval, the analysis within it has already been utilized in various activities by partners. For instance, VCGL has used data from the analysis in workshops and training sessions on IR within the vertical system.
1.2	Develop and pilot a set of provincial-level IR assessment indicators	Unable to assess (as delayed delivery)	This product is not yet complete; therefore, no assessment can be made regarding its future use.
1.3	Develop and pilot an enterprise-level IR evaluation information system	MEDIUM	The enterprise IR diagnostic tool was developed and piloted at selected 5 enterprises in HCMC. It was envisaged that the tool could be used in the future by the enterprise that piloted the tools. But it is not sure if other targeted users as mediators, and labour administrative officials will use the tools as no specific plan from project partners (MOLISA, VCCI, VCGL) to promote the use of this IR diagnostic tool at wider scale.

Output code	Results generated	Level of Sustainability	Remark/Explanation
1.4	Pilot effective workplace dialogue models in line with the legal framework and with the NIRS	Unable to assess (as delayed in delivery)	A situation assessment report on the implementation of Labour Code 2019 on development of internal work rules at enterprise level was conducted and a guideline on developing effective Internal Work Rules at workplace level was developed. However, they have not been consulted to finalize as well as piloted at enterprise level yet so the future use of this product remains a question.
2.1	Promote and improve the effectiveness of tripartite negotiations and consultation through NIRC activities in order to develop recommendations on labour standards and working conditions	HIGH	Several research studies were conducted as planned, and reviewed by a NIRC technical sub-committee; most await action by a convened plenary NIRC. The future use of these studies is confirmed by stakeholders.
2.2	Develop a manual to guide and promote collective bargaining in accordance with the new provisions of the Labour Code and ILO Convention No. 98.	HIGH	Three manuals were completed, including: • One by MOLISA to guide and promote collective bargaining in accordance with Labour Code 2019; The manual was validated in 2022 however the partner (DIRW) has not been published yet as they have been busy with the organisation restructuring. It is confirmed by DIRWA key-informant that once the restructuring process is completed, the manual will be important material for them in implementing the IR development activities in the future • <i>[Support other ILO Projects in completion]</i> One on wage bargaining was completed for VGCL. A consultation workshop is needed for finalization of the manual before publishing. It is confirmed by VGCL key-informant that this manual together with other materials supported by ILO is always useful and will definitely be used. • <i>[Support other ILO Projects in completion]</i> One to improve employer collective bargaining capacity was completed by VCCI and published. VCCI is using this manual (together with other materials as video clips on collective bargaining) in their on-going capacity development activities delivered to enterprises.

Output code	Results generated	Level of Sustainability	Remark/Explanation
2.3	Pilot a genuine collective bargaining model with the support of SMAs of labour in selected enterprises	HIGH	NIRS, with its sister projects, have provided technical support to a pilot activity that led in 2023 to a MECBA between seven enterprises in the electronics sector and the provincial Federation of Labour in Bac Ninh. This result is considered a big success as confirmed by key-informants from Que Vo Industrial Park Bac Ninh. (See the Electronic Cluster Evaluation Report ⁹). This result is jointly delivered with the APPLE Project with major contribution from the APPLE Project.
3.1	3.1. Develop a national information system of labour mediators and arbitrators and pilot a mechanism to link and share experience in labour dispute mediation through a core group of mediators and arbitrators in target provinces with IR problems	LOW	The sister NIRF project funded by USDOL has done the main work to support the establishment, operation, and strengthening of the new labour dispute resolution system. The NIRS Canada Project has supported the drafting of templates that have been prepared and are ready for consultation with the relevant stakeholders. However, further implementation of the LDRS has been hampered by a scarcity of cases, particularly those suitable for resolution through arbitration. It is not yet confirmed if the provincial mediators/arbitrators will use the templates.
3.2	3.2. Develop a labour mediation and arbitration case management system and pilot it in selected provinces	HIGH	At the end of 2023, the MCMR was designed. They have been finalized by MOLISA and are being used in the three piloting provinces. It has been piloted in several enterprises across three provinces to serve as a basis for refinement (though it has not yet been officially implemented across all enterprises in these localities).

⁹ A case about sustainability and replicability at provincial level (Source: Electronic Cluster Evaluation Report): "The IZTU in Bac Ninh Province, Viet Nam has 825 grassroots (factory) trade unions as members. Currently, there are approximately 200 factories operating in Que Vo Industrial Park, Bac Ninh, mainly electronics factories, of which 90% of the factories have trade unions that are members of Bac Ninh IZTU. Implementing the direction of VCGL to the Provincial Federation of Labour and industrial park trade unions, Bac Ninh IZTU strives to support grassroots trade unions in the collective dialogue process at each enterprise and initiate a collective bargaining process for many factories in Que Vo Industrial Park, with the goal of creating a common ground on better working conditions and benefits for workers in the industrial park compared to the provisions of labour laws as well as other localities. This also helps achieve the goal of contributing to the sustainable development of factories by addressing the current situation of high labour turnover between factories in the same area, affecting the stable operation of factories. Participating in the activities of Project VNM/20/02/APL, leaders and key personnel of Bac Ninh IZTU and members of 14 Bac Ninh electronics factory unions received intensive training on collective bargaining. With the guidance of international and domestic experts, their awareness, knowledge, and skills in collective bargaining of enterprise groups were significantly improved. Applied to work practice, Bac Ninh IZTU and electronics grassroots unions have successfully implemented the process of collective bargaining of many factories (MECBA) marked by the Collective Labour Agreement with the participation of 7 out of 14 trained factories. From this implementation experience, Bac Ninh IZTU is now actively disseminating the experience of the above MECBA process to the remaining grassroots unions in Que Vo Industrial Park, and then to other industrial parks in the province. Bac Ninh IZTU also plans to expand the promotion of MECBA to more factories in the remaining industrial parks in Bac Ninh province in the coming years. (Interview with Bac Ninh IZTU representative)."

5.7 Cross cutting issues: Gender mainstreaming in project implementation

The findings of the MTR remain valid on this regard. There has been evidence showing that gender mainstreaming has been considered in the NIRS Canada project, demonstrated in multiple discussions with stakeholders. The NIRS Canada project sought to integrate gender consideration into project activities and methodologies.

Firstly, the National IR report and three topics selected for the NIRC technical meeting in 2023 were 1) NIRC Orientation plan towards 2025; 2) Recommendation on the prevention and combat of sexual harassment at workplace; 3) Recommendation to employers in supporting shift meals to workers. Besides the first topic that is related to NIRC's operation, one of the two technical topics is gendered focus. These topics were reviewed in the Technical Sub-Committee meeting held on 09 September 2022.

Secondly, all the training activities on social dialogue & collective bargaining held in Bac Ninh (2nd-3rd June 2022), Vinh Phuc (16-17 September 2022) and other trainings and workshops had relatively equal proportions of female participation, 46% and 55% respectively.

Thirdly, all the IR tools such as Enterprise IR diagnostic tool, Manual on collective bargaining, Labour MCMRs, Internal work rules and Guideline on prevention and combat of sexual harassment in the workplace (for both state-owned and public enterprises), when drafting, the NIRS Canada project and partners considered gender mainstreaming in the tools to have considerable influence on gender policy development and implementation (including wages for female workers, social benefits such as kindergarten, childcare, maternity, toilet etc.).

Finally, the study reports, such as Report on the employment relations in platform economy, Report on rapid review of IR under the new regulations of 2019 Labour Code in selected enterprises in the recovery period (the post Covid-19 period), Report on employment contract by electronic means, the NIRS Canada project pays a special focus on female workers and gender issue as well as the density and new forms of industries of which female workers shall be affected and the majority of workers are female. A showcase can be the case of a multi-employer collective bargaining agreement in Que Vo Industrial Park, Bac Ninh. Among the working conditions included, there are provisions related to gender, such as support for workers raising children under the age of 6, maternity support for workers during marriage events, and rental assistance for migrant workers. It is expected that gender issues (i.e. maternity, childcare, etc.) will be considered as a part of collective bargaining by the engaging parties.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Conclusion

According to the 4-point assessment scale (see Section IV), the Project is evaluated based on the criteria shown in the table below.

Relevance	HIGH
Cohesion	HIGH
Effectiveness	Above-moderate

Efficiency	Above-moderate
Orientation to Impact	Above-moderate
Sustainability	Above-moderate
Thematic Issues: Gender	HIGH

In conclusion, **the relevance** of the NIRS Canada project is evidenced by its strong alignment with national priorities, international commitments, and its proactive response to the needs of constituents. The project's objectives and activities not only support the goals outlined in Directive No. 37-CT/TW and the 2019 Labour Code, but also effectively address critical cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and disability inclusion. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders and enhancing mechanisms for dialogue and negotiation, the project significantly contributes to the development of harmonious IR in Vietnam. Furthermore, by ensuring compliance with international labour standards and focusing on the protection of fundamental rights in the workplace, the NIRS Canada project positions itself as a vital initiative in promoting responsible labour practices and ultimately aids Vietnam in meeting its international obligations. As such, the project is not only highly relevant but is also instrumental in advancing the principles of social dialogue and collective bargaining within the evolving context of Vietnam's IR landscape. The NIRS Canada project is demonstrably relevant to the needs and capabilities of its constituents, effectively bridging the gaps within Vietnam's IR landscape. By focusing on enhancing the capacity of SMAs and tripartite partners in line with recent legislative reforms, the project addresses critical areas of social dialogue, collective bargaining, and dispute resolution that have previously faced challenges in effectiveness and application. The proactive involvement of diverse stakeholders, including the NIRC, VCGL, local trade unions, and employer organizations like VCCI, underscores the project's commitment to fostering a robust tripartite mechanism essential for promoting harmonious labour relations. Moreover, the project aligns seamlessly with the ILO's strategies and national development goals, affirming its role in strengthening labour market governance and adherence to international labour standards. Through its strategic outputs and interdisciplinary collaborations, the NIRS Canada project not only meets the immediate needs of the constituents but also contributes significantly to the long-term development of sustainable labour practices, ultimately fostering an environment conducive to equitable and effective IR in Vietnam.

The coherence of the NIRS Canada project is evident in its well-structured design, which fosters synergy among its specific objectives, each reinforcing the other to enhance IR in Vietnam. By focusing on the enhancement of tripartite institutions, the strengthening of collective bargaining processes, and the establishment of efficient dispute resolution mechanisms, the project promotes a holistic approach that addresses the multifaceted nature of labour relations. Furthermore, the project's integration with other ILO-funded initiatives amplifies its impact, creating a collaborative environment where resources and expertise are shared to achieve comprehensive improvements across various aspects of IR. This interconnected framework not only strengthens the individual outputs of the NIRS Canada project but also aligns them with broader national and international labour standards, ensuring that the project contributes effectively to the development of a progressive labour ecosystem in Vietnam. Ultimately, the coherence and collaborative nature of the NIRS Canada project set a solid foundation for sustainable advances in labour relations, benefiting all stakeholders involved.

Project effectiveness is evaluated as above moderate as all three key outcomes are partly achieved.

The performance under Outcome 1 highlights both notable progress and areas where growth is still needed. Foundational elements, such as reports and capacity-building initiatives, have been established, which provide a solid base for future development. However, operational challenges—like the need for a more effective labour information system and additional support for social dialogue events—present opportunities for enhancing the establishment of productive tripartite mechanisms. While there have been challenges in obtaining necessary approvals, particularly concerning the NIRC's operations, activity approvals by the Government and social partners and the continuation of problem-solving dialogues beyond the project's conclusion, these are recognized as important areas for progress. The evaluation of Outcome 2 confirms that some progress has been made toward the standardization of collective bargaining as the primary process for determining wages and working conditions. However, the achievement of full outcomes remains in a partial state. The outcome 3 related to effective mediation systems and services show some progress, particularly with the development of action plans and pilot programs. However, significant challenges remain, particularly regarding the establishment of a national information system for labour mediators and the need for broader implementation of mediation systems across provinces.

The **Project Efficiency** is evaluated as above-moderate. The overall disbursement rate of 66.1% reflects a need for enhanced efficiency in resource allocation, particularly concerning the project's key outcomes. While high spending in project management indicates effective financial oversight, significant underspending in core activities raises concerns about maximizing their impact. Factors such as prolonged approval processes, the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, and evolving government policies have contributed to these delays. Despite these hurdles, the project has successfully mobilized six international and local experts and maintained strong coordination with key stakeholders, which has enriched local capacities and facilitated effective project delivery. Moving forward, addressing communication gaps among partners and simplifying administrative procedures will be essential to bolster project efficiency and achieve its objectives.

With regards to orientation to impact, the NIRS Canada Project has oriented to significant initial impacts in promoting effective IR systems and labour market governance in Vietnam. By enhancing the capacities of SMAs and facilitating the development of an IR database, the project has empowered these agencies to conduct research, evaluate the IR system's functionality, and provide informed recommendations. Additionally, the collaboration with international experts has cultivated a pool of national specialists, enriching technical discussions and strengthening the role of SMAs and other stakeholders in IR management. The project has also elevated the role of the NIRC, MOLISA, and SMAs as key promoters of social dialogue and collective bargaining. Despite the challenges faced, there was a consensus that the groundwork laid by the project could have led to positive impacts if continued support had been provided.

The sustainability of the NIRS Canada project is assessed as above-moderate. The National IR Report has already begun to be integrated into training and workshop activities, ensuring its insights remain relevant and actionable. While the enterprise-level IR diagnostic tools show medium sustainability due to a lack of broader implementation plans, other efforts, such as tripartite negotiations and the creation of guiding manuals for collective bargaining, exhibit strong potential for future use. The positive outcomes from the pilot collective bargaining agreement in Bac Ninh further underscore the

project's lasting impact and collaboration across initiatives. Certain outputs, like the national information system for labour conflict resolution face challenges in sustainability.

6.2 Recommendation

Upon analysing the implementation of the project, the following comprehensive recommendations have been developed:

1. The focus of future interventions on IR and on supporting the development and operation of the Labour Dispute Resolution System information system remains valid. Despite the challenges encountered, there is a consensus that the groundwork related to IR development laid by the project could have led to positive impacts if continued support had been provided. Furthermore, the effectiveness of mediation relies heavily on accessible information that enables stakeholders to navigate the mediation and arbitration landscape. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that future support and interventions initiated by the ILO and its partners emphasize the creation of a centralized system that ensures all parties can easily find suitable mediation and arbitration resources, ultimately leading to more effective dispute resolution.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO-HQ, ILO Hanoi, MOHA and Provincial DOHA	High	Coming years	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

2. The future Project on IR should continue to prioritize and integrate gender-specific topics in all future discussions, reports, and training activities. This should include a focus on the ongoing development of gender-responsiveness, such as support for maternity and childcare, within collective bargaining agreements. By systematically incorporating gender considerations into stakeholder engagements and ensuring equal representation of female participants in training sessions, the NIRS Canada project can foster a more inclusive and equitable environment for all workers, thereby strengthening the overall impact of its initiatives on female workers in particular.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO-HQ, ILO Hanoi, VCCI and VCGL, MOHA	High	Coming years	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

3. Continuous Stakeholder Mapping: Given the significant relevance of this project, its successful implementation—particularly with respect to the execution of activities and delivery of outputs—hinges on the active engagement of key agencies such as NIRC who is the vital beneficiary of the Key Outcome 1 and the provincial Departments of Labour which involves implementing the pilot mechanisms for resolving labour disputes through the use of mediators or arbitrators. Ongoing stakeholder mapping is essential to develop a robust engagement strategy for all partners involved and for revision of the expected key outcomes bought in by each partners/beneficiaries especially in the context of administration reform and merging agencies.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO-HQ, ILO Hanoi, VCCI and VCGL, MOHA, Provinces	High	Coming years	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

4. Adjustment of Performance Indicators for Key Outcomes: Building on recommendation 3, it is suggested that adjustments be made to the performance indicators related to the key outcomes of the project. Such adjustments should have been considered earlier, particularly in light of the challenges associated with engaging key beneficiaries at the central level. Key Outcome 1 of the project relied on a critical prerequisite for success: the necessity for the NIRC to hold formal meetings. These meetings would have provided an opportunity for the project's generated National IR Reports and recommendations to be presented as policy recommendations to the Government, thereby facilitating a tripartite mechanism for addressing the issues highlighted in the IR Report. Unfortunately, throughout the project's duration, no NIRC meetings were convened. Given this context, it may be necessary for the project to recalibrate its expectations regarding this key outcome by adjusting the corresponding performance indicators and targets. This recommendation is valuable not only for the current project but also for managing similar initiatives aimed at improving IR in the future.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO-HQ, ILO Hanoi, MOHA and Project Team	High	Coming years	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

5. Adjustments to Participating Localities: This recommendation aligns with recommendation 3 and advocates for adjustments in the localities participating in the project. A thorough evaluation of the involvement of southern pilot localities in Outcome 3 activities could have been conducted at the end-of-term assessment. While the project has yielded successful lessons in Key Outcome 2 through its implementation in Bac Ninh province, there is a significant opportunity to engage northern localities with dynamic labour markets—such as Hanoi, Hung Yen, Bac Giang, Hai Phong, and Bac Ninh—in Key Outcome 3. Alternatively, instead of concentrating on labour dispute resolution cases within the three southern provinces as initially designed, expanding to include northern localities could enhance the number of cases addressed through mediation and/or arbitration. This approach would ensure that the templates developed by the project are utilized by a broader group of labour arbitrators and mediators, thereby facilitating the gradual establishment of a case management system. In summary, expanding the number of provinces participating in similar future projects focused on labour dispute resolution is highly recommended.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO-HQ, ILO Hanoi, MOHA. Provinces and Project Team	High	Coming years	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

6. Coordination Among Linked Projects: When a project coordinates activities with other initiatives, it is vital to create and communicate a diagram that illustrates the connections between these projects or establish a common Theory of Change (ToC). This visual representation should be shared with all partners and donors, as it not only facilitates effective management of human and financial resources across projects but also enhances transparency in demonstrating their collective impact. Such collaborative practices have already been exemplified in Component 3 (Key Outcome 3) with the leadership of the NIRF Project and the participating localities in the pilot. It is recommended that this approach be expanded and upgraded to encompass the entire project.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
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ILO-HQ, ILO Hanoi, VCCI and VCGL, MOHA, Provinces	High	Coming years	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).
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7. The reporting cycle between the project and the donor and the regular update meeting with the donor: For a project on a challenging topic like IR, the reporting mechanism between the project and the donor may be shortened to six months instead of one year, as is currently the case. Prior to submitting the narrative report and/or following its submission, debriefings should occur between the project team (ILO Hanoi Office) and the donor's project management team. This approach will allow flexibility in adjusting the key outcomes or the outcome-level indicators of the project. Linked to the recommendation on stakeholder mapping above, if there is a risk of SMA being unable to engage in the project as expected—for example, if NIRC cannot hold meetings in accordance with the operation principles of this Committee—it may be necessary to adjust the key outcomes. This adjustment requires the donor's understanding and approval. Therefore, a reporting mechanism that is shorter than one year between the donor and the project management team or setting up the regular update meeting with the donor to solve this issue is strongly recommended.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
Donor, ILO Hanoi	High	Coming years	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

8. Establishment and Maintenance of an Expert Network in IR: To address the shortage of experts in IR in Vietnam, it is essential to establish and maintain a dedicated pool of professionals who have contributed to this Project and other IR initiatives implemented by the ILO. The limited availability of IR experts underscores the importance of building a robust network that can facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among practitioners. It is crucial for existing experts, particularly those serving on the NIRC's Technical Sub-Committee, to dedicate additional time and resources to investigate relevant issues in greater depth and with more substantive evidence. Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop the capacity of this committee further, alongside the engagement of external researchers to enrich the pool of expertise. Moreover, the channels for communicating and disseminating research findings should be strengthened, given the absence of a dedicated academic journal for IR in Vietnam. The ILO could collaborate with the CIRD to establish this network by sponsoring research studies on various IR topics to support the activities of the expert group. Case studies, which can be conducted with minimal budgets, represent a valuable method for research. Notable successes in challenging areas—such as wage issues and labour regulations aimed at preventing sexual harassment in the workplace—can serve as significant case studies. These findings could be shared in forums with social partners, including the VCCI and VGCL, thus enabling continued contributions from the IR expert group. Furthermore, it is advisable to fund national experts to participate in international conferences where empirical studies on IR in transitioning economies, such as Vietnam, China, and other ASEAN countries, are presented. This initiative will not only enhance the expertise of local professionals but also help prepare a skilled network of experts for future IR projects, facilitating the rapid implementation of upcoming initiatives through the availability of a team of national IR specialists.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
Donor, ILO Hanoi, CIRD, experts	Medium	Coming years	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

9. Regarding capacity building for tripartite partners, there is a need for more dedicated programmes focusing on development of research capacity to provide reliable evidence and suggestions of effective mechanisms for promoting IR. The network of the experts and specialists on IR as in the recommendation 8 can be utilized for these capacity building support. Within Outcome 3, an incentive mechanism may be considered in the beginning of application. In addition to assisting to establish a database of case management, it is necessary to provide capacity building to different partners to use it to ensure quality data input. This activity should include customised training courses (i.e. according to scales of business or forms of industrial relation/social dialogue).

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO Hanoi, Technical Teams	High	Future intervention	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

10. Enhancing Document Creation on Common Topics: The project has been instrumental in developing three manuals focused on the same overarching theme: collective bargaining. These manuals target specific audiences—SMAs, employers, and workers. While partners appreciate having manuals tailored to their unique contexts, it is essential that they include a common section to foster a shared understanding among all stakeholders. Following this common foundation, each manual should then expand with tailored sections for workers, employers, and government entities.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
ILO Hanoi, Technical Teams	High	Future intervention	Included in the activities of the Responsible Units (Column 1).

VII. LESSON LEARNED AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

LESSON LEARNED

Designing a project that is closely aligned with national priorities and the needs of tripartite partners showcases a two-pronged approach. On the positive side, this alignment fosters buy-in from tripartite partners, enabling them to take a leading role in implementing activities, utilizing outputs, and driving changes at the outcome level of the project. However, the deep engagement with these tripartite partners, particularly with MOLISA and NIRC, can sometimes present challenges in realizing outcomes and ensuring the sustainability of project results. During critical moments when the project aimed to support expected changes and meaningful impacts—such as in the preparation of the 2022 National IR Report—it seems that several important updates and draft recommendations, including those related to the prevention of sexual harassment and shift meals for workers, were not yet approved by NIRC as well as published for reference and application by the parties. This situation has arisen in part because the Chairpersonship of NIRC, which is held by the MOLISA’s Minister, has faced difficulties in organizing official meetings to process these significant contributions from the project, as outlined in Decision 1413/QĐ-TTg (2021).

EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

Enhancing the Role of Social Partners in IR in Vietnam: The NIRS Canada project, alongside other project, such as the ILO VNM/20/02/APL project, has effectively supported the VGCL and VCCI in their roles as social partners, demonstrating how collaborative efforts can enhance IR in Vietnam. The emphasis on dialogue, capacity building, and strategic partnerships stands as a model for future initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable IR.

Collaborating with other ILO Projects to successfully establish a MECBA in Bac Ninh Province: The NIRS Canada project, with its sister projects, have provided technical support to a pilot activity that led in 2023 to a MECBA between seven enterprises in the electronics sector and the provincial Federation of Labour in Bac Ninh. This result is considered as big success as confirmed by key-informants from Que Vo Industrial Park Bac Ninh. With close collaboration with VGCL, the NIRS Canada project and the linked ILO Projects supported Bac Ninh IZTU in facilitating training for leaders and key personnel from 14 electronics factory trade unions in collective bargaining, significantly enhancing their skills and knowledge with assistance from both international and domestic experts. This training successfully translated into practical bargaining processes, culminating in the signing of a MECBA by seven of the trained factories.

[See details in the Annex 6].

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference (TOR)

[A separate file attached]

Annex 2: Evaluation Timeline

Tasks	Indicative dates	Responsible: Evaluation Manager / Evaluation Consultant / Regional Officer / Project Team
TOR Advertisement	7-15 Feb	CO Hanoi
Selection of consultant	16 Feb	Evaluation Manager and Regional Evaluation Officer
Issue Contract	25 Feb	
Inception phase –Meeting with project team, desk review, and drafting of inception report (first draft, and revision based on comments)	1 Mar -7 Mar	Evaluation consultant (comments from evaluation manager in coordination with responsible regional evaluation officer)
Conduct of interviews	13 Mar – 25 Mar	Evaluation consultant
Drafting of first draft of report	April	Evaluation consultant
Submission of draft report [ILO's Comments on first draft]	14 May	Evaluation manager in consultation with project team and stakeholders,
VNM Translation of the evaluation report (the version that already incorporate ILO comments)	12 June	Evaluation consultant
Stakeholders review of draft evaluation report	12 June	
Revise the draft report, integrate comments from stakeholders		Evaluation consultant
Submission of revised evaluation report (ENG)	20 June (realized 4 July)	Evaluation consultant
Approval of report (Evaluation Manager, Regional Evaluation Officer /DEPF, Evaluation office - EVAL)		Responsible regional evaluation officer, responsible officer in EVAL
Dissemination		Evaluation Manager/Project team/CO Hanoi

Annex 3: Project Performance Matrix

Outcome Achievement

OUTCOME ACHIEVEMENT ¹⁰			Level of achievement	
Indicator	Baseline	Outcome summary ¹¹	Achieved, Achieved, Not achieved	Partially
Outcome 1: The multi-stakeholders social dialogue frequently and effectively organized through the central role of tripartite IR mechanisms and institutions.			Outcome Achieved	Partially
Quality of labour information system and database	The IR database developed with the support of previous NIRF Canada project.	The target for the ILO's support through the National IR programme projects is a labour information system that includes data on (1) the number of WROs, (2) the number of CBAs, and (3) the number of labour disputes and relevant IR indicators. The database system is collecting and processing the IR data at central, provincial and enterprise levels. None of these collection systems are yet properly operational. Formats and systems for collection have been created, and in some cases piloted, but the necessary administrative approvals for deployment and use have not yet arrived.	Partially Achieved	
Quality of social dialogue events organised	Some criteria existed including forms, contents and social dialogue	A functioning NIRC engaged in evidence-based dialogue aimed at advising policy making was NIRS' target. NIRS was able to produce studies for consideration in social dialogue, and that occurred in technical committee, but not in NIRC plenary. Convening of the NIRC outside of the NIRS mandate remained hoped for, with the reconstitution of a DIRWA within the Ministry of Home Affairs.	Partially Achieved	
Availability of plans to continue problem-solving dialogue after the project.	No	A plan on the orientation, focus tasks of the NIRC for 2022-2025 was drafted in 2022, but was not approved by either a convened NIRC or the government; the March 2023 Decision by MOLISA on the roles, responsibilities, duties, authorities and organization structure of the DIRW, and subsumed within it information on the role of the NIRC, effectively reoriented the role of the NIRC.	Partially Achieved	

¹⁰ Based on Outcome Achievement template appearing in Annual Project Progress Reports.

¹¹ Compare achievement against planned target as per indicator.

OUTCOME ACHIEVEMENT ¹⁰			Level of achievement
Indicator	Baseline	Outcome summary ¹¹	Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not achieved
The recommendations and documents of National IR Committee	National IR Report 2019	Optimally, the tripartite NIRC would be convened to consult on IR policy issues and made recommendations to the relevant authorities for consideration. This process would be supported by a basis in evidence on the issue at hand arranged by a suitable secretariat. The NIRS output, National IR Report, prepared for 2021 and updated for 2023, was to be one of the first evidence base for policy consideration. In the event, the NIRC has not been convened and this not had the opportunity to consult. Its terms of reference have also been impacted by Decisions on its function and on that of the DIRW. These Decisions reiterate the implementation role of these IR management institutions.	Partially Achieved
Measures to improve the effectiveness of the tripartite mechanism practice at the provincial levels	None	The NIRS has developed tools designed to be used in enterprises as a basis for improving tripartite consultations therein as well as at the provincial level. Pilots have been conducted, but result have not been finalized, nor tools approved for further dissemination.	Partially Achieved
Outcome 2: The standardised collective bargaining taken up more widely as the main process for determining wages and working conditions based on full recognition of freedom of association and independence of the parties.			Outcome Achieved Partially
Improved content of CBA, pre/post project	Available in the example of the multi-CBA Bac Ninh province	Selected working conditions issues contained in multi-CBAs in Bac Ninh province was produced.	Achieved
Availability of strategy for collective bargaining promotion	No	The NIRC was to be capacitated to discuss challenges and strategies for the strengthening and promotion of collective bargaining. Preliminary discussions took place at its meetings.	Partially Achieved

OUTCOME ACHIEVEMENT ¹⁰			Level of achievement
Indicator	Baseline	Outcome summary ¹¹	Achieved, Partically Achieved, Not achieved
Sophistication of strategy for CBA promotion developed	No	Although tripartite partners have developed and postpone to adopt plans/initiatives in selected topics/issues to promote collective bargaining, NIRS laid the groundwork for doing so with studies on subjected identified by the social partners that are susceptible to resolution through collective bargaining processes. Effective collective bargaining has not been promoted and improved by tripartite negotiation and consultation through NIRC activities, as the NIRC has not been active since 2022/2023.	Partially Achieved
An ILS-conforming options for a national approach to promoting collective bargaining based on consultation with social partners and stakeholders	Available relevant manuals/materials on of the ILO on collective bargaining	NIRS, along with its sister projects, set the foundations for considering a national approach to promoting collective bargaining. Consultations were convened, training offered, studies prepared. Manuals to guide and promote collective bargaining in accordance with Labour Code 2019 and Convention No. 98 have been prepared and piloted, but not approved for publication or published. Government policy orientation has since shifted, returning the role of the social partners' organizations to that of implementing solutions to labour market and working condition matters found by the Government and centralized institutions.	Partially Achieved
A genuine collective bargaining model with the technical support mechanism and monitoring system of SMAs of labour.	No clear statistical data (from the need and requirements of the tripartite partners)	The hoped for core technical group of facilitators to provide technical support for pilot collective bargaining process in selected localities in accordance with the provisions of Labour Code 2019 and Convention No. 98 have not materialized. NIRS had moved to develop this capacity while it was able to do so, but this has not been possible in the recent time period.	Not Achieved
Workers covered by CBAs, pre/post project	Available CBAs library of VGCL	The data on the number of workers covered by CBAs has been published but not available for this report. In the Multi-Employer Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in Que Vo Industrial Park, Bac Ninh, there are about 60,000 workers covered by this multi-employer agreement.	Partially Achieved
Number of enterprises covered by CBAs, pre/post project	Available	The data on number of enterprises with or covered by CBAs is published, especially multi – CBA in Bac Ninh province (7 enterprises).	Achieved

OUTCOME ACHIEVEMENT ¹⁰			Level of achievement	
Indicator	Baseline	Outcome summary ¹¹	Achieved, Achieved, Not achieved	Partially
Outcome 3: Effective mediation systems and services supported – in line with increasing value placed on them by stakeholders – for harmonious, stable and progressive IR exercised with full recognition of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.			Outcome Achieved	Partially
Existence of mediation system with national information system of labour mediators and arbitrations	Very weak	Action plans [to implement the task of perfecting the system of mediation and arbitration mechanisms in labour conflict resolution] have been developed by DOLISAs in some provinces. A national information system of labour mediators and arbitration accessible to workers and employers so that they can choose same for help in resolving labour disputes has not been established, although NIRS prepared preliminary proposals.	Partially Achieved	
Mediation interventions give results acceptable to the parties with labour mediation and arbitration cases management system	Yes	The labour case management record was developed and piloted in three provinces (Binh Duong, Dong Nai and HCM City).	Partially Achieved	
Strengthening mediation as labour dispute resolution mechanism	Not yet	The labour MCMR was planned to pilot widely at other provinces.	Partially Achieved	

Output Achievement

Output		Output status (as of 2023_24 Report)	Analysis of Output Delivery ¹²	Level of achievement: Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not achieved
Outcome 1: The multi-stakeholders social dialogue frequently and effectively organized through the central role of tripartite IR mechanisms and institutions. ¹³				
1.1	Develop the National IR Report with the engagement of social partners and the central role of the NIRC	Completed	These report was to provide factual background for tripartite discussion of directions for the development of IR under the Labour Code 2019. By the projects' end, the annual report 2023 were produced and updated. It reflected status on the IR situation in the period from 2021 - 2023, derived from meetings and consultations that were convened to enable the gathering of inputs for the report drafters. The draft National IR Report has been finalized by the NIRC technical sub-committee. As of the end of the project, the National IR Report is waiting for final review and approval by the NIRC at its official meeting before being publicly released.	Achieved
1.2	Develop and pilot a set of provincial-level IR assessment indicators	Delay: behind schedule	At the close of 2024, 12 out of 63 provinces had developed and implemented IR masterplan/project/plans ("projects") that had been called for. Provincial administrations were to carry out a number of tasks. To support these efforts, a number of tools including a set of provincial-level IR evaluation criteria were to be developed with the support of the national level coordination and leadership and the ILO. DIRWA was the technical focal point for this work. The partners need more time to complete this work as it is linked to other tools that have only been completed towards the end of the project, but not finally approved for use.	Partially Achieved
1.3	Develop and pilot an enterprise-level IR evaluation information system	Completed	The enterprise IR diagnostic tool was developed and piloted at selected 5 enterprises in HCMC and expected to be piloted widely. The tool will help the stakeholders at the enterprise level to assess the situation and health of IRs, with a view to developing a (joint) plan of action for improvement. And together with other IR information sources, the IR diagnostic tool will add to a more comprehensive understanding of the health of IR in general. It was envisaged that the tool could be used by mediators, labour administrative officials and enterprises themselves to identify IR issues at enterprises and propose solutions.	Achieved

¹² Compare actual against planned indicator targets

¹³ September 2021 agreed document: SMAs of labour and social partners collaborate effectively in assessing, forecasting IR development trends and in proposing, implementing IR development models and solutions, including those to promote workplace dialogue.

Output		Output status (as of 2023_24 Report)	Analysis of Output Delivery ¹²	Level of achievement: Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not achieved
1.4	Pilot effective workplace dialogue models in line with the legal framework and with the NIRS	Delay: behind schedule	A situation assessment report on the implementation of Labour Code 2019 on development of internal work rules at enterprise level was conducted and a guideline on developing effective Internal Work Rules at workplace level was developed. However, they have not been consulted to finalize as well as piloted at enterprise level yet (the field visit and pilot were planned to be conducted to 08 provinces/cities [two in the North such as Bac Ninh, Hai Duong or similar; two in the central provinces such as Da Nang, Hue or similar; four in the South such as HCM city, Dong Nai and Can Tho and Binh Duong]) Whithin this output, some communication activities were conducted such as the launch of the Social Dialogue Report 2024 and publication of the report and the Global Wage Report 2024 – 25; join with EUTFDW project to develop a video clip to raise awareness on RBC and human rights due diligence for decent work.	Partially Achieved
Outcome 2: The standardised collective bargaining taken up more widely as the main process for determining wages and working conditions based on full recognition of freedom of association and independence of the parties. ¹⁴				Partially Achieved
2.1	Promote and improve the effectiveness of tripartite negotiations and consultation through NIRC activities in order to develop recommendations on labour standards and working conditions	Completed	Several research studies were conducted as planned, ¹⁵ and reviewed by a NIRC technical committee; most await action by a convened plenary NIRC. Plenary meetings of the NIRC are anticipated in future.	Achieved

¹⁴ September 2021 agreed document: Collective bargaining becomes an effective mechanism in setting labour standards and working conditions through the role of tripartite institutions; enterprise-level collective bargaining models are established and operated genuinely with the effective support of SMAs of labour.

¹⁵ On digital employment contracting, and digital platform work.

Output		Output status (as of 2023_24 Report)	Analysis of Output Delivery ¹²	Level of achievement: Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not achieved
2.2	Develop a manual to guide and promote collective bargaining in accordance with the new provisions of the Labour Code and ILO Convention No. 98.	Completed	Three manuals were completed. - One by MOLISA to guide and promote collective bargaining in accordance with Labour Code 2019; the manual was validated in 2022. The partner (DIRW) has not published yet (they have been busy with the organisation restructuring - the merger of the MOLISA with MOHA). - One on wage bargaining was completed for VGCL. A consultation workshop needs for finalization of the manual before publishing. - One to improve employer collective bargaining capacity was completed by VCCI and published. A decree on WRO (grassroots organizations) has been delayed, delaying the manual on it, and the publication of the other manuals.	Achieved
2.3	Pilot a genuine collective bargaining model with the support of SMAs of labour in selected enterprises	Completed	NIRS, with its sister projects, have provided technical support to a pilot activity that led in 2023 to a MECBA between seven enterprises in the electronics sector and the provincial Federation of Labour in Bac Ninh.	Achieved
Outcome 3: Effective mediation systems and services supported – in line with increasing value placed on them by stakeholders – for harmonious, stable and progressive IR exercised with full recognition of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. ¹⁶				

¹⁶ September 2021 agreed document: The system of labour dispute mediation and arbitration institutions is consolidated and operated effectively in accordance with the new requirements of the Labour Code.

Output		Output status (as of 2023_24 Report)	Analysis of Output Delivery ¹²	Level of achievement: Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not achieved
3.1	3.1. Develop a national information system of labour mediators and arbitrators and pilot a mechanism to link and share experience in labour dispute mediation through a core group of mediators and arbitrators in target provinces with IR problems	Delay: behind schedule	Three provinces (HCMC, Binh Duong, Dong Nai) have moved to implement a new LDRS as provided for in Labour Code 2019. The NIRS has contributed to developing an information system that can support interprovincial and provincial-national level information exchange; the sister NIRF project has done the main work to support the establishment, operation and strengthening of the LDRS. Draft templates have been prepared and are ready for consultation with the relevant stakeholders. Further implementation of the LDRS has been hampered by a scarcity of cases, particularly for resolution through arbitration. A focus has thus been on mediation cases, where piloting has been ongoing. Piloting of arbitration has been restricted to Dong Nai Arbitration Council in late 2022 - 2024.	Partially Achieved
3.2	3.2. Develop a labour mediation and arbitration case management system and pilot it in selected provinces	Completed	At the end of 2023, the MCMR were designed. They have been finalized by MOLISA and are being used in the three piloting provinces to refine the system (it has not yet been officially applied in operation in those localities). The MCMR offer the necessary tool for mediators to record, archive and share information, experience and lessons learned from their cases, in a standardized format that makes it possible to synthesize, archive and share information among mediators. It also allows for labour case administration. Training the MCMR has been piloted, using MOLISA guidance, and awaits further implementation. Training activities, publication and analysis of data must await broader piloting and implementation of the LDRS and MCMR.	Achieved

Annex 4: List of Persons Consulted

No.	Full name	Sex	Organization/ Position
1	David Mercier	Male	Donor (ESDC), Manager
2	Patryk Reid	Male	Donor (ESDC), Policy analyst
3	Zissis Hadjis	Male	Donor (ESDC), Policy analyst
4	Ingrid Christensen	Female	LabourILO in Viet Nam, Country Director
5	Nguyen Ngoc Trieu	Male	ILO in Viet Nam, Senior Programme Officer
6	Dang Thi Ngoc Diep	Female	ILO in Viet Nam, Project Coordinator of “ NIRS Canada ” Project
7	Ngo Thi Loan	Female	ILO in Viet Nam, Project Coordinator of “ NIRF ” Project
8	Arun Kumar	Male	ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific, Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue Specialist
10	Nguyen Duy Phuc	Male	CIRD, Director
11	Tran Thi Hong Lien	Female	Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI, Director
12	Dao Ngoc Thanh	Male	Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI, Deputy Director
13	Nguyen Vinh Quang	Male	Department of IR, VGCL, Vice Director
14	Nguyen Thuy Linh	Female	Department of Labour Policy, Labour, MOLISA [Interview while assessing the electronic clustered project in 2024]
15	Tran Van Hieu	Male	Bac Ninh Industrial Zone Trade Union [Interview while assessing the electronic clustered project in 2024]

Annex 5: Documents Consulted

Documents related to the context

- ILO's Decent Work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- ILO's DWCP Viet Nam 2022 – 2026
- ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
- ILO FPRW Declaration
- ILO's Convention related to Social Dialogue: Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144); Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154)
- Programme and budget for 2024–25
- Full text of CPTPP
- Full text of The EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement
- Labour Code No.: 45/2019/QH14
- Resolution No. 80/2019/QH14 on joining Convention 98 of ILO on application of principles of right to organise and collective bargaining, and other relevant documents
- 10-year socio-economic development plan (SEDP) of Vietnam
- Decision No. 416 of the Prime Minister, dated March 25, 2020, promulgates the Plan to implement Directive No. 37-CT/TW, dated September 3, 2019, of the Central Party Secretariat. This directive aims to strengthen leadership and direction in building harmonious, stable, and progressive labour relations in the new situation.
- Plan No. 480/DA-TLD, dated June 6, 2019, from the VGCL on "Improving Capacity for Dialogue and Collective Bargaining in the Period of 2019-2023"; and the NAP for Law and Policy Improvement to Promote RBC, which was enacted on July 14, 2023, alongside the Government's efforts to promote the implementation of ESG related practices.
- Decision 1413/QĐ-TTg dated August 18, 2021 on consolidating the functions, tasks, organizational structure and operations of the NIRC issued by the Prime Minister

Specific project documents:

- Initial Project Documents to ESDC and MOLISA
- Approved Project Document by the Minister of MOLISA (in Vietnamese)
- ILO-ESDC Agreement
- Project's mid-term review report
- Project logical framework and work plans 2020, 2021, 2022
- Project progress report 2020-2021; 2021-2022; 2023-2024
- The Manual on Declaration of 1998 and 8 Fundamental Conventions of the International Labour Organization on FPRW by CIRDO
- ILO's IR Report 2019 Towards Genuine collective bargaining
- National, provincial, and enterprise level IR reports (Draft) 2023 by NIRC
- Record for individual & collective labour dispute case (Draft template)
- Instructions for development and use case management record for individual & collective labour dispute mediation case
- Study on Employment relations in platform economy (working paper)

Other Documents:

- ILO NIRF Project Approved Logframe

- OECD/DAC (2020): Quality Standards for development evaluation. DAC Guidelines and Reference Series: <https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/36596604.pdf>
- ILO EVAL: Evaluation Policy Guidelines, including ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations 3rd edition 2017.
- ILO (2020) Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation (4th edition). ILO-EVAL, Geneva: November 2020. See: https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationpolicy/WCMS_571339/lang--en/index.htm
- United Nations Evaluation Guidelines Norms and Standards ILO policy guidelines (4th edition, 2020): https://www.ilo.org/eval/WCMS_817079/lang--en/index.htm
- UNEG (2018): UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator - Technical Note and Scorecard
- ILO EVAL: Supplementary Guidance Note: Integrating gender equality in ILO M&E. November 2023: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_905557.pdf
- Amanda Mack (December 2023): Integrating Gender Equality in ILO M&E. Collaborative Online Learning Event. PowerPoint Presentation EVAL, Geneva, December 12, 2023.
- ILO (2022): Independent High-Level Evaluation of ILO's COVID-19 response 2020-22. EVAL office Geneva, August 2022: https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationreports/Strategyandpolicyevaluations/WCMS_854253/lang--en/index.htm

Annex 6: Lesson Learned and Emerging Good Practice

This Annex provides the full description of the most important Lesson Learned and Good Practice in the ILO Templates as follows:

Lesson Learned: Designing a project that is closely aligned with national priorities and the needs of tripartite partners showcases a two-pronged approach. This alignment fosters buy-in from tripartite partners, enabling them to take a leading role in implementing activities, utilizing outputs, and driving changes at the outcome level of the project.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Designing a project that is closely aligned with national priorities and the needs of tripartite partners showcases a two-pronged approach. This alignment fosters buy-in from tripartite partners, enabling them to take a leading role in implementing activities, utilizing outputs, and driving changes at the outcome level of the project.
Context and any related preconditions	Vietnam's Labour Code was reformed in November 2019, significantly altering the roles of state management agencies, employers, workers, and their organizations in promoting effective industrial relations (IR). One key change allows for the establishment of workers' organizations at the enterprise level, which is expected to enhance collective bargaining (CB) and social dialogue in workplaces. These labour management regulations aim to align Vietnam with international labour standards and trade integration requirements, as the country is considering ratifying the ILO's Freedom of Associations and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C087) alongside Convention (C098). Vietnam's commitment to the 1998 ILO Declaration mandates adherence to fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to CB. Furthermore, Vietnam's participation in various regional and global trade agreements necessitates that enterprises commit to corporate social responsibility and labour standards. However, the ILO's Industrial Relations Report 2019 identifies both opportunities and challenges for labour in Vietnam. Key challenges include a rapidly growing but largely unskilled wage labour force, limited union management capacity due to a rising union density rate, formalistic social dialogue lacking worker input on issues like wages and safety, and a low ratio of genuine collective bargaining agreements. Additionally, increasing individual labour disputes and wage-related strikes, mainly in industrial regions, indicate insufficient effective bargaining. The report highlights the need to address these challenges to improve the effectiveness of tripartite mechanisms and the functions of labour management agencies.
Targeted users/ Beneficiaries	ILO HQ, ILO Hanoi, Tripartite Constituents and other development partners and donors

Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	However, the deep engagement with these tripartite partners, particularly with MOLISA and NIRC, can sometimes present challenges in realizing outcomes and ensuring the sustainability of project results. During critical moments when the project aimed to support expected changes and meaningful impacts—such as in the preparation of the 2022 National IR Report—it seems that several important updates and draft recommendations, including those related to the prevention of sexual harassment and shift meals for workers workers, were not yet approved by NIRC. This situation has arisen in part because the Chairmanship of NIRC, which is held by the MOLISA’s Minister, has faced difficulties in organizing official meetings to process these significant contributions from the project, as outlined in Decision 1413/QD-TTg (2021).
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The NRIS Project exemplifies a robust alignment with Vietnam's national priorities, specifically in relation to Directive No. 37-CT/TW, which emphasizes building harmonious and progressive industrial relations. It effectively addresses key objectives of the directive, including refining the legal framework for dialogue and negotiation among stakeholders, establishing collective bargaining as a fundamental mechanism for labour standard setting, and improving labour dispute resolution mechanisms. Key outcomes focus on enhancing collaboration between state agencies and social partners to manage industrial relations trends and disputes, promoting effective dialogue at the enterprise level, and establishing a mediation and arbitration system to foster stable labour relations. Additionally, the project supports enhancements to tripartite negotiations and the establishment of a database for evaluating industrial relations in enterprises, reinforcing the importance of informed policymaking. It also aligns with the 2019 Labour Code, which significantly reshapes the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in industrial relations. The project contributes to implementing changes regarding collective bargaining and labour dispute resolution, ensuring compliance with national regulations and international standards. Moreover, Vietnam’s international commitments, particularly to the ILO Declaration, emphasize the protection of freedom of association and collective bargaining. The NRIS Project aids in strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to meet these international labour standards, reinforcing Vietnam's commitment to upholding fundamental worker rights. A key lesson learned is that aligning national initiatives with both domestic regulations and international obligations can effectively enhance industrial relations, promoting worker welfare and organizational cooperation.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	

Good Practice: Enhancing the Role of Social Partners in IR in Vietnam: The NIRS Canada project, alongside other project, such as the ILO VNM/20/02/APL project, has effectively supported the VGCL and VCCI in their roles as social partners, demonstrating how collaborative efforts can enhance IR in Vietnam.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Enhancing the Role of Social Partners in Industrial Relations in Vietnam: The NIRS Canada project, alongside other project, such as the ILO VNM/20/02/APL project, has effectively supported the VGCL and VCCI in their roles as social partners, demonstrating how collaborative efforts can enhance industrial relations in Vietnam. The emphasis on dialogue, capacity building, and strategic partnerships stands as a model for future initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable industrial relations
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The NIRS Canada project plays a crucial role in aligning with the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL)'s tasks, which include coordinating with state management agencies and enterprises to ensure labour law compliance and promote elevated labour rights exceeding legal requirements. In line with the Politburo's Resolution No. 02-NQ/TW and the 13th Congress of the Vietnam Trade Union, the VGCL is prioritizing industries for collective bargaining and signing collective labour agreements from 2023 onward. Its "Improving the Effectiveness of Dialogue and Collective Bargaining for the Period 2023-2028" program aims to enhance collective bargaining across various levels and stakeholders, increasing the number and quality of collective labour agreements. The VGCL serves as the workers' representative in IR activities, facilitating negotiations with employers, training trade union officials, and developing technical support materials. On the other hand, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) is essential as it represents employers and leads social dialogue and collective bargaining processes. The VCCI's Bureau for Employer's Activities advises its Standing Committee and promotes IR development, supporting enterprises in policy implementation and capacity building. Both VGCL and VCCI have equal representation on the National Industrial Relations Committee (NIRC), ensuring balanced participation in the decision-making process. Together, these organizations are pivotal in fostering effective industrial relations in Vietnam, supported by initiatives like the NIRS Canada project and the ILO VNM/20/02/APL project
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	• Alignment with National Labour Advocacy: The NIRS Canada project successfully aligned with the mandates of the VGCL, which focuses on coordinating with state management agencies, local authorities, and enterprises to uphold labour law compliance and promote enhanced labour rights. This alignment has established a foundation for fostering harmonious relationships between employers and employees, as seen through VGCL's involvement in revising the Labour Code and implementing policies that exceed basic legal requirements. • Empowerment of Trade Unions: The project's support for VGCL's initiatives, particularly in enhancing the effectiveness of dialogue and collective bargaining, has empowered trade unions to play a more

	proactive role in industrial relations. Initiatives like the "Improving the Effectiveness of Dialogue and Collective Bargaining Program (2023-2028)" demonstrate a strategic approach to involve trade unions in collective bargaining processes, thereby promoting a culture of collaboration between workers and employers. • Capacity Building for Effective Engagement: Training programs for trade union officials in social dialogue and bargaining facilitated through the project have significantly improved the capacity of grassroots unions to advocate for workers' rights. This capacity building has been instrumental in equipping representatives with the skills necessary to engage effectively with employers, fostering a more robust dialogue environment. • Facilitation of Multi-Level Dialogue: By encouraging participation from stakeholders—including enterprises, corporations, and international organizations—the project has expanded the scope of collective bargaining. This inclusive approach has led to an increase in both the quantity and quality of collective labour agreements, demonstrating a good practice in harnessing diverse perspectives in industrial relations. • Active Participation of Employers' Associations: The role of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) in the project has been crucial for representing employers in social dialogue. VCCI's leadership in promoting collaborative bargaining at all levels, along with its dual representation in the National Industrial Relations Committee (NIRC), fosters an equitable platform for dialogue between employers and employees. This balance is vital for sustaining trust and collaboration in industrial relations. • Collaboration with Government Entities: The partnership between VGCL, VCCI, and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) exemplifies a successful tripartite approach, with equal representation promoting balanced decision-making. Engagement with governmental bodies has reinforced the credibility of social dialogue initiatives and has provided a unified framework for addressing labour issues effectively. • Focused Strategic Priorities: Under the resolutions set forth by the Politburo and the VGCL, the prioritization of specific industries for advancing collective bargaining reflects a strategic approach to enhancing labour relations. By focusing efforts where they can be most impactful, the project has optimized resource allocation and achieved tangible outcomes in improving workplace relations.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	• Workers and Trade Union Members: The primary beneficiaries are the workers represented by trade unions, specifically those involved with the VGCL. • Trade Union Officials: Training programs initiated through the project benefit trade union officials by improving their skills in social dialogue and negotiating collective labour agreements, thereby increasing the effectiveness of grassroots unions. • Employers: Members of the VCCI and other employers are also key beneficiaries, as the project facilitates their participation in social dialogue and enhances their capacity to engage in collaborative bargaining, promoting positive employer-employee relationships. Expected measurable impacts: • Number of workers benefiting from the enhancement of the worker rights; • Number of trade union members to engage more effectively in collective bargaining processes.

	Specific industries identified by VGCL for collective bargaining efforts will benefit from enhanced agreements, leading to better working conditions and labour relations.
Potential for replication and by whom	VGCL, VCCI, state management agencies, employers and grassroots trade unions
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	- DWCP 2017-2021: Contribution to the third priority area: "Build effective labour market governance compliant with fundamental principles and rights at work." - DWCP 2022-2026: Outcome 3.1: Reformed labour market institutions utilized to improve labour standards for all types of workers and to formalize informal employment. Country Program Outcome: - VNM 101: Effective industrial relations systems established in line with international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work. - VNM 801: Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organizations. - VNM 802: Enhanced institutional capacity of the VGCL and grassroots trade unions.
Other documents or relevant comments	

Good Practice: NIRS Canada, with its sister projects, have provided technical support to a pilot activity that led in 2023 to a (Multi-Employer Collective Bargaining Agreement - MECBA) between seven enterprises in the electronics sector and the provincial Federation of Labour in Bac Ninh.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	NIRS, with its sister projects, have provided technical support to a pilot activity that led in 2023 to a MECBA between seven enterprises in the electronics sector and the provincial Federation of Labour in Bac Ninh.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	A substantive and supervised MECBA is an important tool for representing and protecting the legitimate and legal rights and interests of employees, as well as preventing and resolving labour disputes. A collective labour agreement among enterprises in the same industry also helps to establish standard regulations, welfare regimes, and basic working conditions that are similar, fostering employee loyalty to the enterprise. This reduces the practice of job transfers that can affect the stable operation of the enterprise and limits unfair competition in attracting employees among enterprises in the same industry within the same locality. The Trade Union of Industrial Zones in Bac Ninh Province (Bac Ninh IZTU), Viet Nam has 825 grassroots (factory) trade unions as members. Currently, there are approximately 200 factories operating in Que Vo

	Industrial Park, Bac Ninh, mainly electronics factories, of which 90% of the factories have trade unions that are members of Bac Ninh IZTU. Implementing the direction of VCGL to the Provincial Federation of Labour and industrial park trade unions, Bac Ninh IZTU strives to support grassroots trade unions in the collective dialogue process at each enterprise and initiate a collective bargaining process for many factories in Que Vo Industrial Park, with the goal of creating a common ground on better working conditions and benefits for workers in the industrial park compared to the provisions of labour laws as well as other localities. This also helps achieve the goal of contributing to the sustainable development of factories by addressing the current situation of high labour turnover between factories in the same area, affecting the stable operation of factories.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	• Participating in the activities of Project NIRS Canada and Project VNM/20/02/APL, leaders and key personnel of Bac Ninh IZTU and members of 14 Bac Ninh electronics factory unions received intensive training on collective bargaining. • With the guidance of international and domestic experts, their awareness, knowledge, and skills in collective bargaining of enterprise groups were significantly improved. • Applied to work practice, Bac Ninh IZTU and electronics grassroots unions have successfully implemented the process of collective bargaining of many factories marked by the Collective Labour Agreement with the participation of 7 out of 14 trained factories. • From this implementation experience, Bac Ninh IZTU is now actively disseminating the experience of the above MECBA process to the remaining grassroots unions in Que Vo Industrial Park, and then to other industrial parks in the province. Bac Ninh IZTU also plans to expand the promotion of MECBA to more factories in the remaining industrial parks in Bac Ninh province in the coming years.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Expected measurable impacts: • Number of workers benefiting from the enhancement of the worker rights; • Number of MECBA at provincial level reached. • Number of trade union members to engage more effectively in collective bargaining processes.
Potential for replication and by whom	VGCL ¹⁷ , VCCI, local state management agencies, employers and grassroots trade unions
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	• DWCP 2017-2021: Contribution to the third priority area: "Build effective labour market governance compliant with fundamental principles and rights at work." • DWCP 2022-2026: Outcome 3.1: Reformed labour market institutions utilized to improve labour standards for all types of workers and to formalize informal employment. Country Program Outcome:

¹⁷ More information about MECBA supported by the NIRF Japan is available here. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@ilo-hanoi/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms_747752.pdf

	• VNM 101: Effective industrial relations systems established in line with international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work. • VNM 801: Enhanced institutional capacity of VCCI • VNM 802: Enhanced institutional capacity of the VGCL and grassroots trade unions.
Other documents or relevant comments	