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## Building Responsible Value Chains in Asia through the Promotion of Decent Work in Business Operations – Phase II

ILO DC/SYMBOL: RAS/24/02/JPN (umbrella): RAS/24/50/JPN, and RAS/24/51/JPN

Type of Evaluation: Clustered

Evaluation timing: Final

Evaluation nature: Independent

Project countries: India, Japan, Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic, Malaysia

P&B Outcome(s): Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises for inclusive growth, decent work

SDG(s): Goal 8 (8.5 and 8.8)

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 30 March 2026

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ILO Administrative Office: ILO Regional Office Asia and Pacific (ILO Country Offices for India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia) and the ILO Country Office for Japan

ILO Technical Office(s): Multinational Enterprises and Responsible Business Conduct Unit (MULTI)

Joint evaluation agencies: Not Applicable

Project duration: April 2024 – March 2026 (24 months)

Donor and budget: Government of Japan / Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI); project budget USD 2.7 million

Name of consultant(s): Mr. Partha Sarathi Banerjee (International Evaluator), Ms. Latsany Phakdisoth (National Evaluator for Lao PDR)

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Evaluation budget: 32,240 USD

Key Words: Business and Human Rights, Decent Work, Final Independent Evaluation, Human Rights Due Diligence, Responsible Business Conduct, Responsible Value Chains

**Final Independent Evaluation of**

**Building Responsible Value Chains in Asia**

**through the Promotion of Decent Work in**

**Business Operations – Phase II**

Final Independent Evaluation Report

Submitted to:



**International Labour  
Organization**

30 March 2026

## 1. PROJECT TITLE AND DETAILS

<b>Project Title</b>	Building Responsible Value Chains in Asia through the Promotion of Decent Work in Business Operations – Phase II
<b>ILO Project Codes</b>	RAS/24/02/JPN (umbrella): RAS/24/50/JPN, and RAS/24/51/JPN
<b>Geographic Scope</b>	Phase II: India, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia
<b>DWCP Outcomes</b>	(1) India DWCP (2023-2027) Outcomes 1.3 and 2.2 (2) Lao PDR DWCP (2022-2026) Outputs 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 3.2 (3) Malaysia DWCP, Phase 2: 2021-2025 Outcomes 1.1 and 1.2
<b>P&amp;B Outcome</b>	The Phase II of the programme is aligned with five outcomes of the ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) for 2024-2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome 1: Strong, modernized normative action for social justice</li> <li>• Outcome 2: Strong, representative, and influential tripartite constituents and effective social dialogue</li> <li>• Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises for inclusive growth, decent work</li> <li>• Outcome 6: Protection at work for all</li> <li>• Outcome 8: Integrated policy and institutional response for social justice through decent work</li> </ul>
<b>Country Programme Outcome (CPO)</b>	CPOs (IND103, LAO177, MYS102, JPN 101, 801, 802) are all linked to ILO's 2024 – 2025 P&B Output 4.2 (Increased capacity of constituents to develop more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable enterprises in supply chains and responsible business conduct for decent work).  Regional level: contribute to realize RAS 152 (Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work).
<b>SDG(s) under evaluation</b>	Goal 8 (8.5 and 8.8)
<b>Administrative Unit in charge</b>	ILO Regional Office Asia and Pacific (ILO Country Offices for India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia) and the ILO Country Office for Japan
<b>Technical Backstopping Unit</b>	Phase II: Multinational Enterprises and Responsible Business Conduct Unit (MULTI)
<b>Collaborating Units</b>	Phase II: Better Work branch (Governance), Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS)
<b>Time frame</b>	April 2024 – March 2026 (24 months)
<b>Budget</b>	Phase II: USD 2,700,729
<b>Funding Agencies</b>	Japan, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)
<b>Type of Evaluation</b>	Final Independent Evaluation
<b>Timing of Evaluation</b>	December 2025 – March 2026
<b>Evaluation consultants</b>	Mr. Partha Sarathi Banerjee (International Evaluator), Ms. Latsany Phakdisoth (National Evaluator for Lao PDR)
<b>Evaluation Manager</b>	Mr. Bui Van Dung

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### 3. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms	Definition
ACMA	Automotive Component Manufacturers Association, India
ACTEMP	Bureau of Employers' Activities (a bureau of the ILO, one of the tripartite pillars)
ACTRAV	Bureau of Workers' Activities (a bureau of the ILO, another of the tripartite pillars)
AIOE	All India Organization of Employers
BHEUU	Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department (Malaysia)
BHR	Business and Human Rights
BW	Better Work (BETTERWORK), an ILO Programme spanning several countries
CII	Confederation of Indian Industries
CPO	Country Programme Outcomes (ILO)
CS3D	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (European Union)
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (European Union)
DW	Decent Work
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme (ILO)
E&E	Electrical and Electronics (an industrial sector of interest in this project)
EBMO	Employer and Business Membership Organization
EFI	Employers' Federations of India
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
GEDI	Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (a branch of the ILO)
HRDD	Human Rights Due Diligence
i-ESG	Investment – Environment, Social, Governance Framework, Malaysia
IICA	Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
JACTIM	Japanese Chamber of Trade and Industry, Malaysia
JASTI	Japan Audit Standards for Textile Industries
JAW	Confederation of Japan Automobile Workers' Unions
JEITA	Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association
JETRO	Japan External Trade Organization
JILAF	Japan International Labour Foundation
LFTU	Lao Federation of Trade Unions
LNCCI	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MEF	Malaysian Employers Federation
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (Japan)
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Malaysia)
MNE Declaration	Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO)
MNEs	Multinational Enterprises
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MULTI	Multinational Enterprises and Responsible Business Conduct (a unit of the ILO)
NAPBHR	National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (both Japan and Malaysia)
NGRBC	National Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct 2019, India
OECD – DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee

OECD Guidelines	OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PAC	Project Advisory Committee (Lao PDR)
RBC	Responsible Business Conduct
<i>ProDoc</i>	Development Cooperation Project Document (agreed between ILO and donor)
RVC	Responsible Value Chains
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
Sharoshi	Labour and Social Security Attorneys (Japan)
Sharoshi Federation	Japan Federation of Labor and Social Security Attorney's Associations
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SPP	Sustainable Procurement Partnership (a programme of JEITA, Japan)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGCNI	United Nations Global Compact Network India
UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

#### 4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation report provides findings of the Final Independent Evaluation of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) programme "Building Responsible Value Chains in Asia through the Promotion of Decent Work in Business Operations – Phase II" (April 2024 to March 2026). This project was funded by the Government of Japan through its Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). It was a successor to the RVC – Phase I (which ended in June 2024); a pioneering collaboration between the ILO and METI to advance Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) and ensure Decent Work (DW) in regional and global supply chains.

In continuation of RVC – Phase I, the RVC – Phase II focused on Japan and the manufacturing sectors, but expanded to India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia. Moreover, Phase II was guided by the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) focusing on cross-border operations, as well as it includes a significant component of activities covering small and medium enterprises in Japan. The project is currently in its closing stage, and all planned activities are completed.

##### ***Intervention Logic***

In this phase of work, the ILO aimed to strengthen compliance of enterprises with labour standards (national and international), and labour dimensions of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD); enhance the capacity of governments, employers, and workers' organizations to foster adoption of sustainable and responsible business practices, and inclusive growth. The ILO's aim was aligned to the Government of Japan expectations: "*Japanese business enterprises to fulfill their responsibilities in terms of respecting human rights and to resolve issues with effective grievance mechanisms, aiming to foster an environment where Japanese business enterprises that are implementing such measures will be fairly evaluated*" (source: METI website).

To jointly achieve the respective aims of ILO and METI, the development objective (intended impact) of this project was set out as: *More inclusive, responsible, and sustainable enterprises and decent work in supply chains in the specified sectors in the programme countries in Asia*. This objective was agreed with the donor (METI), and stated in the ILO's Development Cooperation Project Document. The intervention logic of the project was accordingly underpinned in the Theory of Change (TOC). The project then pursued two interconnected outcomes to achieve this impact: (i) the first outcome was to strengthen enterprise compliance with national laws and international labour standards; and (ii) the second outcome was to enhance the capacity, dialogue, and collaboration of ILO tripartite constituents: governments, employers' organizations, and workers'

organizations. The project activities, and their outputs, were then linked to the expected outcomes based on a set of TOC assumptions (hypotheses) which formed a cornerstone of this evaluation (section 5.2, Table 1).

### ***Evaluation Purpose, Scope, and Clients***

A key purpose of this evaluation was organizational learning to improve future programming in areas where enterprise needs and development cooperation meet. The evaluation considered outputs, linked outcomes, and the impact of the interventions in the four programme countries, and the sustainability of results achieved. The evaluation findings are expected to contribute to future programme designs and implementations to advance RBC for DW in supply chains.

The main clients of the evaluation are ILO's tripartite constituents in each of the programme countries, the donor, ILO project staff, management, specialists, and technical branches. Other UN agencies, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, line ministries and other donors can also find this evaluation useful for their programming.

### ***Evaluation methodology***

At an operational level, the evaluation spanned three months (January to March 2026) and was sequenced in three stages (details in section 8): inception; country-level data collection through key informant interviews of the ILO's tripartite constituents in each country, ILO project team and specialists, donor, participating enterprises, academia, and other stakeholders; followed by analysis, drawing insights by triangulating data collected from multiple sources, and synthesizing them into reporting. There were three rounds of review of the draft report, and the findings were presented in a stakeholders' validation meeting. The ILO HQ Evaluation reviewed the final report.

### ***Main findings***

The evaluation adopted the six established criteria to evaluate development cooperation projects, namely: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The ILO's cross cutting criteria on gender, non-discrimination, and social dialogue was included as the seventh evaluation criteria (details in section 7, Table 3).

The outputs of all implementation activities planned in this project were fully achieved in all four countries and the region. However, the effectiveness of these outputs, and the linked outcomes varied across countries and could not be realistically achieved as envisaged at the design stage due to reasons discussed in this report (some reasons being beyond the ILO's control). The summarized conclusions are given below and details of the findings are set out in section 9.

<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Sub-criteria / Key Questions</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Evaluation remarks</b>
Relevance (Section 9.1)	Relevance of project activities to the stakeholders	Relevant	-
	Validity of intervention design	Valid	Takeaways for future programming
	Relevance of results achieved	Relevant	-
Coherence (Section 9.2)	Leveraging synergy (internal)	Leveraged	Extent of leverage varied by country
	Leveraging synergy (external)	Varying levels of coherence	Some coherence is observed in all countries; scope for improvement
	Implementation of TOC logic	TOC logic was implemented	Consistency in the logic application varied across activities, countries
Effectiveness (Section 9.3)	India, Lao, Malaysia results	Effective, for the short term	Results may not remain effective over the medium term; needs to be further supported for deepening
	Japan results	Effective	Some results show early signs of greater impact, and self-sustenance
	Home-Host country results	Could have been more effective	TOC assumptions / hypothesis is validated. Future programmes can contribute on foundations prepared.
	Stimulating enterprise interest to be catalysts (all countries)	Varying levels of interest generated to be catalysts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan large entrp. are interested</li> <li>• Japan SMEs 'mixed' interest level</li> <li>• Other country SMEs, suppliers – cautious, low interest, non-priority</li> </ul>
	Management effectiveness	Effective	-
	Unexpected outcomes	No significant reversals	Four examples found, of which three were favourably unexpected
	Facilitating / hindering factors	Both present	Takeaways for future programming
Efficiency (Section 9.4)	Adherence to schedules	Adhered	-
	Utilization of human resources	Utilized	-
	Adherence to budgets	Adhered	-
	Value for Money	Reasonable	11 outputs assessed qualitatively; 'with-case' / 'without-case' analysis
Impact (Section 9.5)	Impact, as achieved (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia)	Established foundations	Without support, impact is unlikely to be retained beyond short-term
	Impact, as achieved (Japan)	Early impact is visible	Ecosystems are in place; the impact may sustain in the selected sectors
	Partnerships for greater impact	Varying strength	Partnering to (i) embed early impact into self-sustaining market systems; (ii) amplify project messages
Sustainability (Section 9.6)	Exit strategies, by design	Scope for improvement	-
	Effect of external developments	Can become a sustainability concern	Susceptible to be de-prioritized in the event of economic shocks, and any disruptions in supply chains
	Likelihood of sustenance (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia)	Needs further nurturing	Further support is needed: technical assistance, building up ecosystems
	Japan outcome sustainability: continuity of RVC – I, RVC - II	Early signs of sustenance	Contributed to building ecosystem that can sustain, especially in E&E

<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Sub-criteria / Key Questions</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Evaluation remarks</b>
Cross-cutting issues (Section 9.7)	Gender equality, non-discrimination	Adhered to principles	Phase 1 findings addressed, but it could have improved. Takeaways for future programming.
	Social Dialogue	The extent of achievements varied across the countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan, likely to sustain. New avenues can open (JEITA SPP)</li> <li>• India, challenges exist. Bipartite roadmap, when operationalized, can create a unique platform.</li> <li>• Lao, will need external support.</li> <li>• Malaysia, challenges exist. The NAPBHR creates opportunities to open new platforms for dialogues.</li> </ul>
Addressing mid-term findings (Section 9.8)	Four OECD DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency)	Some findings are consistent across both assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance: continued</li> <li>• Effectiveness: varied by country</li> <li>• Sustainability: persistent concern</li> <li>• Efficiency: continued</li> </ul>
	Lesson learnt	Actions taken	Some course corrections were made, to the extent it was possible

The evaluation also considered two questions of larger reflection which overlaps across evaluation criteria: (i) Can the inception stage be shortened? (ii) Given the time and resources that was made available, were the envisaged outputs and linked outcomes from the planned activities realistic? The reflections are set out in sections 9.4.5 and 9.4.6.

In addition to the main findings, the assumptions / hypotheses of three TOC Pathways were tested with available evidence and the findings are summarized below (details in Section 10.2).

<b>TOC Pathway</b>	<b>Assumption / Hypotheses</b>	<b>Evaluation Remarks</b>
Pathway 1: Enterprise Change	Training → knowledge → changes in enterprise practices	Trainings can effectively increase knowledge but, by themselves, are insufficient to change enterprise practices (especially in SMEs)
Pathway 2: Tripartite Enablement	Social Dialogue and Capacity Building initiatives → enabling environment → achieve compliance / foster adoption of RBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built capacities, strengthened social dialogue, created enabling conditions.</li> <li>• Translating enabling conditions into widespread enterprise compliance will likely require sustained engagement.</li> <li>• Japan shows early signs of greater impact</li> </ul>
Pathway 3: Home - Host Linkages	Japanese MNE engagements → supplier influence → diffusion of RBC	RBC adoption is driven by home country or purchaser requirements, even if no compliance needs exist under local regulation

### **Lessons learnt**

The evaluation shortlisted two lessons learnt which can be generalized for national and regional stakeholders (a few other lessons learnt being either localized or activity specific risks, hence not

shortlisted). These two lessons learnt are enlisted below, discussed in section 11.1, and further details are provided in Annex – 6A following the ILO’s template.

*Lesson 1: Improving effectiveness of the training imparted.*

*Lesson 2: More focus is needed on SMEs*

### **Emerging good practice**

The evaluation found a few of the project outputs across programme countries to be effective. Some of the effective outputs, that had an early impact, were unique to the context of the programme country and were delivered leveraging established country systems (such as the project’s work with the Sharoshi Federation in Japan). Others were new avenues that were explored for the first time in this project, had replication potential across countries, can be independently organized according to respective country needs, and could become self-sustaining in the medium-term. Three such effective and replicable outputs have been identified as emerging good practices and are enlisted below. These emerging good practices are discussed in section 11.2, and further details provided in Annex – 6B following the ILO’s template.

- (i) Partnerships in Japan with JEITA on the SPP initiative having sector-wide impact*
- (ii) Launching the India bipartite roadmap to promote RBC for DW, and presented it to the Director General of the ILO jointly by the employers’ and workers’ organizations.*
- (iii) Beginning collaboration with the academia to promote RBC / BHR in Higher Education.*

### **Recommendations**

The common findings and lessons learnt has led the evaluation to make two recommendations that are drawn up at the intersectionality of enterprise needs and development cooperation. The five main dimensions within each of these recommendations is elaborated in section 12.1 which can provide more insights to the reader.

*Recommendation 1: deliver higher value to smaller enterprises in future RBC for DW projects*

*Recommendation 2: deepen digital activities in future projects with an aim to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of outputs, and sustain the impact of interconnected outcomes.*

Besides the above two general recommendations, the evaluation also made four country specific recommendations which are stated below and elaborated in section 12.2.

*Recommendation 3, India: Operationalize the bipartite roadmap, begin with the “training” pillar*

*Recommendation 4, Japan: Expand operationalizing “SPP” initiatives in at least two new sectors*

*Recommendation 5, Lao PDR: Contextualized replication of the JEITA SPP initiative by developing one or two sectoral pilots according to national priorities*

*Recommendation 6, Malaysia: Develop BHR sectoral templates, coherent yet differentiated from compliance requirements of the i-ESG framework*

A tabulation (Table 10) specifying who is called upon to act for each of the above six recommendations, their priority levels, timing, and resource needs, is also provided in section 12.

**Key words**

Business and Human Rights, Decent Work, Final Independent Evaluation, Human Rights Due Diligence, Responsible Business Conduct, Responsible Value Chains.

# MAIN EVALUATION REPORT

## 5. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

The evaluation report provides findings of the Final Independent Evaluation of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) programme "Building Responsible Value Chains in Asia through the Promotion of Decent Work in Business Operations – Phase II." This programme was funded by the Government of Japan through its Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and was built on the RVC – Phase I project<sup>1</sup> which was a pioneering collaboration between the ILO and METI, initiated to advance Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) and ensure decent work in regional and global supply chains supply chains. Thus, in a sense, RVC – Phase II project which ran from April 2024 to March 2026 was an outcome of the continued partnership between the ILO and METI and a successor programme of RVC – Phase I (which ended in June 2024).

The report complies with the ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 4th edition. The evaluation also complies with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)'s Evaluation Norms and Standards. In addition, the evaluation adheres to the United Nations system of evaluation norms and standards as well as to the OECD – DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.

### 5.1 Project background

In continuation of RVC – Phase I, the RVC – Phase II focused on Japan and the manufacturing sectors, but expanded to India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia. Moreover, Phase II was guided by the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) focusing on cross-border operations, as well as it includes a significant component of activities covering small and medium enterprises in Japan.

In this phase of work, the ILO aimed to strengthen compliance of enterprises with labour standards (national, international), and labour dimensions of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD); enhance the capacity of governments, employers, and workers' organizations to foster adoption of sustainable and responsible business practices, and inclusive growth.

In this phase of work, the ILO aimed to strengthen compliance of enterprises with labour standards (national, international), and labour dimensions of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD); enhance

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<sup>1</sup> The RVC Phase II was built on the experience and lessons learned from RVC Phase I, which targeted Bangladesh (garment), Cambodia (garment), Japan (garment, electronics, and automotive parts), and Vietnam (garment and electronics) for the duration of two years from April 2022 to March 2024.

the capacity of governments, employers, and workers' organizations to foster adoption of sustainable and responsible business practices, and inclusive growth.

The ILO's aim was aligned to the Government of Japan expectations: "*Japanese business enterprises to fulfill their responsibilities in terms of respecting human rights and to resolve issues with effective grievance mechanisms, aiming to foster an environment where Japanese business enterprises that are implementing such measures will be fairly evaluated*" (source: METI website).<sup>2</sup>

To jointly achieve the aims of the ILO and METI, the development objective (intended impact) of this project was set out as: *More inclusive, responsible, and sustainable enterprises and decent work in supply chains in the specified sectors in the programme countries in Asia*. Accordingly, the project pursued two interconnected outcomes to jointly achieve these aims:<sup>3</sup> (i) the first outcome is to strengthen enterprise compliance with national laws and international labour standards;<sup>4</sup> and (ii) the second outcome is to enhance the capacity, dialogue, and collaboration of ILO tripartite constituents: governments, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations.

Further, the project aimed to contribute to SDG 8 targets (more specifically 8.5 and 8.8)<sup>5</sup>, five ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) 2024-2025 Outcomes 1,2,4,6,8 (more specifically Output 4.2) and Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) for India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia; Country Programme Outcomes (CPO) and Regional Outcome; and the ILO's cross-cutting issues (such as gender, non-discrimination, and social dialogue).

The ILO implemented this project in partnership with its tripartite constituents in each country, together with Japan Federation of Labor and Social Security Attorney's Associations (Sharoshi Federation) for some project activities in Japan, and with Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF) to build capacities in Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU) on RBC and HRDD process. The project beneficiaries included government ministries, employers' and workers' organizations, Multinational Enterprises (MNE), Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SME), academic institutions, and professional associations, all working together to achieve an overarching aim to advance RBC in enterprises and ensure DW in global and regional supply chains.

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<sup>2</sup> See, METI website [https://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/economy/biz\\_human\\_rights/index.html](https://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/economy/biz_human_rights/index.html)

<sup>3</sup> Source: Development Cooperation Project Document (*ProDoc*)

<sup>4</sup> The project intended to play a facilitator and encourager's role as the enterprises are not directly and legally bound by the International Labour Standards

<sup>5</sup> Earlier, in the inception report, SDG 8.2, and 8.3 were also included. However, the contribution from this project was found to be more on SDG 8.5 and 8.8.

## 5.2 Intervention logic

The development objective, and the two interconnected outcomes (stated above) as agreed with the donor (METI Japan), was stated in the ILO's Development Cooperation Project Document (*ProDoc*). The intervention logic of the project was accordingly underpinned in the Theory of Change (TOC) and was postulated in the *ProDoc*. The project activities, and their outputs, were then linked to expected outcomes in the *ProDoc* based on a set of TOC assumptions (hypotheses). These linkages, structured into Table 1 below, forms a cornerstone of this evaluation. The TOC hypotheses were also tested, to the extent it was possible, with data that was collected in this evaluation.

To further improve the evaluability, analyse outcomes and the impact, the evaluation identified TOC pathways and their underlying assumptions which could be tested by collecting early evidence that emerged from this phase of work, but can deepen if such efforts are sustained (or can be reinforced through any subsequent similar intervention). The TOC assumptions / hypotheses which were tested: (i) enterprises have decision-making space to implement HRDD; (ii) capacity-building interventions lead to behavioural change at enterprise level, (iii) strengthened social dialogue translates into sustained institutional practices; and (iv) Japanese MNEs influence suppliers meaningfully.

*Pathway 1: Enterprise Change* Training → knowledge → changes in enterprise practices

*Pathway 2: Tripartite Enablement* Social Dialogue and Capacity Building initiatives → enabling environment → achieve compliance / foster adoption of RBC

*Pathway 3: Home – Host Linkages* Japanese MNE engagements → supplier influence → diffusion of RBC

**Table 1: Activities, and outputs linked to expected outcomes (ref: ProDoc)**

Expected Outcomes	Output	Activities
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Enterprises improve compliance with national laws and better align their practices with principles of international labour standards.	<b>Output 1.1 (India, Lao, Malaysia):</b> Capacity of enterprises is strengthened to carry out human rights due diligence and their understanding is enhanced on how their contribution to the realization of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work should translate into practices.	<b>Activity 1.1.1 (India, Lao, Malaysia):</b> Organize and deliver training and workshops for enterprises to enhance their understanding of RBC, including human rights due diligence, the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the ILO MNE Declaration, and relevant tools and good practices
		<b>Activity 1.1.2 (India, Lao, Malaysia):</b> Document good practices of enterprises contributing to the realization of decent work in line with the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) and the ILO MNE Declaration as appropriate.
	<b>Output 1.2 (Japan):</b> Awareness is raised on responsible business conduct and good practices are disseminated including among Japanese enterprises.	<b>Activity 1.2.1 (Japan):</b> Organize and deliver training and workshops for Japanese enterprises, including SMEs, to enhance their understanding of RBC, including HRDD, the FPRW, the ILO MNE Declaration, and relevant tools and good practices including those developed in Phase I
		<b>Activity 1.2.2 (Japan):</b> Conduct training and capacity building seminars for Labour and Social Security Attorneys, and other specialists to support SME practices.
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Stronger capacity and collaboration of tripartite constituents foster an enabling environment for more sustainable enterprises that implement responsible business practices.	<b>Output 2.1 (India, Lao, Malaysia, Japan):</b> Enhanced capacity of government, workers', and employers' organizations for enhanced dialogue on the promotion of sustainable and responsible business practices.	<b>Activity 2.1.1 (India, Lao, Malaysia):</b> Organize workshop(s) for tripartite constituents, and relevant stakeholders where applicable, on promoting sustainable and responsible business practices, investment, and trade for the realization of decent work and inclusive growth (based on the guidance offered by MNE Declaration and other international instruments and initiatives), including promoting the development of strategies/policies to enhance RBC
		<b>Activity 2.1.2 (India, Lao, Malaysia, Japan):</b> Information briefs and awareness raising materials are localized / produced / disseminated to support constituents in providing information on RBC
		<b>Activity 2.1.3 (India, Lao, Malaysia):</b> Collaborate with JETRO offshore offices in knowledge sharing and awareness raising among enterprises including through their partners (e.g. commercial and industry associations) in the programme countries
		<b>Activity 2.1.4 (India, Lao, Malaysia, Japan):</b> Explore partnerships with local institutions, such as universities, training institutions, or other relevant institutions, to enhance their expertise on international labour standards and knowledge sharing on RBC
		<b>Activity 2.1.5 (Japan):</b> Workshops for workers' and employers' organizations, and relevant stakeholders, potentially including staff from local municipalities responsible for promoting local businesses, to empower their engagement towards enterprises in promoting RBC
	<b>Output 2.2 (Regional):</b> Peer-learning is promoted across countries to promote responsible business practices in supply chains	<b>Activity 2.2.1. (Regional):</b> A workshop/event is conducted to advance knowledge sharing and dialogue with the aim of promoting RBC for realizing decent work in supply chains
		<b>Activity 2.2.2. (Regional):</b> Webinar(s)/event(s) are organized for government, workers', and employers' organizations to advance knowledge sharing and dialogue with the aim of promoting RBC and realizing decent work in supply chains.
		<b>Activity 2.2.3 (Regional):</b> Knowledge sharing will be sought in relevant fora such as the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights Forum, regional events, or other relevant events

### 5.3 Project inception, major events, and milestones

**India:** In the inception phase (July – September 2024), the Project held consultations with tripartite constituents and potential partners, identifying key strategic directions:

- **Sector Focus:** The manufacturing sector, particularly the automobile and electronics industries were prioritized, given its rapid growth under the 'Make in India' initiative and its significance in global supply chains.
- **Geographic Focus:** Delhi NCR, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra were selected based on the concentration of manufacturing activity, Japanese enterprises' presence, and ILO's existing partnerships and networks.
- **Stakeholder Buy-In:** overall support was secured from the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), the Employers' Federation of India (EFI), and major workers' organizations (BMS and INTUC).

Building on inception strategies, the Project activities were launched in October 2024, focusing on enterprise capacity-building and tripartite cooperation.

A highlight of the India component of work: In addition to the seminars and RBC awareness raising activities that the ILO pursued in this project in India, the ILO played an anchor's role playing an anchor's role to develop and launch a bipartite roadmap for promoting RBC for DW in India. The roadmap was the outcome of a structured year-long process of engagement between employers' and workers' organizations. It outlines shared priorities and joint actions to promote RBC across enterprises, including MSMEs, with a focus on fair employment practices, occupational safety and health, non-discrimination, social protection, green and digital transitions, and strengthened social dialogue mechanisms, among others.<sup>6</sup>

**Lao PDR:** In the inception phase of project (April – December 2024), preparatory activities included staff recruitment. The project was officially launched in January 2025, following the official project approval from the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)<sup>7</sup> and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW). A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was subsequently established, comprising representatives from MOLSW, MPI, Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) and Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU) for project oversight and to provide strategic guidance. The project undertook translation works<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> ILO (2026). See, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/india%E2%80%99s-social-partners-present-bipartite-roadmap-promote-responsible>

<sup>7</sup> Since then, and during this project, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) in Lao PDR has been merged with the Ministry of Finance (MOF).

<sup>8</sup> The key translation works from English to Lao carried out in this project included: the MNE Declaration, documents on BHR and RBC, engaging TUs in HRDD, and the ILO helpdesk for business on ILS

of some key policies and documents, that formed the foundation of other activities in this project as well as benefitted the constituents and stakeholders.

A Rapid Scoping and Baseline Assessment identified garments and electronics sectors as growing manufacturing sectors which could be the two priority areas for this project. It mapped key stakeholders and assessed their capacity gaps. The project interventions accordingly focused on these two sectors, keeping the training activities and capacity-building initiatives open to participation by the sectors. In the early stages, the project introduced RBC and HRDD by linking these concepts to enterprises' daily operations, particularly through OSH and management systems. This practical approach helped attract enterprise engagement and improved understanding of how ILS relate to supply chains, productivity, workplace safety, and risk management, especially in the Lao context where exposure to such standards remains limited. The project also collaborated with the MoLSW to deliver labour inspector training on supply chain due diligence, strengthening inspectors' understanding of national labour law and its links to ILS. The project further facilitated stakeholder discussions and inputs to the draft Decision on OSH standards related to heat, lighting, and noise. These efforts align with the assessment recommendations to move beyond regulatory reforms and support enterprises in integrating RBC into their daily operations.

*Some highlights of the Lao PDR component of work:* (i) In collaboration with LNCCI, the project organized six capacity-building workshops for LNCCI member enterprises across the northern, central, and southern regions of Lao PDR. A Capacity Building Workshop for facilitators on RBC and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices was also conducted to develop local multiplier capacity. Additionally, a sector-specific seminar for garment enterprises was organized with the Association of Lao Garment Industry (ALGI). These activities reached 391 participants, including 182 women. (ii) Further, the project contracted JILAF to implement a capacity-building initiative for the LFTU on RBC and HRDD. The initiative strengthened LFTU's understanding of RBC and equipped union representatives with tools to identify and address human rights risks in workplaces. The support was well aligned with LFTU's mandate. (iii) The project demonstrated effective collaboration with government counterparts, wherein project activities were linked to national priorities, including OSH regulations and labour inspection strengthening. Capacity-building for labour inspectors improved understanding of labour laws, inspection frameworks, and due diligence concepts. Continued collaboration with stakeholders—including MoLSW, the LFTU, and the LNCCI—could further advance the development and implementation of OSH standards and capacity building for inspectors and workers, helping bridge the gap between legislation and practice and contributing to safer and more responsible workplaces.

**Malaysia:** In the inception phase, the Project conducted a series of consultation sessions with tripartite constituents to secure their support for project implementation and to facilitate outreach to enterprises in the Electrical & Electronics (E&E) and Automotive sectors. Several actions were initiated to support project objectives, such as:

- Establishing strategic collaborations with government agencies and the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) to deliver training for enterprises in the E&E and Automotive sectors.
- Initiating engagements with universities to reach companies involved in internship programmes and ensure RBC will be continuously learned and taught in Malaysia as part of the project's sustainability plan.
- Launching the "RBC 101 Workshop Series", designed to introduce small and medium enterprises, particularly in the manufacturing sector, to RBC foundational concepts. This was a unique initiative taken by the ILO project team.
- In 2024, the project also translated key information material, including MNE declaration and awareness materials, into Bahasa Malaysia thereby helping enhance accessibility and local relevance.

Some of the highlights of the Malaysia component of work: The project made significant technical contributions to the "Labour" pillar of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAPBHR) which was promulgated by the government in August 2025. Other major contributions included: (i) compiling and disseminating good business practices from enterprises in the E&E and automotive sectors through digital products; (ii) collaborating with Malaysia Employers Federation (MEF) and the ILO ADVANCE project to co-develop an ESG online module for companies to provide training support beyond the project period; and (iii) facilitating social dialogue among ILO constituents and stakeholders on RBC, HRDD, and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work through targeted capacity-building initiatives.

In **Japan** there was a continuity between the two project phases. Hence, a separate discussion on the inception stage is not being done. These aspects of continuity, and how they have reinforced any causal linkages, or had favourable impact on project outcomes, have been referred to in a few sections of this report as deemed necessary.

In this phase, under Outcome 1, the training and awareness raising seminars were conducted in collaboration with various stakeholders, which enabled capacity building and led to further buy-ins regarding RBC from these stakeholders:

- Raising awareness in enterprises: several large enterprises, conglomerates participated

- Employers' organizations: Japan Auto Parts Industries Association (JAPIA), Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association (JEITA) on various initiatives including Sustainable Procurement Partnership (SPP), Japan Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren), Japan Textile Federation (JTF), Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc. and Construction and Real Estate HRDD Promotion Council.
- Engagement with other stakeholders: Japan Federation of Labor and Social Security Attorney's Associations (Sharoshi Federation) the Osaka Association of Labor and Social Security Attorneys, Global Compact Network Japan, JCCU, Tokyo Metropolitan Human Rights Promotion Center.

Besides this, the project reached out to the SMEs in a significant way to raise awareness on RBC / HRDD in collaboration with industry associations. The measures adopted, were: (a) continued capacity building of BHR Sharoshi to increase the pool of RBC experts (BHR Sharoshis); (b) in-person promotion of BHR and awareness raising in 19 prefectures, most of this coverage being in semi-urban areas and in smaller towns (other than major cities), thereby setting up potential networks to take forward onward activities; (c) making significant contributions to JEITA's SPP programme; (d) providing training to strengthen the capacity of eligible Sharoshi serving as JASTI auditors under the Japan Audit Standards for Textile Industries (JASTI), launched in March 2025, supporting the development of trainers delivering such training;<sup>9</sup> and (e) develop case studies on SMEs and trade unions on RBC / HRDD. These activities function as sustainable mechanisms to support SMEs in the long term.

Under Outcome 2, an ILO–Keidanren Joint Session for Industry Associations workshop titled “New Approaches to Advancing Business and Human Rights through Industry Collaboration” was held in December 2025.

**Information, Education and Communication:** The Japanese version of the “ILO Helpdesk for Business” is currently being translated to provide continuous guidance on RBC and ILS to employers and workers in Japanese during and after the project term. Tools and materials from Phase I, such as (i) ILO-UNGC e-learning course and (ii) ILO-JETRO good practices report on RBC / HRDD are disseminated to seminar participants. There were other information, education, and communication activities as well.

**Regional:** The project, in collaboration with the ILO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), MULTI, ACTRAV and ACTEMP, organized a social dialogue forum among the EBMOs, trade unions, bipartite and tripartite dialogue across countries and sectors for peer-

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<sup>9</sup> The project worked with the Sharoshi Federation. In addition to the Sharoshi Federation, other auditing organizations are also involved in this national initiative.

learning and to foster enabling environment to promote RBC for DW. In all, 374 participants joined the events on RBC, HRDD, and ILS. Between April 2024 to Jan 2026, 94.0 percent of participants stated they had increased their knowledge on RBC and the principles of ILS. During this time, some of the major activities included:

- (i) UN Forum on Business and Human Rights Forum (September 2024);
- (ii) Cross-Country Dialogue on Responsible Business and Decent Work in electronics sector (February 2025);
- (iii) Cross-country automotive workers session (April 2025);
- (iv) Sharing experiences on advancing responsible business conduct: Perspectives from India and Japan (July 2025);
- (v) High-level regional forum on supply chains (September 2025); and the
- (vi) Cross-country session among four programme countries (September 2025).<sup>10</sup>

Cross-country session with academia (January 2026): Conducted a reach out to university faculties to integrate RBC into education to sensitise future employers, employees, and policy makers. In all, 23 university faculty members (8 in-person, 15 online) from Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and South Asia joined this session which served as a peer-learning platform with various levels of understanding on RBC.

#### **5.4 Organizational Arrangements**

*ILO Project Team*: The project team consisted of a Project Manager (also designated as the Programme Coordinator), project leads, administrative and finance assistants in each of the four programme countries, and at ROAP Bangkok.

*ILO Specialists* in Employers' Activities, Workers' Activities, Enterprise, Better Work provided their technical expertise to the project with backstopping being done by Multinational Enterprises and Responsible Business Conduct Unit (MULTI/RBC).

#### **5.5 Funding arrangements**

The RVC Phase II project was funded by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Government of Japan, and used modality which required the project to close by March 2026.

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<sup>10</sup> The Cross-Country Sharing Session on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) and a Way Forward for RVC-II Project was held on September 17, 2025 to enable more in-depth sharing among four countries, utilizing the opportunity of high-level regional forum.

## 6. EVALUATION BACKGROUND

**Adherence to the general objectives of an evaluation:** This evaluation adhered to the general objectives of an evaluation. A summary of this adherence according to the present context of RVC – Phase II evaluation is tabulated below (Table 2).

**Table 2: Adherence to general evaluation objectives**

Evaluation objectives (in general)	Present context of RVC – II evaluation
Assess the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objective and expected results to date, at the host and home countries as well as the regional level. Identify the supporting factors and constraints that have led to them, including implementation modalities chosen; and partnership arrangements.	<p>Most of the RVC - II project activities are complete and the remaining activities are planned to be completed within the stipulated project period. This evaluation was conducted concurrently as the project progresses towards completion within March 2026.</p> <p>The evaluation findings may vary by country driven by the level of RBC awareness among stakeholders, the implementation modality adopted in each country, and the effectiveness of management arrangements in the programme countries.</p>
Assess to what extent the project addressed the mid-term evaluation recommendations (if any), and mitigated any risks assessed thereof	The mid-term progress of this project was reported for the period April 2024 to March 2025. This final evaluation assessed to what extent the project addressed recommendations made in the mid-term progress report.
Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the project	The evaluation identified such results for each host country (India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia), as well as for the home country (Japan) and at the regional level.
Establish the relevance of the project design and implementation strategy in relation to the ILO, UN and SDGs and national development frameworks	<p>The evaluation adopted the six OECD DAC evaluation criteria: (1) Relevance (2) Coherence (3) Effectiveness (4) Efficiency (5) Impact and (6) Sustainability. Along with these, the ILO's cross-cutting criteria (gender, non-discrimination, and social dialogue) was adopted.</p> <p>The Strategic Fit of this project with ILO DWCP outcomes, P&amp;B outcomes and CPOs was assessed along with Relevance, and similarly the Validity of Design. The evaluation also assessed project contributions to SDG 8 targets (8.5, 8.8).</p>
Assess the extent to which the project outcomes will be sustainable	<p>While the evaluation attempted to identify the sustainability of intervention outcomes, the findings are limited to initial results and outputs achieved which may, after the project is over, evolve over time or get reinforced if new interventions are implemented through respective host country DWCPs.</p> <p>As this project RVC – Phase II is a continuation of RVC – Phase I, and the final evaluation report of RVC – Phase I is available, an attempt was made to corroborate the evaluation findings between these two phases and draw synthesized insights on sustainability of the intervention impacts as well as future programming.</p>
Provide recommendations to stakeholders to promote sustainability and support further development of the project outcomes	The recommendations made are based on the initial results coming out of the interventions. They also considered lessons learnt to design future similar interventions.
Identify lessons learned and good practices to inform the key stakeholders (i.e. national stakeholders, the donor, and the ILO) for future similar interventions	Some lessons learnt and good practices emerged from the initial results. These were analysed and disseminated to stakeholders, the donor, and ILO functionaries.

### ***Specific objectives of this evaluation***

The specific objectives of this evaluation were considered adhering to the general objectives of an evaluation to frame evaluation questions and reporting findings. These specific objectives are enlisted below.

- i. *Assess Relevance*: Evaluate the extent to which the project's design, objectives, and activities responded to the needs and priorities of tripartite constituents and aligned with national development plans and ILO Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP).
- ii. *Assess Coherence*: Examine the extent to which the project complemented, aligned with, or duplicated other ILO initiatives, national programmes, and international frameworks, and whether synergies were effectively leveraged across countries and sectors of interest.
- iii. *Measure Effectiveness*: Determine the degree to which the project achieved its intended outcomes, particularly in enhancing enterprise compliance with labour standards and strengthening tripartite collaboration for responsible business practices.
- iv. *Evaluate Efficiency*: Examine the use of resources (financial, human, and institutional) and the management arrangements to assess whether the project was implemented in a cost-effective and timely manner.
- v. *Analyze Sustainability*: Assess the likelihood that the project's results and benefits will be sustained beyond its duration, including the institutionalization of responsible business conduct and continued stakeholder engagement.
- vi. *Identify Impact*: Explore the broader effects of the project on workers, enterprises, and policy environments in the target countries, including improvements in working conditions and supply chain practices.
- vii. *Cross-cutting issues (gender equality)*: The RVC phase I evaluation findings noted that "gender equality was almost fully lacking in the LogFrame." This evaluation found the gap was addressed in the LogFrame of the current phase; thereafter the evaluation assessed the how gender aspects was considered in the project activities.
- viii. *Document Lessons Learned and Good Practices*: Capture insights and experiences that can guide ILO interventions, and development cooperation projects, in similar contexts. Provide recommendations to inform future programming.

### ***Adherence to Evaluation Purpose***

A key purpose of this evaluation was organizational learning to improve future programming in areas where enterprise needs and development cooperation meet. The evaluation examined the expected and achieved accomplishments thereby attempting to understand the process and factors of causality that led to the achievement of results or lack thereof. The

evaluation findings are expected to contribute to institutional learning on future programme designs and implementations to advance RBC for DW in supply chains and other such programming on Multinational Enterprises.

### ***Adherence to Evaluation Scope***

The evaluation considered outputs, linked outcomes, and the impact of the interventions in the four programme countries, and the sustainability of results from the implementation. The evaluation analysed output documents, progress reports, and digital assets created. The evaluation collected primary information from interviews with the ILO project team, specialists, tripartite stakeholder-constituents, project implementation partners, academia, and workshop participants to assess the effectiveness of outcomes and achievement of results in accordance to the specific objectives of the evaluation.

### ***Clients of this evaluation***

The main clients of the evaluation are ILO's tripartite constituents, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Government of Japan (the donor), concerned Ministries and Departments of the Governments in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia; ILO project staff, management, and specialists who supported this project, and other key project stakeholders for whom this evaluation can generate learning and reinforce accountability. In addition to the main clients, ILO's technical branches, namely ACTEMP, ACTRAV, MULTI/RBC, FUNDAMENTALS, and BETTERWORK, also stand to benefit from the knowledge generated through this evaluation. There are wider circles, not directly involved in the implementation of this project that may find this evaluation useful: namely, other UN agencies, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, line ministries and other donors.

### ***Evaluation management structure***

The overall management of the evaluation was provided by the designated ILO Evaluation Manager responsible for undertaking an initial briefing with the international and national evaluators, reviewing, and approving the inception report, circulating draft reports for comment from key stakeholders and reviewing the final evaluation report. Approval of the evaluation report was done by the ILO Evaluation Department and Regional Evaluation Officer. The independent evaluation team was responsible for desk research, defining the methodology and data collection tools, in-country data collection (stakeholder, constituent, and ILO specialist interviews), undertaking web-surveys, conducting data analysis, leading the virtual validation workshop, and drafting reports (inception and final).

## 7. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The seven evaluation criteria adopted for this evaluation were relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability,<sup>11</sup> and the ILO's cross cutting issues (gender equality and social dialogue). The key evaluation questions (Table 3, 24 questions), and the instruments, developed at the inception stage were sharpened and made more specific to stakeholder / constituent interviews as deemed necessary during the data collection stage.

The evaluation also took cognizance of three frontiers within which the RVC Phase II project was implemented: (i) the project was envisaged to be two-year intervention, and may have had limited time to achieve impact at scale especially in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia where it was being implemented for the first time. It takes time to raise awareness, build capacities of constituents and stakeholders, and effect policy changes; (ii) the challenges to sustain results (even if they are found to be effective initially) which can help advance the adoption of better RBC and BHR practices in cross border MNE operations; and (iii) the increasing volatility and uncertainty in geo-politics is affecting MNE operations, realigning supply chains, impacting trade agreements, and ushering in disruptive changes in complex policy environment in almost every country.

**Table 3: Key Evaluation Questions**

<b>1. RELEVANCE</b>
Key Questions
<b>Relevance of project activities to the stakeholders:</b> To what extent, and in what ways, were the project activities relevant for the stakeholders in each country?
<b>Validity of intervention design:</b> (i) To what extent was the intervention designed to address institutional needs, and priorities in each country? (ii) To what extent were the project outcomes designed to be relevant to the P&B 2024-2025 Output 4.2 and SDG targets 8.5 and 8.8? (iii) To what extent do project activities, outputs, outcomes, correspond to causal linkages expressed in the TOC?
<b>Relevance of results achieved:</b> To what extent, and how well, did the project outputs and linked outcomes support the needs and priorities of: (i) the national stakeholders in the four countries, and (ii) the wider national development frameworks and DWCPs?
<b>2. COHERENCE</b>
Key Questions
<b>Leveraging synergies (internal):</b> To what extent did the project leverage synergies and partnerships with other ILO projects and programmes?
<b>Leveraging synergies (external):</b> To what extent did the project leverage synergies and partnerships with programmes of constituents, social partners, development agencies?
<b>Implementation of TOC logic:</b> How consistently was the TOC logic applied across activities and across countries to achieve project objectives?

<sup>11</sup> These are the six OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance

<b>3. EFFECTIVENESS</b>
Key Questions
<b>All countries:</b> To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs, and how effectively have the outputs contributed to achieve desired outcomes in the countries?
<b>Home and Host countries (synthesized findings):</b> To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs, and how effectively have these outputs contributed to achieve the desired outcomes particularly for cross-border operations of the Japanese Multinational Enterprises?
<b>Management Effectiveness:</b> Were the management and governance arrangements and the M&E systems (including risk analysis) of the project adequate and effective?
<b>All Countries:</b> How effective was the project in stimulating interest of the participating enterprises to be catalyst and promote a culture of compliance with national laws and respect for the principles of ILS at the country and regional levels?
Has the project produced any unexpected outcomes? If so, what were the activities / factors that contributed to the unexpected outcomes?
Identify (a) the factors that facilitated, and (b) that hindered (if any) the project from achieving its results? Were any of these factors the same as that found in RVC – Phase I? If so, how were their effects either amplified to achieve even better results or mitigated to control inhibitors to project progress?
<b>4. EFFICIENCY</b>
Key Questions
<b>Adherence to schedules and time efficiency:</b> Was the project efficiently managed in terms of activity completion according to stipulated timelines? Could these have been improved?
<b>Utilization of human resources:</b> Did the project efficiently recruit and manage human resources according to its design? Could these have been improved?
<b>Adherence to budgets and resource efficiency:</b> Were the financial resources efficiently utilized in this project and according to stipulated budgets?
<b>Value for Money:</b> Assess the added value of the project and the outputs from the project activities versus their value for money (qualitative assessment).
<b>5. IMPACT</b>
Key Questions
<b>Impact, as achieved:</b> To what extent, and through which pathways, did project outcomes (i) contribute to a more enabling environment for responsible business conduct, including improved policy alignment and evidence of practice in all four participating countries? (ii) foster decent work in regional and global supply chains?
<b>Partnerships:</b> Going forward, what measures can be taken to strengthen coordination, maximize synergies, improve collaboration with existing and new partners to enhance impact?

<b>6. SUSTAINABILITY</b>
Key Questions
<b>Exit strategies, by design:</b> Assess what exit strategies were designed to achieve sustainability of the interventions beyond the project duration? How were the exit strategies factored into project design? To be analysed by each country, and then be explored for any common finding.
<b>Effect of external developments:</b> What factors (policy, institutional, or donor-related) has either affected or is likely to affect sustaining the programme results, or continued relevance?
<b>Likelihood of sustenance (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia):</b> (i) To what extent are the desired changes observable? This may be possible only to the extent of initial results that has come. (ii) What is the capacity to sustain? How strong is the commitment of the Governments, MNEs, other stakeholders to continue initiatives supported by the project? (iii) To what extent are the project's results likely to be sustained in the long term?
<b>Likelihood of sustenance (Japan):</b> Can synthesized insights be drawn from impact of outcomes of RVC – I and RVC – II phases on sustainability of the intervention?
<b>7. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES</b>
Key Questions
<b>Gender equality, non-discrimination, and disability inclusion:</b> To what extent, and in what ways, did the project incorporate principles of gender equality, non-discrimination / social inclusion, and disability inclusion?
<b>Social dialogue:</b> To what extent, and in what ways, did the project strengthen social dialogue among social partners and international stakeholders, including Japanese enterprises and public institutions: (i) at the country level? (ii) at the regional level?

## 8. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology discusses the overall evaluation approach, methods adopted for data collection, validation, and analysis along with operation sequence of key events and points out the sources of potential limitations.

### **Evaluation approach**

At an operational level, the evaluation was sequenced in three stages. Key activities within each of these stages have been discussed below.

**Stage # 1 (inception):** This stage of work laid the foundation of the engagement.

- (a) A desk review of available information shared by the ILO with the evaluation team included study of *ProDoc* (development cooperation document approved by the donor) list of stakeholders in each country, mid-term progress report from the ILO to the donor covering the first year's progress (April 2024 – March 2025), other important project documents and progress reports filed by ILO's project team and partners.

- (b) Preliminary discussions: The kick-off meeting and subsequent discussions with the ILO project team facilitated by the evaluation manager helped the evaluators obtain preliminary insights into project activities, plan for the evaluation activities to be undertaken in each country and the international mission plans.
- (c) Data collection instruments: It was envisaged that two instruments will be needed for data collection: (i) a short web survey that will have a common set of questions for workshop participants in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia; and (ii) a semi-structured questionnaire to conduct the Key Informant Interviews (KII) where the questionnaire would be customized (to an extent) according to the role played by the stakeholder in this project in the respective countries: such as ILO constituents, partners, enterprises selected to be interviewed, as well as the ILO specialists who supported the project. A sample of these two instruments are included (Annex – 4 and Annex – 5) following the ILO's guide to collect evaluation information effectively (International Labour Organization, 2020b).
- (d) The inception report was drafted following guidelines (International Labour Organization, 2021b), and was finalized after consultations with the ILO Evaluation Manager.

**Stage # 2 (data collection)**: This stage of work was sequenced into (a) country-level data collection in the four countries, (b) interviews of ILO specialists, (c) web-survey of workshop participants in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia, (d) one Focus Group Discussion with the Sharoshi Federation in Japan, and (e) a debrief session to close the data collection stage.

- (a) Country-level data collection framework had two components: (i) data collection by country-based consultants in India and Lao PDR; and (ii) data collection through international missions to Malaysia and Japan. A list of key stakeholder-constituents and partners to be interviewed in each country was drawn up in consultation with the respective ILO country project teams. In addition to these key informants, a few enterprises participating in this project were interviewed to better understand the effectiveness and the impact of project outcomes.<sup>12</sup> The stakeholders interviewed is summarized in Table 4 and enlisted in Annex – 8, which includes the ILO specialists profiled below.
- (b) Interviewing ILO specialists: The evaluation team interviewed 20 ILO specialists which includes project staff, Country Office Directors, and all concerned HQ and regional technical specialists who supported the project in various capacities.
- (c) Web-survey of workshop participants: A short web-survey was administered through the SurveyMonkey™ platform to obtain feedback from workshop participants (India, Lao PDR,

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<sup>12</sup> The enterprises to be interviewed will be a purposive / convenience sample, based on (1) discussions between the evaluators and the ILO project country teams, (2) evaluator's time during missions and availability of interviewees, (3) interviewing a combination of MNEs and SMEs to the extent possible

and Malaysia) to assess any awareness raised on RBC principles from the trainings, and the possibility of adoption RBC practices to achieve decent work in their work areas.

- (d) Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Only one FGD was conducted in this evaluation; with the Sharoshi Federation in Japan to understand the effectiveness of the BHR training component which covered 646 Sharoshis of which 48 were subsequently certified as auditors for JASTI.<sup>13</sup>
- (e) A debrief session to close the data collection stage was held with the ILO project team, and the evaluation manager, to (i) identify any remaining data collection activity in the countries;<sup>14</sup> (ii) share initial “sense making” findings from the data collected; and (iii) set out timelines to complete the remaining evaluation activities.

**Table 4: Composition of KIs by country, region, and stakeholder groups**

<b>Stakeholder / Constituent</b>	<b>India, Lao PDR, Malaysia</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>Total</b>
Government	5	1	6
Enterprise, and Business Membership Orgs. (EBMO)	7	2	9
Trade Unions / Workers' Orgs.	4	2	6
Enterprises	7	4	11
Others (Academia and Intermediaries)	1	1 <sup>15</sup>	2
<b>Sub-total (A)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ILO Officials</b>	<b>Regional and HQ</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>Total</b>
ILO Specialists	11 <sup>16</sup>	0	11
ILO Officials having oversight	3	1	4
ILO project team	3	2	5
<b>Sub-total (B)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total (A) + (B)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>54</b>

<sup>13</sup> The Sharoshi Federation is in the process of doing their annual survey. The data collected from BHR Sharoshis through this survey will be sourced and analyzed to draw insights, if the data is made available within the evaluation timeframe. For the present purpose, this topic was discussed in the FGD with the Federation where all the participants unanimously said the training was effective. Further, corroborative evidence was sourced from the Federation through a brief follow up questionnaire to understand how the same cohort of Sharoshis were performing in JASTI audits (90 such audits were completed by then), being trained under the earlier ILO RVC Phase I programme.

<sup>14</sup> The project team was requested to provide an update from ongoing project activities (for the months of February and March 2026) to the evaluation team before the stakeholder validation workshop.

<sup>15</sup> For this evaluation, the Sharoshi Federation has been categorized as an intermediary

<sup>16</sup> This includes ILO specialists based in Bangkok, Delhi, and Geneva

**Stage # 3 (data analysis, validation, and reporting):** The country-level data were analysed by the evaluator to derive insights. These insights were then synthesized to develop the first draft of the evaluation report following recommended checklists (International Labour Organization, 2021a, 2021c), draw conclusions, identify good practices and lessons learnt, and draft a set of recommendations for the key stakeholders.

- (a) Data Analysis: The data collected was triangulated (wherever possible) referencing the *ProDoc*, review of documentation on project outputs, findings from KIIs, and other material available on record.
- (b) Reporting of findings: The detailed findings are reported for each of the six OECD DAC criteria and the ILO's cross cutting criteria (section 9). The conclusions are summarized and tabulated in section 10.
- (c) Testing TOC assumptions / hypotheses: The evaluation assessed available evidence (as examples) and drew insights from them to test the assumptions / hypotheses postulated in the three TOC pathways. The findings are reported in section 10.

There were three rounds of review by the ILO: the first (and preliminary) round being led by the project team on fact checks and supporting the evaluators to fill-in any missing data points or pieces of evidence that was either not documented or was not reviewed. The evaluation team took these inputs into consideration and submitted the revised draft of the report.

A second round of review then followed adopting the ILO's evaluation report review procedures. As a part of its second-round review, the ILO hosted a validation meeting of its officials, and stakeholder – constituents, where the study team presented the draft evaluation report. The comments / suggestions received from the ILO officials, and stakeholders was suitably incorporated to prepare the final evaluation report, along with an executive summary and PowerPoint presentation to communicate key findings and recommendations to stakeholders. The final evaluation report was reviewed by the ILO HQ Evaluation before it was formally shared with the constituents and donor, and accepted for general dissemination.

### ***Stakeholder participation in the evaluation process***

The evaluation ensured participation of key stakeholders (International Labour Organization, 2014). Insights were obtained from discussions with the ILO project manager, the country leads in each programme country, ILO specialists at the region (Bangkok and Delhi) and HQ (Geneva), and the ILO Directors charged with oversight responsibilities. Besides them, the evaluation interviewed donor representatives, key informants from governments, employers' and workers' organizations (ILO constituents), enterprises, academia, and other stakeholders.

***Description of dates, events, and operation sequence of the evaluation***

The evaluation timelines mostly followed the expectations set out in the Terms of Reference (provided in Annex – 10). Initial findings from the desk review and discussions with the ILO project team showed that the intervention progress varied by country. The evaluation activities were accordingly set up leading to a sequential study of each country. The work plan followed in this evaluation is illustrated in Figure 1 (below) and the schedule of activities, with dates, is provided in Annex – 1.

#	Stage	Key Activities	FN0 (16-31 Dec 2025)	FN1 (1-15 Jan 2026)	FN2 (16-31 Jan 2026)	FN3 (1-15 Feb 2026)	FN4 (16-28 Feb 2026)	FN5 (1-15 Mar 2026)	FN6 (16-31 Mar 2026)	FN7
1		Selection of Evaluators by ILO Evaluation								
2	Stage 1: Inception	Desk review of documents, consultations as needed								
3		Drafting of inception report (first draft)								
4		Revise and finalize the Inception Report				★ Inception Report				
5		Development of data collection tools / stakeholder identification / mission planning for data collection stage								
6		Stage 2: In-country data collection, int'l missions, stage debrief	<b>Lao PDR:</b> Key informant interviews, wrap-up meet							
7	<b>Malaysia:</b> Key informant interviews, wrap-up meet									
8	<b>India:</b> Key informant interviews, wrap-up meet									
9	<b>Web-survey:</b> workshop participants in IND, LAO, MYS									
10	<b>ILO:</b> Interviews with ILO HQ and regional specialists, ILO project manager and project leads in each country									
11	<b>Japan:</b> Key informant interviews, one FGD, wrap-up meet, and a debrief to close the data collection stage							★ Stage debrief		
12	Stage 3: Analyze data, synthesize findings, and Report	Preliminary analysis, triangulation of data / information, iterations, and finalization of the (internal) country findings								
13		First draft of Evaluation Report reviewed by ILO Project Team, second draft submitted to ILO Evaluation Manager								
14		Validation Meeting with stakeholders, revise the draft evaluation report based on comments and suggestions						Validation Meeting ★		
15		Submit Final Report, Evaluation Executive Summary and required annexes to ILO Evaluation Manager for approval							★ Final Eval Report	
16		Engagement Management activities: coordination, periodic reporting, handling missions and contracting matters								

Figure 1: Gantt Chart, evaluation activities by fortnights

### ***Methodological limitations***

Evaluation methodologies have their set of limitations and these need to be recognized before the main findings are reported. This evaluation too has its methodological limitations and three such limitations are enlisted below.

(a) Selection bias is an inherent risk when project teams help facilitate contact with programme stakeholders. At the same time purposive samples (based on convenience due to limited time available during evaluation missions) lead the evaluator(s) to interview the most active, responsive, and/or engaged stakeholders. The evaluator attempted to mitigate this risk in the following ways: (i) exploring to understand reasons that could have made some constituents ‘less engaged’;<sup>17</sup> (ii) triangulating data from different sources – KII findings, reviews of project documents, digital artefacts generated, and partner reports.

(b) There was low response to the web-survey of workshop participants (only 27 responses were obtained from India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia)<sup>18</sup> which was not statistically significant. The response rates could have been higher if the survey was conducted soon after the workshops were held at different times in the countries, but the independent evaluation was not due then. Thus, for the purpose of this evaluation, the findings from the web-survey have been taken as indicative and has been used to corroborate main findings drawn from data collected through other instruments.

(c) In addition to above two limitations, the evaluation recognises limitations related to uneven availability of data across countries, variation in stakeholder access, time, and resource constraints, complexity of attribution, language nuances (especially in Japan, where all KIIs were conducted availing interpretation services), and the limited generalisability of purposive samples.

Evaluation resource limitation, and an unexpected outcome: Unlike RVC Phase I final evaluation, where the international evaluator was supported by four national evaluators, the international evaluator in RVC Phase II covered three of the four participating countries himself, and was supported by a national evaluator in only one country. This, however to an extent, eased the challenge of coordinating with multiple national evaluators to ensure that the data collected

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<sup>17</sup> For example, in Japan, there were 16 SMEs who participated in the JEITA SPP when it was launched in 2025, but only 8 of these 16 SMEs stayed engaged in the next phase of the SPP initiative (during 2026). The evaluator, while trying to understand the motivators for the 8 SMEs to stay engaged, also probed to understand possible reasons why 8 SMEs deferred joining the next phase of the SPP Initiative.

<sup>18</sup> The anonymous web-survey was administered through the ILO implementation partners to the workshop participants and the web-survey response collector was solely accessed by the evaluator.

remains consistent and comparable despite varied contexts; and reduced the divergence risks of methodology application by the national evaluators or interpretation of data collected.

## 9. MAIN FINDINGS

This section discusses the main findings on the seven evaluation criteria as set out in Section 7 of the evaluation report (the six OECD DAC criteria and the ILO's cross cutting criteria). A limited assessment of the impact and sustainability of the project intervention activities was deemed appropriate for the short duration of implementation activities in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia. In Japan, however, there was a continuity of activities through successive project phases (RVC Phase I April 2022 – March 2024, and RVC Phase II April 2024 – March 2026) which merited a regular assessment of the impact and sustainability.

### 9.1 RELEVANCE

**Overall findings:** The findings from review of project documents, KIIs of the ILO's constituents and stakeholders in all four countries have, without any exception, confirmed the relevance of this project for them. A majority of EBMO and workers' organization constituents interviewed termed the project 'highly relevant' and 'timely' both for building awareness on RBC for DW and supporting the focused initiatives as applicable in their countries. Further, the findings from KIIs revealed that the ILO project team consulted key stakeholders in all the countries during the inception phase to detail out several intervention activities (and in some cases, reorganize the activities) to improve their relevance and orient outputs to meet stakeholder needs. While the intervention design was valid, there may have been a scope to improve further. The findings for the key evaluation questions (Table 3, relevance) are reported below.

*9.1.1 Relevance of project activities to the stakeholders: To what extent, and in what ways, were the project activities relevant for the stakeholders in each country?*

- i. **Relevance to stakeholders (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia):** The project documents show participants found the project activities in all three countries (workshops, training sessions, consultations, and dialogues) to be relevant to their needs. The evaluation checked to confirm this understanding in two ways: (i) through KIIs; and (ii) indicative responses from participants in the web-survey. Both these checks were affirmative.

- ii. **Relevance to stakeholders (Japan):** The project documents show participants found the project activities in Japan (workshops, training sessions, consultations, and dialogues) to be relevant to their needs. The evaluation checked to confirm this understanding through KIIs.
- iii. **Relevance of focused initiatives:** In addition to the above trainings, seminars, awareness raising sessions, five focused initiatives pursued by the project were evaluated: (i) promoting BHR awareness and building capacities of Japanese SMEs in the E&E sector in partnership with JEITA (SPP programme); (ii) training LFTU in Lao PDR on RBC and HRDD, thereby building capacities which LFTU subsequently used to organize more RBC awareness raising sessions for its members using its own resources; (iii) making technical contributions to the NAPBHR development process in Malaysia; (iv) building BHR advisory capacities for Sharoshi in Japan, by working with the Sharoshi Federation; and (v) playing an anchor's role to develop and launch a bipartite roadmap for promoting RBC for DW in India. All these five pursuits were found to be relevant from the KIIs and the FGD findings.<sup>19</sup>

#### 9.1.2 Validity of intervention design:

- (i) *To what extent was the intervention designed to address institutional needs, and priorities in each country?*
  - (ii) *To what extent were the project outcomes designed to be relevant to the ILO's P&B 2024-2025 Output 4.2, and SDG 8 targets (8.5 and 8.8)?*
  - (iii) *To what extent do project activities, outputs, and outcomes, correspond to causal linkages expressed in the TOC?*
- (i) The project was designed on the intervention logic (Section 5.0), taking cognizance of the donor expectations and the activities, outputs, outcomes were underpinned by its TOC as postulated in the *ProDoc*. The evaluation found the project design to be relevant for all four programme countries on two counts: (a) relevant to national priorities to advance the RBC for DW agenda in their respective countries, supply chains,<sup>20</sup> and (b) improve alignment of prevalent practices to the MNE Declaration principles.
  - (ii) The project design was aimed to be relevant and contribute to achieving P&B 2024-2025 Output 4.2 (Increased capacity of constituents to develop more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable enterprises in supply chains and responsible business conduct for decent work).

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<sup>19</sup> The international evaluator also attended the bipartite roadmap launching programme in India as an observer; joint views expressed therein by stakeholder constituents (EBMOs and workers' organization, who were panelists) confirmed that the initiative was relevant to them in the contemporary national context

<sup>20</sup> Inputs obtained from KIIs and FGDs conducted by members of the evaluation team

As the Country Programme Objectives (CPO) are all linked to P&B Output 4.2, the relevance of project outputs to the CPOs (given below), ensured contribution to P&B Output 4.2.

- Outputs of the project were relevant to IND103 (*Enterprises, MSMEs, social and solidarity economy (SSE) entities and value chains benefit from improved productivity, sustainability, and innovations for just transitions and decent work*)
- Outputs of the project were relevant to LAO177 (*Increased policy capacity, competency standards, and certification and accreditation arrangements to support promotion of technical/vocational skills for women, men, and youth according to Lao PDR DWCP Outcome 1.3*)
- Outputs of the project were relevant to MYS102 (*Promoting decent work fairer, more resilient, and sustainable supply chains going forward*)
- Outputs of the project were relevant to JPN 101 (*Japanese enterprises are better equipped with knowledge and skills to advance responsible business practices in line with the principles of the ILO MNE Declaration*), as well as JPN 801, and JPN 802
- Regionally, the Outputs of the project were relevant to RAS 152 (*Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work*)

The project design, outputs and expected outcomes were relevant to achievement of SDG 8 goals, especially SDG 8.5 (decent work and equal pay) and SDG 8.8 (Labour Rights and Safety: protecting labour rights and promoting safe working environments).

(iii) The designed project activities, outputs and outcomes reflect the underpinned intervention logic and corresponds to the causal linkages in the TOC, but they could have been improved to an extent. The two observations below are provided as examples on how this improvement could possibly have been done.

- It is likely that the output to outcome linkages could have been stronger if: (a) 'group work' exercises, and 'site visit activities', were more embedded as a part of training workshops, and awareness building sessions; and (b) to deepen the understanding of RBC concepts, and how it can be adopted in practice, some of the key informants suggested 'development and application of checklists', undertaking one or two 'HRDD pilots' (subject to availability of funding), and similar other 'learning by doing' methods be incorporated in future intervention designs to set some examples thereby initiating hands-on training for better retention of concepts which otherwise was taught in classroom situations.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Inputs, suggestions, and recommendations obtained from KIs conducted by members of the evaluation team. One suggestion of 'group work' received during KIs was triangulated by reviewing a project partner report which showed the usefulness of adopting group work for better training outcomes. See, Sharoshi Federation final technical report dated 27-Mar-25, section 6, Lessons learned and future opportunities, page 15, which stated: "By adding group work, they were able to talk with a variety of people from other industries, so they seemed to be highly satisfied. We have found that seminars that combine lectures and group work are highly effective especially when the seminar instructors have a good knowledge on BHR."

While a more practice-oriented approach allowing enterprises to apply RBC for DW principles directly could have been beneficial, to the best of the evaluators' understanding, two key limitations should be acknowledged within the scope of the project (a) there is currently no ILO training-of-trainers programme on RBC for DW and HRDD that would enable sustained, hands-on support to SMEs throughout their learning journey; and (b) the project operated with limited scope, time, and financial resources, which constrained its ability to go beyond awareness-raising and provide more in-depth, tailored support to enterprises and stakeholders.

- The strategies for raising RBC awareness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in supply chains, and nudging them to voluntarily adopt a more responsible business conduct to achieve decent work in their operations, deserve to be handled separately in the design. Although there are areas of intersection between large enterprises, MNEs and smaller economic units in supply chains, and cross-border operations, the challenges facing SMEs (especially Tier 2 suppliers and below) to adopt RBC for DW need focused considerations while they struggle to mostly retain and, in some cases, grow their market shares profitably.<sup>22</sup> Hence, in this case, the design could have explicitly included SMEs in Activities 01.01.01 and 01.01.02 for India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia, indicating a weakness in causal linkage between these activities and Output 01.01 and Outcome 1.0.

On the one hand, it can be argued that a start with SMEs in three new countries (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia) may not have generated effective results unless their purchaser / customer MNEs saw values and benefit of RBC and would 'reward' their RBC early-adopter suppliers to adopt in the business transactions. The RVC Phase I in Japan started with MNEs and industry organizations. After building awareness among MNEs, the need to build capacity among SMEs came out quite clearly. This could be a reason why Japan component could have clear focus on SMEs in Phase II (Activity 01.02.01, Japan). The project activities in Japan targeted the SMEs and outputs have accordingly followed.

On the other hand, it can be counter-argued that (a) the application of learning from Japan Phase I continuing into Phase II supported deeper engagement with SMEs and this learning

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<sup>22</sup> Some of the SME challenges (which are different from large enterprises) emanate from their limited scale of operations, keeping pace with technology upgrades in their respective sectors, volatility in product markets as well as disproportionately higher impact of in-sourcing disruptions, maintaining product / service margins, keeping control on the cost of capital, nurturing human capital, and managing staffing pools.

could have been applied right away to India, Lao PDR and Malaysia. Although SMEs were not explicitly referenced in the description of Activities 01.01.01 and 01.01.02 in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia, they were in practice included; (b) the larger enterprises in India and Malaysia were already (to an extent) aware of RBC / BHR needs through their respective national guidelines and frameworks and the project could have leveraged such awareness;<sup>23</sup> and (c) the structure of the secondary (industrial) sector in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia, have a dominance of SMEs and the project design could have taken cognizance of this by including SME specific activities in these countries.

*9.1.3 Relevance of results achieved: To what extent, and how well, did the project outputs and linked outcomes support the needs and priorities of: (i) the national stakeholders in the four countries, and (ii) the wider national development frameworks and DWCPs?*

(i) **Relevance of results to national stakeholders**

- **India, Lao PDR, Malaysia:** The project outputs in all three countries (workshops, training sessions, consultations, and dialogues) were achieved as intended and project documents show participants found them relevant for increased awareness. The evaluation checked to confirm this understanding in two ways: (i) through interviews of key informants (especially the EBMOs, the enterprises interviewed, and the workers' organizations); (ii) responses from participants in the web-survey; and both these checks were affirmative. However, if one were to take a longer-term horizon planning view, it is likely the present set of outputs have contributed to 'intermediate' outcomes achieving short-term, but foundational, goals such as improved awareness, alignment, and dialogue. But these achievements may not be predictors of sustained behavioural or institutional change which could be driven by several other institutional, regulatory, and firm-level economic factors. The needs and views on longer-term systemic change, and their drivers, were discussed with Japanese MNEs in India and Malaysia during the KIIs and the above understanding was confirmed.
- **Japan:** The outputs in Japan from workshops, training sessions, consultations, and dialogues were achieved as intended and project documents show participants found them relevant for increased awareness. The evaluation checked to confirm this understanding

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<sup>23</sup> In India, the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC) is effective from 2019; and in Malaysia the i-ESG framework is effective from 2022

through interviews of key informants: especially the EBMOs, the enterprises, the workers' organizations, the Sharoshi Federation, and their members who were interviewed.

(ii) **Relevance of results to development frameworks**

- **National frameworks:** While the project was adaptive in pursuing planned activities such as training and awareness building, it took the flexibility offered in the project design to contribute to emerging opportunities aimed to build national frameworks that can be considered foundational to promote BHR and RBC for DW. Two such examples can be cited: (a) In Malaysia, the project's contribution to the development of the "Labour" pillar in the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAPBHR) promulgated by the government in August 2025 which, inter alia, specifically references the MNE Declaration, and (b) In India, the year-long pioneering work done by the project to develop a bipartite roadmap which is designed to serve as a national framework that can be replicated to other countries<sup>24</sup> thereby creating a platform for social dialogue and have a structured engagement between employers' and workers' organizations to promote RBC for DW. Six employers' organizations and six workers' organizations have already committed to acting on the roadmap, with more expected to join this collaborative initiative.
- **Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP):** The results were relevant to DWCPs in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia as discussed below.

**India DWCP (2023-2027)**

- *Outcome 1.3 (By 2027, the institutional capacity of constituents is strengthened to advance gender equality and promote the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, including OSH and workplaces free from violence, harassment, and discrimination)*
- *Outcome 2.2 (By 2027, all enterprises, MSMEs, social and solidarity economy (SSE) entities and value chains, including those led by women, other informal and vulnerable groups, will benefit from improved productivity, sustainability, and innovations, for realizing just transitions and decent work)*

In India, two of the project outputs made relevant contributions to achieve the DWCP outcomes stated above: (a) the bipartite roadmap between employers' and workers'

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<sup>24</sup> The ILO Director-General Gilbert F. Houngbo was presented the bipartite roadmap during his visit to India on 18-Feb-26. On this occasion he said "The steps taken here in India contribute to the global movement by demonstrating how dialogue between employers and workers can identify shared priorities and translate them into practical cooperation." See, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/india%E2%80%99s-social-partners-present-bipartite-roadmap-promote-responsible>

organizations to promote RBC for DW has five pillars all of which are relevant; (b) most of the participants in the RBC for DW awareness building sessions with employers' organizations such as the Employers Federation of India (EFI) and Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) had small SME participation.

#### **Lao PDR DWCP (2022-2026)**

- *Output 1.3 (Improved capacities of tripartite constituents at national and provincial levels for social dialogue (including policy engagement and collective bargaining) and provision of membership services)*
- *Output 1.4 (Increased capacity of tripartite constituents to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for women and men workers and reduce the prevalence of worst forms of child labour and incidence of forced labour)*
- *Output 3.1 (New or strengthened gender-responsive national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks, and capacity to promote and protect rights of departing and returnee migrant workers, and promote coherence with employment, skills, social protection, and other relevant policies)*
- *Output 3.2 (Increased availability of and access to pre-migration and on-return services, as well as to migrant workers' associations/networks, for women and men migrant workers, including in the areas of skills development, access to employment and prevention of and protection from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment)*

In Lao PDR, the project outputs made relevant contributions to achieve the DWCP outcomes stated above. Some of the project outputs can be highlighted such as: (a) training and awareness raising sessions of SMEs; (b) Capacity building for facilitators on RBC and ESG practices – training of trainers implemented through LNCCI; (b) capacity building of LFTU by JILAF, which helped LFTU independently roll our RBC awareness building session to its members in a larger number of enterprises.

#### **Malaysia DWCP, Phase 2: 2021-2025**

- *Outcome 1.1 (Strengthened labour legislation to ensure compliance with International Labour Standards)*
- *Outcome 1.2 (Eradication of forced labour and child labour)*

In Malaysia, the project contributed to the development of the “Labour” pillar in the NAPBHR (August 2025) which sets Malaysia on course to become fully compliant with International Labour Standards (ILS) wherever gaps exist. NAPBHR, *inter alia*, references the ILO’s MNE Declaration instrument which requires enterprises to eradicate forced labour and child labour.

## 9.2 COHERENCE

**Overall findings:** The evaluation attempted to assess coherence from three dimensions: (a) gaining synergies and benefitting from mutually reinforcing outcomes across ILO projects and on-going country office programmes (internal to the ILO); (b) positioning this project coherently with on-going initiatives of constituents and other institutions / agencies and collaborating synergistically with them to reinforce outcomes (external to the ILO). Evaluations findings show while some synergistic leveraging on both these dimensions did occur, there were varying levels of coherence across countries and project activities; (c) how consistently was the TOC logic applied during implementation across project activities and countries? It found the TOC logic was applied in all four countries but the consistency and strength of causal linkages in application could have improved across activities and countries. The findings for key evaluation questions (Table 3, coherence) are reported below.

### 9.2.1 *Leveraging synergies (internal): To what extent did the project leverage synergies and partnerships with other ILO projects / programmes?*

The project leveraged synergies with on-going ILO projects and country programmes in all four countries and as well as the region. One such example from each is given below.

- (i) **In India**, the project collaborated synergistically with the ILO Country Office's on-going initiative with Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) to further the work that was started when the National Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC) 2019 was published. Coherent outputs and relationships from that initiative was leveraged to develop outputs under the RVC Phase II project. This synergy that was achieved was acknowledged both by the ILO and IICA panelists in the 29-Jan-26 workshop that was convened to launch the Bipartite Roadmap to promote RBC for DW in India.
- (ii) **In Lao PDR**, there were operational coordination mechanisms such as monthly staff meetings, project coordination meetings, and shared participation in events, and the RVC Phase II project supported information sharing across other ILO projects. Knowledge products, including OSH materials, and visual tools, were shared and adapted where relevant. However, despite information sharing and alignment at the programme level, there were no joint activities or pooled budgeting mechanisms. As a result, coherence remained largely administrative and technical rather than strategic or programmatically integrated.
- (iii) **In Malaysia**, the RVC Phase II project worked with ILO's ongoing ADVANCE project on synergistic activities and pooled budgets to co-develop an online module for the Investment

- Environment, Social Governance (i-ESG) framework aimed to disseminate knowledge to companies and provide them with training support beyond the project period. Other activity level collaboration between RVC Phase II and ADVANCE project included co-organizing workshops in Penang and Johor by pooling in budgets from the respective projects. Further, the project undertook a joint meeting with BHEUU and ILO ADVANCE project to present the labour dimension of the BHR agenda, followed by joint comments on the draft provisions that were included in the (then) proposed NAPBHR. This approach reflected the comprehensive nature of the Declaration, which covers the full decent work dimension of RBC.
- (iv) **In Japan**, the RVC Phase II project leveraged synergies off earlier ILO programmes as well as initiatives of ILO Office for Japan in general. For example, panelists for the ILO–Keidanren Joint Session for Industry Associations held in December 2025 under the present project benefitted from speakers from institutions who were supported by previous ILO programmes as well as under current initiatives. Another instance of internal collaboration was demonstrated in February 2025, when the project organized a cross-country bipartite dialogue in the electronics sector on RBC and DW in Tokyo. Representatives from seven countries attended the dialogue, namely India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. As the RVC Phase II covered only three of the six overseas countries, the project collaborated with other ILO projects and Japan CO to organize this dialogue.
- (v) The **Regional Supply Chain Forum** was co-funded by multiple ILO projects on supply chains under the lead of Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP). It contributed to (a) cost saving for specific events, in this case the September 2025 dialogue; (b) reducing the administrative burden for the organization of this event on individual projects as it was mainly supported by ROAP; and (c) ensuring a much broader participation of countries by leveraging stakeholder networks across the region rather than being limited to just four project countries.
- (vi) The project was internally well supported by **ILO Specialists** in ROAP Bangkok and sub-regional office in Delhi, both of which offices provided resource persons regularly to the project (especially from ENTERPRISE, ACTEMP, ACTRAV, and other units). From HQ, the MULTI unit backstopped the project, including deploying experts on missions to each country for national tripartite workshop, and BETTERWORK (who were involved in RVC Phase I) continuing to support RVC Phase II for Japan component on a need basis. MULTI and the GEDI branch also supported and guided the project team on gender specific knowledge regarding elaboration of one of enterprise good practice cases related to LGBTI.

*9.2.2 Leveraging synergies (external): To what extent did the project leverage synergies and partnerships with programmes of constituents, social partners, development agencies?*

The evaluation found that the project had either leveraged synergies or had attempted to do so with programmes of other constituents, governments, social partners, national institutions, development partners in all four countries. However, the strength of such collaboration varied across countries. One such example from each of the four countries is given below.

- (i) **In India**, the project collaborated synergistically with the United Nations Global Compact Network India (UNGONI) to host a workshop aimed to support businesses in transitioning from traditional Corporate Social Responsibility approaches to more integrated, risk-based, and accountability-driven RBC frameworks aligned with global standards and regulatory requirements. The workshop witnessed active participation from 22 industry representatives from automotive sector enterprises, supply chain partners, and sustainability and CSR leaders who attended to strengthen their understanding of evolving global and national expectations around responsible business. Subsequently, the project explored collaboration with the UN Global Compact Academy to institutionalize a global e-learning module on decent work principles within a national small credit certification scheme.
- (ii) **In Lao PDR**, the project collaborated with UNDP to host a workshop on business and human rights. The ILO through RVC phase II project enriched tripartite social dialogue, a long-established institutional framework that facilitates collaboration among government, employers, and workers' representatives. The model highlights the importance of balancing economic development with adequate social protections, in line with the ILO's DW principles, and illustrates how structured social dialogue can support more inclusive and sustainable policy outcomes. However, follow-up was limited due to the closure of the UNDP project.
- (iii) **In Malaysia**, the ILO collaborated with UNDP on the government's NAPBHR drafting exercise. NAPBHR has three pillars – Governance, Labour and Environment. UNDP was the lead UN agency, and ILO's technical contribution was on the "Labour" pillar covering BHR and MNE Declaration. The government (both MoHR and BHEUU) found ILO's contributions to be meaningful and acknowledged including them in the published action plan under applicable sections. However, an important coherence challenge the project faced (and continues to face), was promoting adoption of RBC and BHR principles and practices (which are not mandatory) vis-à-vis the i-ESG framework of Malaysian Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) which requires enterprises to be statutorily compliant. Both have common underlying elements of good business practices, and this creates the likelihood that there may be a 'perception distortion' in communication to enterprises by different institutional actors.

(iv) **In Japan**, the project played an anchor's role by working with JEITA on their flagship Sustainable Procurement Partnership (SPP) initiative which is a cross-industry platform connecting large JEITA member companies in the E&E industry with SMEs in their supply chains. Through the SPP, large enterprises work to provide capacity-building and awareness-raising support to the SMEs, offer practical advice, and create opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, with the goal of building a sustainable supply chain for the entire industry. The tenets of the SPP are: (i) it is an initiative carried out through industry-wide collaboration that goes beyond the individual enterprise; (ii) it places emphasis on engagement between SMEs and large enterprises across the value chain; (iii) it is an initiative that has been developed in collaboration with external experts from Japan Sharoshi Federation and the ILO Office for Japan. In 2024-25, the SPP provided support to SMEs to formulate human rights policies and, in 2025-26 it is scheduled (now work in progress) to support SMEs implement HRDD processes and establish grievance handling mechanisms. The SPP's support processes include a management study meeting to encourage commitment from executives, workshops for practitioners from the participating companies to learn about RBC and BHR, individual consultations with a BHR Sharoshi to support the formulation of human rights policies tailored to each company's situation, and a final closing meeting in which each company presents its initiatives. The participating SMEs come from across Japan and range from small enterprises with fewer than ten employees to those with over 300. They represent a diverse range of industries, extending beyond electronic component manufacturers to software and other related sectors.<sup>25</sup>

### *9.2.3 Implementation of TOC logic: How consistently was the TOC logic applied across activities and across countries to achieve project objectives?*

The evaluation found the TOC logic was applied in project but the consistency and strength of causal linkages in such application could have improved across activities and countries. Two such examples are given below.

(i) **In Malaysia**, the project in collaboration with the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), commissioned a baseline assessment to gather insights into the E&E and automotive industry practices and seek their perspectives on RBC and HRDD. In all 35 companies participated in the assessment which combined desk research with quantitative surveys and qualitative

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<sup>25</sup> Source, ILO Japan (2026): joint publication between ILO-JEITA-Sharoshi Federation titled "Sustainable Procurement Partnership: An industry-wide initiative and case studies of SMEs on responsible business conduct"

interviews to identify current practices, gaps, and opportunities in RBC and HRDD. While adopting such a systematic root cause analysis approach to align project activities in accordance with the TOC intervention logic linked to Output 01.01 (and may be contribute to other outputs as well) is commendable, the evaluation did not find evidence of similar detailed baseline assessments, conducted by external experts, being commissioned for India where initial scoping exercises were done internally by the ILO Delhi. At the same time, it is unclear how the outputs of the baseline assessment in Malaysia were used during the project duration in Malaysia, except informing trainers of RBC 101 seminar series. The KIIs with government stakeholders revealed they were unaware of such a sector-level (even if the sample size was small) assessment was carried out in this project and were keen to access the outputs even if the project was nearing an end. The baseline study in Lao PDR, commissioned with an external consultant, conducted KIIs which identified the target sectors and key challenges (details in section 5.3). This baseline informed a few aspects of the intervention, the potential and capacities of collaboration partners.

- (ii) **In Malaysia and Japan**, the project engaged with universities and academic institutions (as expected under Activity 02.01.04) in different ways pursuing their respective purposes. In January 2026, the Japan project team in collaboration with Konan University conducted a hybrid-format academic workshop titled “Foundations of Business and Human Rights and Applications to University Education” wherein 23 university faculty members (8 in person and 15 online) participated. In Malaysia, the evaluation could assess engagements outputs separately for two universities: one engagement was for a seminar held in a West Malaysia university to enhance awareness of RBC among academia and the university students looking to be placed for their one-year work-based learning programme in the E&E sector, and the other engagement was for development of an online, training course module by an East Malaysia university for the i-ESG framework. In Lao PDR, only one knowledge-sharing session on RBC was held with about 30 academics of the National University of Laos in the last month of the project leaving no scope for follow-on activities. The evaluation did not find evidence of any engagement with universities and academic institutions in India, but that of an engagement with a technical and vocational education skill council for management and professional services. Thus, the nature of academic activities varied in each country in terms of their engagement with institution types, coverage of subjects, and the depth achieved in each of the engagement areas, leading the evaluation to conclude that the consistency of such activities could have improved.

### 9.3 EFFECTIVENESS

**Overall findings:** The effectiveness of results has been evaluated on two dimensions: (a) project activities that were commonly pursued in all four countries such as training, awareness building, and capacity development; and (b) the country specific approaches pursued by the project to facilitate launching a few focused initiatives which were unique in their respective country contexts. These are discussed below.

- (a) The project trained over 8,800 participants and advanced national strategies through country implementation partners, all of which were in alignment with the respective DWCPs. The project established foundations in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia, during the inception and early implementation phases. In Japan, the project built on the foundations laid by its predecessor RVC Phase I project. In all the four countries, the ILO promoted social dialogue to strengthen tripartite collaboration, worked to build capacity for enterprises to help them begin aligning to ILS, MNE Declaration, and applicable national laws.
- (b) In addition to the above, and its related activities, the project pursued five focused initiatives:
  - (i) promoting BHR awareness and building capacities of Japanese SMEs in the E&E sector in partnership with JEITA (SPP programme);
  - (ii) training LFTU in Lao PDR on RBC and HRDD, thereby building capacities which LFTU subsequently used to organize more RBC awareness raising sessions for its members using its own resources;
  - (iii) making technical contributions to the NAPBHR development process in Malaysia;
  - (iv) building BHR advisory capacities for Sharoshi in Japan, by working with the Sharoshi Federation;
  - (v) playing an anchor's role to develop and launch a bipartite roadmap for promoting RBC for DW in India.

The management effectiveness of the project was found to be adequate. However, some of the project activities such as to strengthen home-host linkages for cross-border operations of the Japanese MNEs and working with JETRO overseas offices could have been more effective. The evaluation found evidence that large Japanese enterprises are interested to lead the BHR advocacy but 'mixed' levels of such interest among SMEs both in Japan and in the host countries. The findings for key evaluation questions (Table 3, effectiveness) are reported below.

*9.3.1 All countries: To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs, and how effectively have the outputs contributed to achieve desired outcomes in the countries?*

The Table 5 below provides a summary of results achieved vs. targets, by output indicators linked to outcomes. All output targets were achieved within stipulated time, without any lapses.

**Table 5: Results achieved vs. targets, by output indicators linked to outcomes**

Indicator	Baseline (before project start)	Target (end-of-project goal)	Achieved (actual against planned)
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Enterprises improve compliance with national laws and better align their practices with principles of international labour standards			
Percentage of training participants reporting increased knowledge on RBC and the principles of ILS	India – 0%	India – 75%	India – 91.2%
	Lao PDR – 0%	Lao PDR – 75%	Lao PDR – 95.1%
	Malaysia – 0%	Malaysia – 75%	Malaysia – 89.2%
	Japan – 0%	Japan – 80%	Japan – 93.6%
<b>Output 1.1 (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia):</b> Capacity of enterprises is strengthened to carry out human rights due diligence and their understanding is enhanced on how their contribution to the realization of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work should translate into practice			
Number of participants trained by country (disaggregated by gender)	Num. of seminars: 0	-	80
	Participants: 0	1250	2034
	Male	-	50.7%
	Female	-	48.1%
	Others	-	0.8%
	Prefer not to say	-	0.4%
<b>Output 1.2 (Japan):</b> Awareness is raised on responsible business conduct and good practices are disseminated including among Japanese enterprises			
Number of participants trained by country (disaggregated by gender)	Num. of seminars: 0	-	44
	Participants: 0	500	4126
	Male	-	49.4%
	Female	-	27.8%
	Others	-	21.4%
	Prefer not to say	-	1.4%
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Stronger capacity and collaboration of tripartite constituents foster an enabling environment for more sustainable enterprises that implement responsible business practices			
Percentage of govt. officials, employers' and workers' representatives reporting increased knowledge on RBC	India – 0%	India – 75%	India – 100%
	Lao PDR – 0%	Lao PDR – 75%	Lao PDR – 90.9%
	Malaysia – 0%	Malaysia – 75%	Malaysia – 93.7%
	Japan – 0%	Japan – 80%	Japan – 94.0%
<b>Output 2.1 (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Japan):</b> Enhanced capacity of govt., workers' and employers' orgs. for enhanced dialogue on the promotion of sustainable and responsible business practices			
(i) Number of participants in workshop / dialogue events / meeting by country (disaggregated by gender)	Num. of seminars: 0	-	34
	Participants: 0	300	2363
	Male	-	61.0%
	Female	-	38.2%
	Others	-	0.5%
	Prefer not to say	-	0.4%
(ii) Number of info brief / materials produced	Num. of briefs / materials: 0	4	9
<b>Output 2.2 (Region):</b> Peer-learning is promoted across countries to promote responsible business practices in supply chains			
Number of workshop / webinars participants by country	Num. of seminars: 0	-	5
	Participants: 0	250	359
	Male	-	55.0%
	Female	-	45.0%
	Others	-	0.0%
	Prefer not to say	-	0.0%

**In India, Lao PDR, Malaysia** (under outcome 1), the project trained 2,034 enterprise participants on RBC, HRDD, and ILS, exceeding the target of 1,250 participants. The training duration varied by each country. At a cumulative level, more than 90 percent of the participants (India 91.2%, Lao PDR 95.1%, Malaysia 89.2%) reported increased knowledge on RBC and the principles of ILS. Besides this, the project pursued a few focused initiatives in each of the programme countries which are enlisted in section 5.3.

**In Japan** (under outcome 1), the project trained 4,126 enterprise participants between April 2024 to January 2026 on RBC, HRDD, and ILS. The achievements far exceeded the target to train and raise awareness of 500 participants. About 93.6 percent of the participants reported increased knowledge on RBC and the principles of ILS. The main project activities and major events held in Japan are enlisted in section 5.3.

**Region:** The major project activities, and events held in the region are enlisted in section 5.3.

**Effectiveness of results:** The evaluation drew the following insights from the above results.

- (i) Effectiveness of Output 1.1 (India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia): A review of project progress reports, and other documents show all planned trainings, workshops and awareness building sessions are completed. Findings from KIIs show interviewees were unanimous in stating that the training sessions and workshops had raised their (as well as their peers and colleagues) awareness on BHR and RBC for DW. Findings from the web-survey also provides corroborative evidence, wherein all respondents (without exception) stated the same. While the outputs of project activities in raised the understanding of BHR and RBC for DW among the enterprises it reached out to, and made them realize the need to adopt more responsible business practices, the evaluation found no evidence that, by acquiring such knowledge, the capacity of enterprises were actually strengthened to carry out HRDD or how the enterprises should translate this newly acquired knowledge into practice as envisaged in Output 1.1. The interviewees expressed either caution or scepticism about implementing more responsible business practices in their operations and undertaking HRDD; their main arguments centred on absence of regulatory requirements (“so why do we need to adopt RBC practices?”), incurring additional costs, applicability of standards according to the size of enterprise and on-ground situation at their units, increases in their compliance burden, and creation of challenges in the transition phase when enterprises are struggling to stay afloat amid the geo-political turmoil. A recurrent theme which emerged in most KIIs was the project training material could have included more granular action-oriented checklists, sectoral templates,

case studies of how SMEs in their sectors have done it which can be an important takeaway for future programming. The evaluation discussed this feedback with ILO specialists during their KIIs, and they confirmed they received similar feedback / indications from participants during their sessions or thereafter.

- (ii) Effectiveness of Output 1.2 (Japan): A review of progress reports, and other documents for the Japan component of work, show all planned trainings, workshops and awareness building sessions are complete. The BHR training of Labor and Social Security Attorneys (Sharoshis), who mostly have SMEs as their clients, was an important workstream of the project which was completed as planned. Triangulated findings from a review of Sharoshi Federation reports, KIIs with early-adopter SMEs and trained Sharoshis who are working with their clients on BHR adoption, and findings from the FGD held with Sharoshi Federation showed the trainings were effective. The Sharoshis have started contributing towards raising awareness on RBC among Japanese enterprises in general and, specifically nudging some of their Japanese SME clients to adopt better BHR practices. This finding is in accordance with Output 1.2, as well as the donor's (METI) expectations that the SMEs voluntary adopt more responsible business practices. The project, through a shortlisting process, has selected a set of good practices which is likely to encourage other SMEs adopt similar practices. This compilation can become a reference document for Sharoshis and concerned stakeholders aiming to adopt BHR practices in their operations and supply chains, thereby providing momentum to future institutional work in this direction. The evaluation, thus found evidence that these results show early signs of greater impact, and self-sustenance.
- (iii) Effectiveness of Outcome 1: The synergized effectiveness of Output 1.1 and 1.2 results are linked to Outcome 1 which begins by stating "Enterprises improve compliance ...". The evaluation found no direct evidence of any enterprise improving its compliance because of any project intervention activity (which was not expected as well), but KIIs in Japan did reveal that early-adopter SMEs have begun changing their approach to adopting BHR practices in their operations (such as by adopting BHR policies and publishing them). Some of these SMEs are advised by their Sharoshis, but others have started on their own. The knowledge disseminated through the trainings and awareness raising sessions conducted in this project, though found useful by participants now, may not remain effective over the medium term unless nurtured appropriately. Follow on activities need to be supported, gradually embedding them into business practices to make them self-sustaining. The knowledge assets created in

this project (good practice documents, information briefs, digital assets), if leveraged well, can enhance the effectiveness of this Outcome manifold.

- (iv) Effectiveness of Output 2.1 (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Japan): The tripartite-plus workshops conducted in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia focused on the promotion of sustainable and responsible business practices, investment, and trade for the realization of decent work and inclusive growth, based on the ILO MNE Declaration and other international frameworks resulted in the development of country-specific roadmaps outlining national decent work priorities, relevant MNE Declaration principles, and follow-up actions. Participating constituents in Malaysia<sup>26</sup> and Lao PDR<sup>27</sup> expressed interest in establishing national tripartite focal points to promote the MNE Declaration and enhance policy coherence on RBC for DW.

Besides the above, the evaluation found an initial set of three evidences that the project has directly contributed to opening new avenues for enhanced dialogue among constituents (besides the ones that already exist) to promote sustainable and responsible business practices, and enhance capacities of workers' and employers' organizations: (i) **in Lao PDR**, the project contracted JILAF to implement a capacity-building initiative for the LFTU on RBC and HRDD. Following the June 2025 training, LFTU conducted regular dissemination activities on HRDD covering 21 factories (19 private companies and two army-owned factories), reaching approximately 7,000 workers (5,890 women) using its own resources. The LFTU support, thus shows evidence of institutional uptake and multiplier effects demonstrating a beginning made towards stronger ownership, internalization of knowledge, showing early signs of a potentially greater impact; (ii) **in Japan**, JEITA's industry-led SPP initiative, supported by the project and Sharoshi Federation, aims to systematically support SMEs to realize decent work in the electronics and digital supply chains; and foster an enabling environment by promoting better cooperation between government, workers and employers to address structural challenges; (iii) **in India**, drafting and launching the Bipartite Roadmap formalized through a year-long dialogue process between EBMOs and workers' organization to promote RBC for DW. Of the above three contributions made by the project, the evaluation deemed the latter two (in Japan and in India) are new avenues that have replication potential across countries, can be independently organized according to sector-wide needs in their

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<sup>26</sup> See, national roadmap to promote responsible business practices in Malaysia developed:

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/national-roadmap-promote-responsible-business-practices-malaysia-developed>

<sup>27</sup> See, Lao PDR strengthens responsible business conduct through collaboration and roadmap development:

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/lao-people%E2%80%99s-democratic-republic-strengthens-responsible-business-conduct>

respective countries, and can become self-sustaining in the medium-term. Hence both these have been identified as emerging good practices (discussed in Section 11.2 of this report).

**In Malaysia**, the promulgation of the NAPBHR in August 2025 (where the ILO was contributor to the NAPBHR Labour pillar through this project) has set the stage for creating new avenues for tripartite dialogue on this subject. The evaluation noted, that despite these project achievements which have resulted in documentation of the good practices adopted by SMEs, the scale of challenge to permeate responsible business practices across the world of work in the programme countries is mammoth. More needs to be done to sustain the gains made not only in this project, and in allied initiatives as well, but implement larger programmes after the project period to make news gains.

The evaluation found instances of the project's **collaboration with academia** and local professional institutions in all four programme countries<sup>28</sup> to be effective, which have replication potential across countries, can bring in systemic change to raise awareness on RBC for DW at scale and, being embedded in higher education systems, are inherently self-sustaining. Hence, it has been identified as an emerging good practice and discussed in Section 11.2.

- (v) Effectiveness of Output 2.2 (Regional): The evaluation found evidence of six cross-country business forum sessions and one academic session during the project duration.<sup>29</sup> While the project team felt all these sessions were effective, the evaluation noted that the “Cross-Country Dialogue on Responsible Business and Decent Work in electronics sector (February 2025)” which brought together 27 representatives from seven countries, namely India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, was referenced by the donor and the electronics sector stakeholder enterprises interviewed during the KIIs (i.e. after a year the dialogue had happened). This leads the evaluation to independently confirm that the dialogue was effective and was found useful by the participants. For another instance, the attendees to the “High-level Regional Forum on Supply Chains (September 2025)” reported

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<sup>28</sup> In Japan regional academic seminar project team in collaboration with Konan University (January 2026). In Malaysia Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) Johor academic seminar to enhance awareness of RBC among academia & university students. In India, UN Global Compact – ILO India e-learning RBC module being developed, to be registered with Management and Professional Services Skill Council. In Lao PDR RBC seminar scheduled on 12-Mar-26 with National University of Laos, Faculty of Economics and Business Management (35 academics attending)

<sup>29</sup> These six cross-country sessions were: (i) UN Forum on Business and Human Rights Forum (September 2024), (ii) Cross-Country Dialogue on Responsible Business and Decent Work in electronics sector (February 2025), (iii) Cross-country automotive workers session (April 2025), (iv) Sharing experiences on advancing responsible business conduct: Perspectives from India and Japan (July 2025), (v) High-level regional forum on supply chains (Sept 2025), (vi) cross country academic session (January 2026)

the dialogue was good, meeting the project objective of such cross-country interventions to promote peer-learning (Annex – 2 TOC visualization, ‘Sphere of Control’).

However, if a greater impact is sought in the regional ‘Sphere of Influence’ leading to ‘Sphere of Interest’ (Annex – 2, TOC visualization) where some national-level changes are adopted on binding responsible labour practices, address persistent issues related to migrant workers, and other similar issues driven by national interests, the regional forum meetings have to be differently designed, structured on specific issues, spaced out over several months, preceded by regional consultative processes with the participation from senior officials.

(vi) Effectiveness of Outcome 2, and interconnected Outcome 1: It is likely that the effectiveness of Output 2.1 will dominate the linkages to Outcome 2 and will make Outcome 2 effective to that extent. In the present geo-political context, the causal linkages between Output 2.2 and Outcome 2 may be comparatively weaker but, with passage of time, can become stronger. The evaluation has also noted that both Outcomes 1 and 2 are interconnected, and to an extent mutually reinforcing, though this aspect is not expressly recognized in the TOC Logical Framework. This is because the large enterprise actors in each sector who are seeking to drive change by adopting more responsible business practices in their own operations, as well as domestic and cross-border supply chains (due to statutory / compliance needs and other business imperatives) are also leaders in EBMOs who are stakeholders, project participants actively working on RBC / BHR initiatives.

Target setting in future programmes: For two indicators both aimed to measure participation in training sessions and workshops, the actual participation exceeded targets by several times viz. under Output 1.2 the targeted participation was 500, whereas the actual participation was 4,126 and under Output 2.1 (i) the targeted participation was 300, whereas the actual participation was 2,363. At the same time, the targets vis-à-vis achievements were comparable for the two other similar indicators under Output 1.1 and Output 2.2. This may be due to either the project team taking an overly cautious approach to set targets on a case-by-case basis, or a larger than intended number of attendees joining the awareness building workshops (especially the virtual sessions) which may have contributed to higher participation numbers but not necessarily have translated into higher retention than those achieved through in-person sessions. The evaluation deems this finding ‘to set more realistic targets’ a takeaway for future programming, but not be categorized as a lesson learnt which have been discussed in Section 11.1 of this report.

*9.3.2 Home and Host countries (synthesized findings): To what extent has the project delivered outputs that can be attributed to achieve the desired outcomes particularly for cross-border operations of the Japanese Multinational Enterprises?*

The evaluation interviewed a Japanese chamber and three Japanese MNEs in the automotive sector, who were participants in this programme, in two host countries as a purposive sample. Besides this, the evaluation also interviewed two EBMOs and one large conglomerate in the E&E sector in Japan (home country) having cross-border interests and operations in several Asian countries. Three key findings emerged from these interviews which are enlisted below.

- (i) The Japanese companies which are moving towards adopting RBC for DW in their operations in host countries are driven by compliance needs and policies of their holding companies in Japan (home country) even if they are not required to be compliant to national laws of their host country. While these transitions cannot be attributed to any interventions made by this project, they had participated in the ILO-led workshops / training sessions and found them to be useful to raise their awareness.
- (ii) The Japanese companies who were suppliers to larger Japanese companies in host countries and had participated in due diligence exercises on environmental aspects or other matters (not related to BHR) driven by their purchaser's needs, thought they would need handholding support if they were needed to become compliant to RBC for DW requirements.
- (iii) All those interviewed believed encouraging companies to achieve voluntary compliances in the host countries have their limitations and could lead to unevenness in sector-wide adoption. They felt, at some point in time, the host country governments will need to frame and promulgate enforceable regulations to propagate adoption of RBC for DW in their countries.

*9.3.3 How effective was the project in stimulating interest of the participating enterprises to be catalyst and promote a culture of compliance with national laws and respect for the principles of ILS at the country and regional levels?*

The evaluation found evidence from a review of project documents, progress reports, good practice compilations, and digital outputs, that large Japanese enterprises are interested to lead the advocacy initiatives to adopt more responsible business practices, and promote a culture of compliance with home and host country national laws and respect for the principles of ILS at the country and regional levels. These review findings were validated through KII findings with large companies, EBMOs, chambers and industry associations.

However, the Japan SMEs (whether in Japan or subsidiaries in other programme countries) had a 'mixed' level of interest to adopt more responsible business practices and consider making any commitments to participate in HRDD exercises. While all of them understood the importance of the topic, and the business imperative, their caution and/or reluctance stemmed from issues on incurring additional costs in an increasingly competitive landscape, being burdened with additional compliance needs, questions around balancing workers' rights at work with their duties, and transitioning challenges. Through the KIIs the evaluation understood some of these issues could lead to SMEs having to make difficult operational choices, or these issues could be sector-specific business practices, or enterprise-level operational models. The evaluation noted that all SMEs sought help on two counts: (i) a phased implementation of compliance requirements, and (ii) more practical handholding support that can either be provided by the larger enterprises (typically, the purchaser of their products) or by an independent institution such as the ILO in collaboration with the concerned EBMO.

The SMEs and suppliers (non-Japanese) in other countries also had 'mixed' levels of interest. Listed companies, and those having collaborations, either with US or EU conglomerates or did business in those markets, understood the imperative of adopting more responsible business practices. They, however, cited low levels of interest amongst their key managerial personnel leading to non-prioritization of such topics during their annual planning and budgeting meetings.

#### *9.3.4 Management Effectiveness: Were the management and governance arrangements and the M&E systems (including risk analysis) of the project adequate and effective?*

The evaluation found the management and governance arrangements, and the monitoring systems in this project to be adequate and effective. The overall project manager / coordinator and project lead in each country had complete and up-to-date information on all project activities under their supervision, stakeholder engagements, and sufficiently smooth client relationships. The ILO Directors in charge of oversight in each of the four programme countries also played their expected roles appropriately. The ILO specialists in HQ and the regions (Bangkok and Delhi) also provided required support and backstopping to the project team as needed. Administrative and finance support at the region and the country offices were also deemed to be appropriate.

#### *9.3.5 Has the project produced any unexpected outcomes? If so, what were the activities / factors that contributed to the unexpected outcomes?*

(i) India bipartite roadmap: the agreement between the six employers' organizations and the six workers' organizations to jointly launch the bipartite agreement was an unexpected outcome

achieved beyond initial expectations. The project team departed from taking a more common tripartite approach to explore a step-by-step bipartite approach to achieve a unique result.

(ii) JEITA SPP in Japan: The triangular collaboration among JEITA, Sharoshi Federation, and ILO was not envisaged in the project design. It became a structured collaboration among three parties building on bilateral collaboration between JEITA and ILO on the one hand, and between Sharoshi Federation and the ILO on the other hand. In addition, the cross-country bipartite dialogue for electronics sector (held in February 2025) also fostered a collaboration between JEITA (as an EBMO) and JCM (as a workers' organization) which is now resulting in exchange of speakers between both organizations in Japan as well as in other countries.

(iii) Collaboration with JETRO: The good practice booklet produced in RVC Phase I with JETRO<sup>30</sup> was useful, especially in the early stage of RVC Phase II, to gain stakeholder buy-in in the three new programme countries (India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia) as well as in seminars for enterprises, where concrete RBC adoption examples in Japan at the enterprise-level could be disseminated. However, the number of collaborative activities with JETRO overseas offices (Activity 02.01.03) during RVC Phase II project implementation was limited to holding awareness raising seminars for Japanese companies operating in each of the three host countries: (a) for India, in collaboration with Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in India (JCCII); (b) for Lao PDR in collaboration with JETRO; and (c) for Malaysia in collaboration with JACTIM. All these activities were advised by the respective JETRO offices. The ILO project team were in contact with JETRO overseas offices and kept them informed about major project events and milestones achieved.

(iv) Malaysia: The government has consistently engaged with the project mainly due to the ILO's long-standing relationship with MoHR. The project took opportunity of NAPBHR development process (linked to the 2025 ASEAN summit deadlines) to mainstream RBC for DW; it offered distinct and specific support to the government to develop the NAPBHR "labour" pillar. While the ILO advocates for the participation employers' and workers' organizations, in this case, the ILO got an unexpectedly deep opportunity to engage with both MoHR and BHEUU (it was the first time ILO was working with BHEUU) to support the development process of the NAPBHR "labour" pillar. The ILO enabled participation of employers (through its EBMO partner, MEF) in the government's NAPBHR consultation processes.

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<sup>30</sup> ILO (2024). Responsible Business Conduct and Human Rights Due Diligence: Good Practices of Japanese Companies. See, <https://www.ilo.org/node/647036>

9.3.6 *Identify (a) the factors that facilitated, and (b) that hindered (if any) the project from achieving its results? Were any of these factors the same as that found in RVC – Phase I? If so, how were their effects either amplified to achieve even better results or mitigated to control inhibitors to project progress?*

- (a) Facilitating factors: The project drew upon the strength and credibility of ILO's social partner networks, and achievements of earlier interventions in all the four programme countries and the region. In Japan, the project built upon the RVC Phase I outputs especially the training of Sharoshis and other collaborative activities with the Sharoshi Federation.
- (b) Hindering factors: The evaluation did not find any instance where the project progress was hindered by actions taken by any constituent or stakeholder. The evaluation found only one instance of about six months of non-engagement between the project and the ILO's workers' organization constituent in Malaysia for reasons which were internal to the constituent and beyond the ILO's control. This non-engagement happened during the peak period of project activities, leading to some lost opportunities of the ILO's awareness building activities on RBC for DW with the workers' organization members.

The project took cognizance of the recommendations made by the final independent evaluation of RVC Phase I project, and took steps to address them in this phase of work. The cross-sector event in Keidanren was built on RVC Phase I recommendation to have an event that will give broader visibility to stakeholders in Japan. Besides organizing this event, the evaluation found two more examples of well-structured steps to take forward the RVC Phase I recommendations:

- (i) More actions on the workers' side: The project created a booklet focused on trade union practices in Japan to promote RBC for DW. It used the recommendations from Phase I effectively to have a buy-in from all the stakeholders to develop this booklet which was acknowledged by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO), UA Zensen, and ILO-ACTRAV. This was the first-of-its-kind booklet in the ILO. Further, the project engaged with JILAF to commission a training programme for LFTU in Lao PDR on RBC and HRDD thereby building capacities which LFTU has subsequently utilized to organize more RBC awareness raising sessions among its members.
- (ii) More gender focus: The findings are reported under cross-cutting issues Section 9.7.

## 9.4 EFFICIENCY

**Overall findings:** The evaluation found the project was efficient in managing time and resources. While the findings for each key evaluation question (Table 3, efficiency) are reported below, the evaluation also took the opportunity to reflect on two larger questions: (a) can the inception stage be shortened? (b) given the time and resources that was made available, were the envisaged outputs and linked outcomes from the planned activities realistic? Though these two questions are stated here, they overlap between two evaluation criteria, namely efficiency and effectiveness.

*9.4.1 Adherence to schedules and time efficiency: Was the project efficiently managed in terms of activity completion according to stipulated timelines? Could these have been improved?*

The planned project activities were mostly completed on time with some schedule adjustments that are inevitable on multi-stakeholder regional projects. Overall, the project was time-efficient, even though further operational improvements in managing schedules could have been done.

The evaluation reflected on a larger point of having a six months inception stage in a two-year Phase II project signifying continuity from an earlier phase (even if the continuity was only in Japan). The evaluation considered the rationale put forward by the project team that it takes time to get stakeholder buy-ins, recruit new staff, factor in internal lessons learned from Phase I and other projects, thereby setting relatively lighter targets for the first year and expecting that higher targets would be achieved in the subsequent year.

*9.4.2 Utilization of human resources: Did the project efficiently recruit and manage human resources according to its design? Could these have been improved?*

The project managed its human resources well, and took steps to augment staff to expedite delivery. There were instances of involuntary attrition of national technical and administrative staff, but the project managed to adhere to output schedules. However, there can be a scope to improve efficiencies in recruitment and other processes, which is discussed in section 9.4.1 (above).

*9.4.3 Adherence to budgets and resource efficiency: Were the financial resources efficiently utilized in this project and according to stipulated budgets?*

The budget utilization, including encumbrances, till January 2026 was about 90 percent. Table 6 below provides a snapshot of the budget utilization for each of the four programme countries.

**Table 6: Budget utilization, by country** (as of 31 January 2026)

(All figures in USD)

Country	Budget	Actual	Encumbrances	Balances	Utilization including encumbrances	Utilization based on actual
Japan	1,269,949.20	1,005,171.94	179,508.22	85,269.04	93%	79%
ILM	1,467,055.97	1,045,506.87	228,151.90	193,397.20	87%	71%
India	577,893.38	388,747.27	109,445.20	79,700.91	86%	67%
Laos	286,101.63	210,790.37	33,343.45	41,967.81	85%	74%
Malaysia	410,897.66	330,512.69	75,238.25	5,146.72	99%	80%
Total	2,737,005.17	2,050,678.81	407,660.12	278,666.24	<b>90%</b>	75%

Further, the evaluation found evidence that project aimed to be efficient by sharing resources (both for logistics and speakers) with other ILO projects and external agencies:

(i) Resource sharing with other ILO projects: For example, to host the cross-country bipartite session in Japan (February 2025) the project shared resources available with ILO ACTRAV and ACTEMP as well as with other ILO projects such as METI skills project and MHLW RISSC project.

(ii) Resource sharing with external partners: The evaluation found three examples of the project's resource sharing with external partners: (a) the Sharoshi Federation provided a significantly sized annual funding for venue, human resources, communications, and providing administrative resources for BHR Sharoshi two days in-person training for over 700 participants (so far), BHR Sharoshi Facilitator training, JASTI training, JASTI facilitator training, exclusive prefectural BHR seminars, BHR special committee, in-person and online seminars for BHR Sharoshi, and one day Osaka Expo conference on BHR;<sup>31</sup> (b) the JEITA SPP funding for venue, human resources, communications, and providing administrative resources for (year 2024) Executive salon Day1 Day 2, Practitioners training, Human rights policy workshop, Follow up consultations. Closing Event and (year 2025) Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Follow up consultations, Closing Event; and (c) some in-kind support was made available from JEITA, JAPIA, Construction and Real Estate BHR committee, Tokyo Municipalities, and other MNEs to provide venue and administrative resources in managing the seminar(s) on RBC / BHR.

<sup>31</sup> The Osaka expo event was held on 9th August 2025 where the ILO project staff participated and contributed time. The BHR Sharoshi summit was from 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM with participation of the President of the Sharoshi Federation. In all, 315 participants, primarily BHR attorneys from various regions across Japan joined (both in person and online). The BHR Symposium was from 2:00 – 5:20 PM targeting the SMEs interested in taking steps on RBC/HRDD and Sharoshis who wished to support them. In all, 279 participants from enterprises and Sharoshis joined (both in person and online). <https://theme-weeks.expo2025.or.jp/program/detail/66ea712f551a6.html>.

**9.4.4 Value for Money: Assess the added value of the project and the outputs from the project activities versus their value for money (qualitative assessment).**

The evaluation limited itself to undertaking only a high-level qualitative analysis to assess (i) the added value of the project, and (ii) the outputs from the project activities versus their value for money. For this analysis, qualitative ‘with-case’ / ‘without-case’ scenarios were drawn up which highlighted ten outputs attributable to project activities in the four countries which, in absence of this project, would either have not been possible or would have had significant limitations. A summary of this analysis is provided in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Qualitative analysis ‘with-case / without-case’ (11 outputs, by country)**

Country	Project Output / Attributable to project (‘with case’ scenario)	Baseline Scenario / In absence of the project (‘without case’ scenario)	Evaluation Remarks
India	Bipartite Roadmap to promote RBC for DW drafted and launched	Bipartite Roadmap unlikely to have been drafted within March 2026	KIIs with EBMOs and Workers’ Orgs. indicated no alternate platform was available to draft the RBC for DW roadmap
India	Training, awareness raising on MNE Declarations, RBC for DW in view of Trade Pacts, CS3D, CSRD <sup>32</sup>	There would have been significant limitations towards raising awareness and sourcing expertise by the industry associations	KIIs with the EBMOs acknowledged the relevance of this project for this topic and contribution it has made within available time and resources
Japan	BHR Sharoshi Training	There would have been significant challenges to source alternate and similarly credible expertise	KIIs with the EBMOs, Workers’ Orgs. and FGD with Sharoshi Federation indicated no alternate global institution could provide this expertise
Japan	Significant contribution made by the project to JEITA’s SPP initiative	There would have been significant challenges to source alternate and similarly credible expertise	KIIs with JEITA and Workers’ Orgs. indicated no alternate global institution could provide such credible expertise
Japan	Good practice compilation for the peer learning of SMEs, BHR Sharoshis	No document would have been developed	This compilation was possible, as it was a ‘downstream’ output of some activities that were undertaken in this project
Japan	10 concrete ideas to integrate BHR into University Education	No document would have been developed	A well-structured first step to systematically raise BHR awareness in Hr. Education
Lao PDR	LFTU initiative to raise awareness on RBC	No workers’ org. driven initiative would have been launched to raise awareness on RBC	This was a unique contribution made by the project through its engagement with JILAF

<sup>32</sup> Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D) and Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) both assume significance in view of India – European Union Trade Pact announced in January 2026

Country	Project Output / Attributable to project ('with case' scenario)	Baseline Scenario / In absence of the project ('without case' scenario)	Evaluation Remarks
Lao PDR	Capacity Building for Facilitators on RBC and ESG Practices	There would have been no established pool of local trainers with expertise in RBC and ESG	This initiative represented a unique collaboration between LNCCI and the project.
Malaysia	NAP BHR "Labour" Pillar	There would have been significant challenges to source alternate expertise, reference to MNE Decl. could have been missed	The unique contribution of ILO on Labour (especially on MNE Declaration) acknowledged by both departments of the Government of Malaysia
Malaysia	ILO – MEF – UNIMAS online i-ESG modules	There would have been significant challenges to source similarly credible combination of expertise, along with the funding	This was acknowledged in the KIIs and the first draft of the outputs were reviewed
Malaysia <sup>33</sup>	Good BHR practices of companies in Malaysia	No document / video would have been developed	This compilation was a 'downstream' output of some activities in this project

## Two questions of larger reflection

### 9.4.5 Can the inception stage be shortened?

The evaluation deems the ILO could consider keeping shorter inception stages in future projects, institute improved knowledge harvesting systems that factor in past learnings to support faster launches of workstreams (maybe prioritize a few activities), lighter internal norms such as for recruitment, implementation partner contracting, and digital communication material approvals applicable to shorter duration projects vis-à-vis regular norms applicable to longer duration projects. While stakeholders' and constituents' buy-ins are foundational, and agreements with implementation partners need to be well-structured, both these engagement processes can be iterative, co-created, and incrementally expedited. A shorter inception stage (gestation period) can give more time to the project team to navigate the implementation phase more efficiently (and possibly more effectively). The takeaway on target setting is discussed under section 9.3.1.

### 9.4.6 Given the time and resources that was made available, were the envisaged outputs and linked outcomes from the planned activities realistic?

The evaluation reflected on this core programming question limited to the evidence available from this project. Early findings show that a mixed results, indicating some of the envisaged outputs

<sup>33</sup> At the time of this evaluation, it is understood that the project is preparing a similar good practice document / video for Lao PDR as well which will be published within the project duration

were realistic whereas the linked outcomes were ambitious as discussed in section 9.3.1 (iii) and section 9.3.1 (vi). The evaluation also tested the assumptions / hypotheses of the three pathways underpinning the TOC in this project (section 10.2). The tests corroborate findings stated above that longer than two-year duration projects will be needed to create deeper impact in countries where foundational work is commencing. The longer duration projects must be reinforced by a larger number of effective partnerships and platforms, and provisioning of more resources. All these factors together can then support commencement of scaled roll-outs during the intervention period, ultimately embedding responsible business practices into sustainable market systems.

The evaluation noted another key difference in the ILO's established, and well-resourced programmes between the developing (or less developed) countries selected in the RVC Phase I and Phase II projects. On the one hand, the RVC Phase I leveraged off the ILO's Global Flagship Better Work (BW) programme which has operations of significant scale well-established in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Vietnam, and has become reputable over several years. To an extent, the RVC Phase I project was 'embedded' in the ILO BW which gave the ILO a robust platform to launch the RVC Phase I project. The coherence was so high, that the final independent evaluation of RVC Phase I noted a limitation to attribute results to either BW, or to the RVC Phase I project.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the output-outcome expectations and performance metrics (indicators) that was shaped and sharpened for RVC Phase I were contextualized in what could be realistically achieved in those programme countries under such synergistic conditions.

On the other hand, none of the three developing (or less developed) programme countries in the current project (India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia) had an operational BW programme. The RVC Phase II project leveraged the respect ILO country office networks with constituents and social partners (which varied in strength) to lay the foundations to advance the BHR / RBC for DW agenda. Thus, these larger aspects of coherence (potential synergies) need to be considered by future programmes when planning for outputs and their linked outcomes, and thereafter monitoring progress through achievement of appropriate indicators.

## **9.5 IMPACT**

**Overall findings:** The impact of this project can be assessed as emerging and varying in each of the programme countries. The findings for each key evaluation question (Table 3, impact) are reported below.

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<sup>34</sup> See, ILO i-eval Discovery <https://webapps.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/#ajosjoa>

*9.5.1. Impact, as achieved: To what extent, and through which pathways, did project outcomes (i) contribute to a more enabling environment for responsible business conduct, including improved policy alignment and evidence of practice in all four participating countries? (ii) foster decent work in regional and global supply chains?*

**In India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia**, the primary impact of this project was the establishment of a foundational understanding of RBC, HRDD, and labour rights among key stakeholders. The ILO constituents, social partners, and other stakeholders have widely recognized this contribution from the project as an important starting point to improve awareness and create conditions for further action. Thus, the project successfully established foundations essential to progress.

However, there is limited evidence that systemic changes have begun that can be attributed to the project interventions. It was difficult to assess the extent to which participants applied the knowledge gained. Opportunities for deeper policy impact were only partially realized in some countries. For example, in Malaysia, the NAPBHR “labour” pillar can be construed as evidence of the government’s intent to create an enabling environment to adopt more responsible business practices, and bring in greater policy alignment, it is likely that more time and efforts will be needed from all constituents to implement changes on the ground. Other outputs of the project, such as training materials developed and translated (wherever needed) for further use, outputs of focused initiatives, and good practice compilations (both documents and digital outputs) have created local resources and platforms that can be leveraged beyond the project duration.

**In Japan**, the project built on the foundation laid by RVC Phase I. The BHR awareness raised within stakeholder groups, the partnerships that were forged, and the set of outputs that was generated from the earlier phase laid a strong foundation for ILO to launch this phase of work. The evaluation found two examples of Phase I partnerships that was leveraged for this phase.

(i) Phase I partnership with JEITA: (a) the ILO conducted a seminar for SMEs on request from JEITA. The ILO delivered their talks jointly with an experienced BHR Sharoshi. This encouraged JEITA to seek a collaboration with the ILO and Sharoshi Federation to support their SPP initiative; (b) the ILO Japan office supported the first bipartite dialogue between JEITA and JCM which led JEITA to consider seeking the workers’ organisations’ support in enhancing HRDD in overseas value chain, leading to the February 2025 cross country bipartite dialogue inviting other Asian countries.

(ii) Phase I partnership with Sharoshi Federation laid the foundation for the Federation to create their training of trainer (ToT) system. Subsequently, this allowed the Federation to deploy their

resource persons for ILO's present project (as well as independently with JEITA and JAPIA, METI, and other government linked institutions). This also created opportunities for BHR Sharoshis to provide practical, situational advice to establish human rights policies in SMEs.

The continuity between phases of work in Japan (now spanning four years) has allowed the project to identify SMEs who are early adopters, who can become potential SME BHR leaders, can share their learning from the project activities for documenting the emerging good practices which their peer SMEs can value, contextualize, and adopt.

*9.5.2. Partnerships: Going forward, what measures can be taken to strengthen coordination, maximize synergies, improve collaboration with existing and new partners to enhance impact?*

The evaluation probed this question moving beyond the coherence improvement measures, and looked at two sets of partnership measures that can be initiated to enhance impact: (a) help embed project outcomes and early impact into self-sustaining market systems; and (b) amplify project messages on results achieved through communication and outreach activities. Both these measures can be directed to institutional partners which have capacities, reach to credibly supplement ILO's own efforts to effectively communicate with its constituents and stakeholders.

(a) *Embed early impact into self-sustaining market systems*: **In India**, the evaluation probed this question referencing the bipartite roadmap that was jointly launched under this project by the employers' and workers' organization to promote RBC for DW. The KIIs with all four EBMOs and both workers' organizations revealed, of the five pillars stated in the roadmap, beginning work on the synthesized priority of the "training" pillar would be the least contentious, and possibly the most productive in the short-term. A collaborative platform set up under the "training" pillar can garner public, private, and other institutional funds (supported by the government) to become a self-sustaining market system in the medium-term. The employers acknowledged they need to assume a leader's role under the "training" pillar, and the workers understood their responsibility to support their employers by participating in upskilling programmes as deemed necessary in the changing world of work. Moreover, getting a collaborative platform operationalized soon after the launch (even if it is for one of the pillars) can become a bipartite confidence building measure. Subsequently, this collaborative platform can be expanded to cover more bipartite pillars and then become more resilient to handle contentious issues under other pillars that are likely to emerge sooner than later.

(b) *Amplify messages through outreach*: **In Japan**, the evaluation found evidence that the ILO's partners helped amplify the project messages on results achieved through communication

and outreach activities to their members and networks. The Sharoshi Federation has (so far) published five monthly Sharoshi articles on BHR, and an annual white paper with special editions on BHR topics, that was sent to all registered Sharoshi across Japan (there are about 47,000 Sharoshis). Similarly, JEITA produced several reports on SPP on their website giving credits to the ILO's support and Keidanren's report mentions JEITA's SPP initiative. Moreover, top newspaper companies such as Nikkei and Asahi have written articles on JEITA's SPP initiative in 2024 and 2025 covering SMEs. One such SME, which was covered by *Asahi* newspaper for their BHR policies, was interviewed in this evaluation; they stated that the positive press coverage by a top newspaper helped them build credibility as an employer and well-positioned them to attract talent to their enterprise.

## 9.6 SUSTAINABILITY

**Overall findings:** The question of sustainability of outcomes and the early impact generated assumes great significance in a relatively short, two-year project. While the project met output targets, delivered results from the focused initiatives it pursued, built some capacity which had initial ownership among the social partners (in varying degrees across the four countries), it did not get time to establish sufficiently robust institutional mechanisms either to ensure continued financing or make the outcomes become independent and self-sustaining in the marketplace. This was a significant and persistent challenge throughout the project duration, driving the project team to look for sustainable exit strategies for every significant output and linked outcomes in the programme countries. The project also aimed to embed RBC for DW in national policies, institutional mechanisms, and market systems, which can reduce sustenance dependency on external programmes, ensure longer term national ownership, thereby deepening the impact.

A reflection on the larger question of realistic targets vis-à-vis time and resources made available is discussed in section 9.4.6, the findings for each key evaluation question (Table 3, sustainability) are reported below.

*9.6.1. Exit strategies, by design: Assess what exit strategies were designed to achieve sustainability of the interventions beyond the project duration? How were the exit strategies factored into project design? Analysed by country, and explored for any common finding.*

The evaluation assessed weaknesses in setting out exit strategies in the project design which could: (a) either have made project outcomes achieve greater impact beyond the project duration; (b) or have begun transitioning the effective outcomes as the project nears completion to become

more sustainable in the absence of ILO's continued facilitation. This weakness of appropriate exit strategies in the design was a persistent concern of the project team and can be seen reflected in the self-evaluation in the mid-term progress report. However, at the implementation stage, the project did make efforts to organize implementation arrangements that could continue beyond the project duration. These efforts can be broadly categorized into two heads:

(a) align efforts to contribute to national efforts on policy promulgation (Malaysia NAPBHR) and development of national frameworks that could be foundational for continued work and have a high impact beyond the project duration (India bipartite roadmap)

(b) creation of digital assets that will continue to deliver intended value beyond project duration, such as the ILO MEF UNIMAS i-ESG modules, good practice case studies (Malaysia, Lao PDR, Japan), and national accreditation of ILO/UNGC e-learning modules in India (to be completed).

In Japan, as there was continuity between phases, and the enabling environmental factors of sustaining the interventions are different than those prevalent in the other countries, the likelihood of sustenance of the project outcomes are higher (discussed subsequently in section 9.6.5).

Differences in exit strategies between RVC Phase I and Phase II: As discussed in section 9.4.6, the RVC Phase I was 'embedded' in the ILO's reputed, global flagship BW programme in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Vietnam. This ensured the gains from RVC Phase I will sustain through regular activities of BW which will continue in these three target countries, such as the advisory and training services and assessments, as well as the implementation of the improvement plans developed by the BW Enterprise Advisors jointly with factory staff. Thus, the exit strategy of RVC Phase I was well-defined and structured at project design. In contrast, as RVC Phase II was 'built grounds-up' in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia (none of these countries have a BW programmes) the sustainability of exit strategy has remained a persistent concern.

*9.6.2. Effect of external developments: What factors (policy, institutional, or donor-related) has either affected or is likely to affect sustaining the programme results, or continued relevance?*

The BHR agenda is susceptible to being de-prioritized by enterprises in the event of economic shocks. It is likely that costs associated to maintain BHR systems, standards, and uphold responsible business practices which continue to ensure decent work may be reduced by enterprises if major disruptions are caused in the supply chains that require enterprises to cut costs to stay competitive.

*9.6.3. Likelihood of sustenance (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia): (i) To what extent are the desired changes observable? This may be possible only to the extent of initial results that has come. (ii) What is the capacity to sustain? How strong is the commitment of the Governments, MNEs, other stakeholders to continue initiatives supported by the project? (iii) To what extent are the project's results likely to be sustained in the long term?*

(i) **In India and Malaysia**, the KIIs with enterprises (both SMEs and EMBOs) revealed that none of them had adopted more responsible business practices or had any immediate plans to adopt them solely because of the project interventions. However, in Malaysia (driven by i-ESG requirements) and in India (driven by the NGRBC 2019, and several other compliance requirements) the enterprises are already fulfilling many requirements aligned to the RBC principles. The RBC / BHR principles bring forward some deeply contentious issues such as zero recruitment fees for migrant workers (applicable for Malaysia), issues on working conditions that significantly varied by sector (such as between plantations and agro-processing, component manufacturers, smokestack industries, service providers, etc.), industrial relations, employment contracts, and wages and social security issues. Hence, it could be inferred that the companies were prepared to an extent and the project's awareness raising activities gave them an understanding of their incremental preparatory needs, if the RBC for DW (or BHR guidelines, as the case maybe) were to become statutorily enforceable.

**In Lao PDR**, the project created a pool of trained facilitators capable of delivering RBC training. While training capacity exists, sustained demand and financing mechanisms are yet to be established. The LFTU has incorporated HRDD into their ongoing dissemination and awareness raising activities, and can provide facilitators for continued engagement. However, the continued utilization of these facilitators by LFTU depends on external funding support.

(ii) The evaluation used a Skill-Will<sup>35</sup> lens (as a reference) to better understand if market systems and the enterprise actors were skilled enough and had developed the will to adopt more responsible business practices. At a high-level, the evaluation findings show smaller enterprises are generally low on skills and capacity to adopt (although it varies) but most of them lack the will to adopt RBC / BHR until it translates into a compliance need. The larger enterprises (or may be medium sized) have more capacity and the evaluation found evidence

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<sup>35</sup> The evaluation referenced the ILO's Market Systems Analysis (MSA) methodology and applied a high-level, light-touch lens limiting to the scope of this evaluation question and main actors who were interviewed; it was not a detailed assessment on its own adhering to the full MSA methodology

that a few of them are voluntarily adopting some of the RBC practices, demonstrating they have a latent will. The government views are generally driven by their position that enterprises are expected to adopt responsible business practices, they would do what is needed to be compliant with prevalent statutes, standards (in case of exports), and be supportive of voluntary adoption of more responsible practices according to business needs and competitive requirements of national and international markets. There is a general reluctance by governments to promulgate new directives, or institute additional enforcement measures that would be seen as 'pushing' the enterprises.

(iii) The project also actively promoted the *ILO Helpdesk for Business* services as one of the sustainable exit strategies. The ILO Helpdesk for Business is a one-stop advisory shop for company managers and workers on how to better align business operations with the ILS. It includes a free and confidential direct assistance service to answer specific queries as well as a web-based platform with tools and resources. The ILO Helpdesk allows enterprise and project partners to contact the ILO at any time during and after project duration.<sup>36</sup>

(iv) Despite some positive signs, most stakeholders expressed uncertainty regarding continuation of RBC promotion work without external technical assistance, and in some cases funding assistance. A clearly designated national lead institution for RBC coordination (focal point), especially for wider adoption of the MNE Declaration principles can help build reporting systems (to begin with), and sustain country level engagements to promote RBC for DW. At an overall level, RBC / BHR promotion initiatives need further nurturing which can be achieved through technical assistance programmes that are nationally coordinated, implemented with a set of focused activities, and the outcomes are aimed to build sustainable ecosystems.

#### *9.6.5. Likelihood of sustenance (Japan): Can synthesized insights be drawn from impact of outcomes of RVC – I and RVC – II phases on sustainability of the intervention?*

The evaluation has found early signs of sustenance in Japan, which are assessed to be primarily driven by five mutually reinforcing factors: (i) statutory frameworks are in place,<sup>37</sup> and the government is taking a facilitator's role; (ii) there is continuity between RVC Phase I and Phase II (totalling four years of intervention activities) wherein the project made significant contributions to

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<sup>36</sup> See, <https://www.ilo.org/node/5446> and [www.ilo.org/business](http://www.ilo.org/business)

<sup>37</sup> Government of Japan's focus on business and human rights is evidenced by its National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights (BHR) 2020 which was followed by the release of guidelines on Respecting Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains 2022. More recently, two amendments were made to the Sharoshi Act to include "individual dignity" (Article 1), and "Labour Audits" (Article 2)

train and build capacities, establish networks, facilitate commencement of certifications; identify, recognize and promote ‘champions’ / ‘role models’ to trigger peer-learning processes; (iii) industry leaders, who wield corporate power over their domestic suppliers and cross-border supply chains, are taking a lead to build coalitions through the apex business associations, chambers of commerce, and sector-level associations (such as JEITA) to promote BHR programmes. The targeted outputs of these coalition activities can evolve into operational benchmarks which then can become ‘standards’; (iv) the Sharoshi’s facilitation and advisory model is well established in Japan for over five decades, and will continue to be economically sustainable for incremental BHR advisory or audit services offered by Sharoshis to their clientele most of whom are SMEs; (v) the industrial relationships between employers and workers is inherently cogent and more cordial in Japan than what is prevalent in some of the other developing economies of Asia. Cogent and cordial relationships can facilitate constructive bipartite social dialogue at all levels even if many SMEs do not have trade unions. The positive outcomes from the continuous RVC – I and RVC – II phases, and the tangible value that the project delivered to the Sharoshi Federation, to the JEITA SPP initiative, and to other industry stakeholders has provided evidence to the ILO partners, and the industry members of EBMOs in general, for allocating more of their internal resources to sustain this programme.

## **9.7 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

**Overall findings:** The project recognized the importance of integrating principles of gender equality, non-discrimination, and social inclusion to promote RBC for DW and HRDD. In line with the principles promoted by the ILO, the project sought to ensure that its activities were inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse stakeholders, including women workers and vulnerable groups in the labour market. However, findings from KIIs broadly concurred that more focus can be given on gender dimensions in future programmes. The project strengthened social dialogue by fostering engagement among constituents, improving understanding of labour standards, tripartite roles and responsibilities. Results varied by country: relatively stronger in Japan which can become sustainable; progressing in India and Malaysia, but less consistent and more reliant on external support in Lao PDR.

*9.7.1. Gender equality, non-discrimination, and disability inclusion: To what extent, and in what ways, did the project incorporate principles of gender equality, non-discrimination / social inclusion, and disability inclusion?*

While the RBC for DW project tenets can be gender neutral across enterprises, there is an inherent need to take a more gender-focused approach to improve working conditions for women in manufacturing facilities and smaller production units across Asian countries. Overall, the project made meaningful efforts to promote gender equality and non-discrimination, particularly in ensuring balanced participation and raising awareness among stakeholders. It took steps to collect gender disaggregated data by adding gender as a compulsory question in surveys. In Japan, it incorporated the gender angle<sup>38</sup> in one of the four good practices in the BHR Sharoshi / SME compilation. The project, in collaboration with MULTI/RBC and the ILO regional gender equality specialist, organised an awareness session for ILO staff on the gender dimensions of RBC and HRDD, alongside an overview of regional gender equality challenges and opportunities.

However, findings from KIIs with enterprise participants, EBMOs, ILO specialists and officials charged with oversight broadly concurred that more focus can be given on gender dimensions in future programmes. For example, while gender equality was addressed in training activities, it was less systematically integrated into specific initiatives that the project pursued and sustainability planning. The training activity materials, workshops discussions, and academic ideation sessions could have explored this topic in more detail; especially in ‘group work’ activities to elicit solutions from participants that could address specific issues. Thus, gender equality, non-discrimination, and related topics was addressed as a generalized training component, rather than being a strategic principle guiding project implementation. Translating awareness into workplace practice requires further effort, especially on the gender dimension. Future initiatives could further strengthen this area by embedding gender equality and inclusion more systematically across project design, implementation, monitoring, and sustainability strategies.

*9.7.2. Social dialogue: To what extent, and in what ways, did the project strengthen social dialogue among social partners and international stakeholders, including Japanese enterprises and public institutions: (i) at the country level? (ii) at the regional level?*

The project made a positive contribution to the promotion of social dialogue. Training workshops served as platforms for interaction among employers, workers, and government representatives, facilitating exchanges of perspectives and fostering mutual understanding on labour standards and workplace practices. The training content also covered key principles of social dialogue,

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<sup>38</sup> Case of Withceed Hospitality Management Inc., page 29-33 in the ILO – Sharoshi Federation joint publication titled “Responsible *business conduct in small and medium-sized enterprises: Examples of collaborative practice with BHR promotion labour and social security attorneys*”. Dissemination scheduled for 24-Mar-26 <https://www.ilo.org/meetings-and-events/webinar-%E2%80%9Cbusiness-and-human-rights%E2%80%9D-featuring-practical-examples-small-and>

including freedom of association, collective bargaining, and grievance mechanisms, helping participants better understand their respective roles and responsibilities within tripartite labour relations. Besides these activities, the project also made contributions such as:

(i) India: The launching of the bipartite roadmap was a culmination of a year-long effort in an environment where there are divergent positions between the employers, government, and workers' organizations on the new Labour Codes which have taken effect from November 2025.

(ii) Japan: the ILO Keidanren sessions and the JEITA SPP initiatives were built on robust social dialogue mechanisms. Several other instances are provided in section 5.3

(iii) Lao PDR: Social dialogue was mainly promoted through project activities and consultation events, while opportunities to further utilize existing coordination mechanisms for continuous engagement could have been strengthened. The evaluation noted government stakeholders would have welcomed more regular updates.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, other stakeholders informed the evaluation a lack of updates towards finalizing the RBC roadmap after the National Tripartite Workshop was held in June 2025. They expressed interest in being more consistently informed and engaged as the project progressed.<sup>40</sup>

(iv) Malaysia: The project facilitated consultations with employers to strengthen stakeholder contributions to the NAPBHR 2025–2030 in collaboration with MEF and the Legal Affairs Division (BHEUU) of the Prime Minister's Department.

(v) Regional: the list of regional social dialogue contributions made is provided in section 5.3

While the project contributed to improved dialogue among stakeholders during implementation, the sustainability of the social dialogue platforms promoted through this project is likely to vary by country. While in Japan it is likely to sustain, in India there can be some weaknesses but can reasonably be expected to be taken forward under the aegis of the bipartite roadmap that was launched in January 2026. In Lao PDR it is likely to remain largely dependent on ongoing external support rather than getting embedded within the national institutional processes. In Malaysia, the NAPBHR framework can provide an opportunity to open new platforms for dialogues.

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<sup>39</sup> For instance, the stakeholders noted that a PAC meeting took place in June 2025, but after that regular updates on project progress were limited.

<sup>40</sup> The Rapid Scoping and Baseline Assessment commissioned in this project stated "The tripartite cooperation mechanism, established under Prime Minister Decree No. 571/PM, was designed to foster collaboration between key stakeholders, including the MoLSW, LNCCI, and LFTU. The goal is to bring together the government, employers, and trade unions to align policy decisions with the needs of all parties. However, KIIs found that the mechanism has faced challenges due to poor coordination and lack of clarity in stakeholder roles. This fragmented collaboration limits its effectiveness, leaving gaps in labor law enforcement and undermining efforts to protect workers' rights."

## 9.8 ADDRESSING MID-TERM FINDINGS

This final evaluation assessed to what extent the project addressed the self-evaluation findings and lessons learnt, reported at mid-term (till March 2025). The mid-term self-evaluation adopted only four of the OECD DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency). The present final evaluation finds there is consistency across both assessments. The project has remained relevant and efficient. At the same time, the effectiveness across outcomes in the programme countries showed variance in the mid-term; and this variance has continued till the present final evaluation. Sustainability of project outcome and the impact that the project will create was a concern in the mid-term. This has persisted even though project outputs and outcomes have improved significant and all targets have been achieved. The project also took some course corrective actions based on lessons learnt at the mid-term.

## 10. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions drawn from the main findings are reported under two heads (i) assessment of results achieved by evaluation criteria; and (ii) testing of the three TOC hypotheses / pathways based on available evidence.

### 10.1 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS, BY EVALUATION CRITERIA

The assessment of results by evaluation criteria, provided in Table 8 below, is summarized from the main findings reported in sections 9.1 to 9.8.

**Table 8: Assessment of results, by evaluation criteria**

<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Sub-criteria / Key Questions</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Evaluation remarks</b>
Relevance (Section 9.1)	Relevance of project activities to the stakeholders	Relevant	-
	Validity of intervention design	Valid	Takeaways for future programming
	Relevance of results achieved	Relevant	-
Coherence (Section 9.2)	Leveraging synergy (internal)	Leveraged	Extent of leverage varied by country
	Leveraging synergy (external)	Varying levels of coherence	Some coherence observed in all countries; scope for improvement
	Implementation of TOC logic	TOC logic was implemented	Consistency TOC logic application varied across activities, countries

<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Sub-criteria / Key Questions</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Evaluation remarks</b>
Effectiveness (Section 9.3)	India, Lao, Malaysia results	Effective, for the short term	Results may not remain effective over the medium term; needs to be deepened, and supported further
	Japan results	Effective	Some results show early signs of greater impact, and self-sustenance
	Home-Host country results	Could have been more effective	TOC assumptions / hypothesis is validated. Future programmes can contribute on foundations prepared.
	Stimulating enterprise interest to be catalysts (all countries)	Varying levels of interest generated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan large entrp. are interested</li> <li>• Japan SMEs 'mixed' interest level</li> <li>• Other country SMEs, suppliers – cautious, low interest, non-priority</li> </ul>
	Management effectiveness	Effective	-
	Unexpected outcomes	No significant reversals	Four examples found, of which three were favourably unexpected
	Facilitating / hindering factors	Both present	Takeaways for future programming
Efficiency (Section 9.4)	Adherence to schedules	Adhered	-
	Utilization of human resources	Utilized	-
	Adherence to budgets	Adhered	-
	Value for Money	Reasonable	11 outputs assessed qualitatively; 'with-case' / 'without-case' analysis
Impact (Section 9.5)	Impact, as achieved (India, Lao, Malaysia)	Established foundations	Without support, impact is unlikely to be retained beyond short-term
	Impact, as achieved (Japan)	Early impact is visible	Ecosystems are in place; the impact may sustain in the E&E sector
	Partnerships for greater impact	Varying strength	Partnering to (i) embed early impact into self-sustaining market systems; (ii) amplify project messages
Sustainability (Section 9.6)	Exit strategies, by design	Scope for improvement	-
	Effect of external developments	Of concern	Susceptible to be de-prioritized in the event of economic shocks, and any disruptions in supply chains
	Likelihood of sustenance (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia)	Needs further nurturing	Further support is needed: technical assistance, building up ecosystems
	Japan outcome sustainability: continuity of RVC – I, RVC – II	Early signs of sustenance	Contributed to building ecosystem that can sustain, especially in E&E
Cross-cutting issues (Section 9.7)	Gender equality, non-discrimination	Adhered to principles	Phase 1 findings addressed, but it could have improved. Takeaways for future programming.
	Social Dialogue	The extent of achievements varied across the countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan, likely to sustain. New avenues can open (JEITA SPP)</li> <li>• India, challenges exist. Bipartite roadmap, when operationalized, can create a unique platform.</li> </ul>

Evaluation criteria	Sub-criteria / Key Questions	Assessment	Evaluation remarks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lao, will need external support.</li> <li>• Malaysia, challenges exist. The NAPBHR creates opportunities to open new platforms for dialogues.</li> </ul>
Addressing mid-term findings (Section 9.8)	Four OECD DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency)	Some findings are consistent across both assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance: continued</li> <li>• Effectiveness: varied by country</li> <li>• Sustainability: persistent concern</li> <li>• Efficiency: continued</li> </ul>
	Lesson learnt	Actions taken	Some course corrections were made, to the extent it was possible

## 10.2 TESTING OF THE TOC PATHWAYS

The project's TOC identified three complementary pathways to promote RBC and decent work: enterprise-level change through training and awareness raising, enabling conditions through tripartite dialogue and institutional capacity building, and diffusion of responsible practices through global supply chains linked to Japanese MNEs. The evaluation assessed the extent to which evidence from implementation supports the pathway assumptions to effect change (as envisaged in the TOC) and whether they contributed to the adoption of responsible business practices.

Pathway 1: Enterprise Change Training → knowledge → changes in enterprise practices

The project exceeded training targets across the four countries, with more than 90 per cent of participants reporting improved understanding of RBC, HRDD, and ILS. The evaluation found them to be effective in increasing knowledge and awareness (reported in section 9.3), but found limited evidence that it brought (or will bring) changes in enterprise practices (especially in SMEs) which are likely to be driven by other considerations (discussed in sections 9 and 12). Enterprises often expressed caution in translating this knowledge into practice due to the absence of regulatory requirements, perceived compliance costs, and uncertainty about applying international standards in SME contexts. Stakeholders also suggested that more practical tools such as sector-specific guidance, checklists, and case studies if adopted more elaborately in future programmes will provide guidance to SMEs to adopt RBC principles in their operations. Early signs of behavioural change were observed in Japan, where trained Sharoshis have begun advising SMEs on adopting BHR-related policies. This indicates that the training imparted to Sharoshis can be linked to their advisory services to SME clients to adopt BHR principles, thereby strengthening the pathway from acquiring knowledge to adoption in practice.

*Pathway 2: Tripartite Enablement* Social Dialogue and Capacity Building initiatives → enabling environment → achieve compliance / foster adoption of RBC

The project contributed to strengthening the enabling environment through social dialogue, institutional capacity building, and policy engagement. It supported several initiatives that enhanced cooperation between bipartite constituents (employers' and workers' organizations) as well as tripartite constituents by including the government. Evaluation findings (reported in section 9.3) show most of these social dialogue initiatives facilitated by the ILO were effective, and were successful in building an enabling environment amid other challenges and adversarial relationships. This helped the project establish a policy foundation for future dialogue such as the bipartite road map in India, capacity-building support to the LFTU in Lao PDR, which subsequently disseminated knowledge on RBC and HRDD across multiple factories, and the NAPBHR labour pillar work in Malaysia.

While, the evaluation did not find evidence in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia that any strengthening of the social dialogue fora will translate into either enterprises voluntarily adopting for responsible business practices (especially by the SMEs), or the governments getting motivated to promulgate enforceable RBC for DW regulations which will mandate enterprises to comply with such rules and procedures, it is understood that such change cannot be immediate. These gains will need continued support to sustain except for a couple of initiatives in Japan and (maybe) in India. Thus, the impact of the capacities built under this project, and the conducive and enabling environment created through this project, is likely to decline in the short-to-medium term if they are not nurtured or have not begun to be applied in practice.

Regional forums also facilitated cross-country exchange, although their influence to effect either national-level policy changes or foster adoption of RBC practices by enterprises appeared limited. Overall, the project helped strengthen institutional platforms for promoting responsible business practices, though translating these enabling conditions into widespread enterprise compliance will likely require sustained engagement beyond the project period.

However, it is important to note that the evaluation findings in Japan indicated early signs of a greater impact than in other three programme countries to foster adoption of RBC / BHR practices in the selected sectors (discussed in section 9.6.5).

*Pathway 3: Home – Host Linkages* Japanese MNE engagements → supplier influence → diffusion of RBC

The evaluation found a few examples that indicated the potential that exists for diffusing RBC practices in regional supply chains through home-host linkages, but those were outside of the project activities. KIIIs with Japanese enterprises (four tier 1 suppliers, one large original equipment manufacturer, and one EBMO) in the host countries revealed adoption of responsible business practices by Japanese MNE operations in the host countries is largely driven by corporate policies and compliance requirements set either by their headquarters in Japan (home country) or by compliance requirements set by large Japanese companies who are purchasers of their products even if there are no such compliance needs under local regulatory frameworks. This finding supports the TOC hypothesis.

Thus, while participation by tier 1 suppliers and Japanese MNEs in project activities increased their awareness of RBC concepts (and in some cases reconfirmed earlier awareness), the project by itself was not a driver of enterprise-level changes. Home country influences within regional value chains may encourage the adoption of HRDD practices, but interviewed enterprises highlighted the need for practical guidance and advisory support being made available in the host countries. Interviewees also noted that voluntary compliance alone may lead to uneven adoption, underscoring the importance of complementary regulatory frameworks in host countries.

**Table 9: Findings from testing of TOC assumptions / hypotheses**

<b>TOC Pathway</b>	<b>Assumption / Hypotheses</b>	<b>Evaluation Remarks</b>
Pathway 1: Enterprise Change	Training → knowledge → changes in enterprise practices	Trainings can effectively increase knowledge but, by themselves, are insufficient to change enterprise practices (especially in SMEs)
Pathway 2: Tripartite Enablement	Social Dialogue and Capacity Building initiatives → enabling environment → achieve compliance / foster adoption of RBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built capacities, strengthened social dialogue, created enabling conditions.</li> <li>• Translating enabling conditions into widespread enterprise compliance will likely require sustained engagement.</li> <li>• Japan shows early signs of greater impact</li> </ul>
Pathway 3: Home - Host Linkages	Japanese MNE engagements → supplier influence → diffusion of RBC	RBC adoption is driven by home country or purchaser requirements, even if no compliance needs exist under local regulation

## 11. LESSONS LEARNT AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

A specific objective of this evaluation was to document lessons learnt and emerging good practices (section 6). As reported in the previous sections, the RVC Phase II project was relevant, and largely coherent with other initiatives for advancing the RBC agenda, raising awareness, and

ensuring decent work in supply chains in Asia. A few focused initiatives pursued by the project bore effective results which, otherwise, may not have happened. While the interventions met their immediate targets, and opened new possibilities, the impact of outcomes could not be fully achieved in the limited time available. The implementation of project activities was challenging for reasons discussed in this report. Some of these challenges emanated from the design (TOC pathways and their assumptions, and setting of realistic outcome expectations), and other challenges emerged during implementation which culminated in lessons being learnt.

### **11.1 LESSONS LEARNT**

Evaluations are expected to document lessons learnt that can be applied elsewhere to improve programme or project outputs, outcomes, and their impact. Some of these lessons learnt are either localized, or pertain to managing specific operational risks, both of which have limited use in the generalization discourse. This evaluation shortlisted two lessons learnt which can be generalized for national and regional stakeholders, can be of interest to constituents of a global institution such as the ILO, as well as to METI who as a donor has wide geographic interests. These two lessons learnt are summarized below (details provided in Annex – 6A following ILO's template) and, thereafter were included to develop a set of recommendations.

- (i) Improving effectiveness of the training imparted: The evaluation has discussed the unevenness in the effectiveness of the training sessions delivered especially if they were virtual sessions on knowledge intensive topics such as the HRDD (section 9.3.1, effectiveness of Output 1.1). There is a scope to include more practical and real-life examples in the course work for audiences who are beginning to learn RBC and HRDD concepts. An important learning was to include discussion topics on any top concerns for a particular cohort during the awareness raising sessions. For example, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) emerged as a top concern in Lao PDR and offered an appropriate point of entry in the awareness raising sessions to introduce RBC and HRDD concepts.<sup>41</sup>

Another such example was found in the Japan component of work. From the review of project documents (corroborated by KII findings) indicated group work and follow-on practical activities, such as the initial JASTI audits by Sharoshis, were generally found to be more effective. While in-person trainings are more expensive, logistically more challenging, and not

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<sup>41</sup> ILO (2025). RVC Phase II self-evaluation. Mid-term progress report (p. 30)

easily scalable, it is more effective vis-à-vis virtual sessions when introducing new topics such as RBC / BHR and conducting intensive training on the adoption of HRDD processes in operations. Recognizing this challenge, a recommendation has been framed to address this issue which is discussed in Section 12.

- (ii) More focus is needed on SMEs: Almost 80 percent (or more) of the enterprises in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia are small and medium-sized. While the project worked with SMEs in these three countries, a more systematic approach needs to be adopted. In Japan, the project kept a focus on SMEs by building it into the designed activities, and thereby achieved results that was reasonably effective, and commensurate with the time and resources that were allocated. Taking cognizance of this unevenness in achievements, a more structured approach has been recommended for future programming considerations which is discussed in Section 12.

## **11.2 EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES**

The evaluation found a few of the project outputs across programme countries to be effective. Some of these effective outputs, making an early impact, were unique to the context of the programme country and were delivered leveraging established country systems (such as the project's work with the Sharoshi Federation in Japan). Some new avenues were explored for the first time in this project, and their outputs have replication potential across countries. These activities can be independently organized according to respective country needs and, if implemented well, can become self-sustaining in the medium-term. Three such effective and replicable outputs have been identified as emerging good practices (Section 9.3.1) and are summarized below. The details of these emerging good practices are provided in Annex – 6B following ILO's template.

- (i) Partnerships in Japan with JEITA on the SPP initiative having sector-wide impact
- (ii) Launching the India bipartite roadmap to promote RBC for DW, and presenting it to the Director General of the ILO jointly by the employers' and workers' organizations.
- (iii) Beginning collaboration with the academia to permeate RBC / BHR practices for DW through Higher Education systems: In Japan a regional academic seminar in collaboration with Konan University was held in January 2026. A key output of this session was shortlisting of 10 concrete ideas on how to introduce BHR topics in higher education. In Malaysia, the academic seminar to enhance awareness of RBC among academia and university students at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) Johor and in Lao PDR the RBC seminar with academia in collaboration with National University of Laos, Faculty of Economics and

Business Management were similar examples. In India, an RBC e-learning module is being developed jointly by UN Global Compact and ILO India. It is planned to be registered with Management and Professional Services Skill Council to allow more credibility and reach to private sector professionals.

## 12. RECOMMENDATIONS

A key purpose of this evaluation was organizational learning to improve future programming in areas where enterprise needs and development cooperation meet. The main findings and lessons learnt has led the evaluation team to make some recommendations that can be considered for future programming by bringing together constituents and stakeholders to prioritize interventions and where the intended impact of such interventions can be better aligned to national and regional priorities. The recommendations are grouped into two categories: (a) those based on common findings across programme countries (discussed in section 12.1), (b) those based on country-specific findings (discussed in section 12.2).

### 12.1 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON COMMON FINDINGS

Two recommendations, based on common findings across countries, and drawn up at the intersectionality of enterprise needs and development cooperation, are aimed to: (i) deliver higher value to smaller enterprises in future RBC for DW projects, and (ii) deepen digital activities in future projects with an aim to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of outputs, and sustain the impact of interconnected outcomes. These recommendations are elaborated below.

**Recommendation 1:** Deliver higher value to smaller enterprises in future RBC for DW projects.

One of the recommendations made in the final independent evaluation of RVC Phase I projects was to work with the SMEs.<sup>42</sup> Japan was the only programme country in this phase which had a continuity from phase I. Thus, it was reasonable to expect that only the Japan component of work in this phase would have a focus on SMEs which was explicitly mentioned in two Activities 01.02.01 and 01.02.02, contributing to Output 01.02 linked to Outcome 1. The project worked in

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<sup>42</sup> Final independent evaluation of RVC Phase I project Recommendation 5: Expand the outreach efforts gradually to engage a broader spectrum of stakeholders, particularly towards enterprises of Tiers 2 and 3 including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

the other three countries for the first time which included working with their SMEs, but did not design any activity exclusively to target SMEs.

Overall, the project worked with significant numbers of SMEs across the four countries, as well as with EBMOs which have many SMEs as their members. The project results in Japan, show the effectiveness of ILOs' work in Japan with the SMEs which were either done directly (such as awareness raising) or in partnership with JEITA (such as the SPP initiative) or with the Sharoshi Federation (BHR training). In the three other countries, where there was no foundational work done (like phase I in Japan), and even the larger enterprises had limited awareness on RBC, a focus was kept on larger companies to increase impact of the project on supply chains.

This leads the evaluation to recommend that at least one Outcome in future programmes, aimed to advance RBC for DW in Asian supply chains, should focus on delivering higher value to the SMEs in the programme countries or the region. With a significant amount of foundational work being done in Japan, and a beginning being made in at least seven other Asian countries (including RVC Phase I and RISSC programme countries), keeping one Outcome focused on SMEs can direct a portion of the available resources and managerial efforts to enterprise segments that can benefit from development cooperation to leave no one behind. Five illustrative dimensions of such an Outcome (if designed) is stated below for future programming considerations.

- (i) Address areas of SME concern: cognizance needs to be taken on the key challenges being faced by the SMEs (especially tier 2 and below) which can vary by countries. The project design can be informed by a situational analysis of the limitations posed by their small scale of operations, inadequacies in capital structure, barriers to access low-cost financing, uncertainty in market access, volatility in price realization of their product / service sales, variations that are enforced in their purchase contracts by larger customers and acceptance of such terms due to their limited bargaining power, limitations to upgrade technology and production capacities. There exists a scope to adapt technical contents more to meet the reality of SME needs. Some of these operational challenges, in turn, flow into the human resource domain and affect SME workforces in several ways: such as creating unpredictable variability in staffing demands, create challenges in recruiting workforces with appropriate skills and competencies within short timeframes, pose challenges on migrant workforces, drive the need to provision more expenses to provide working conditions comparable to the larger enterprises, address matters related to human rights in operational areas, adhere to social security and related compliance issues from these challenges. Once all such

dimensions (as well as relevant others) are better understood, the project design can be better contextualized to suit the needs of the SMEs in the programme countries, and project activities can be structured to appropriately advance the RBC / BHR agenda in these contexts.

- (ii) Sector focus: a mix of sectors need to be chosen that balances donor needs (e.g. which could be automotive and/or E&E) and country priorities (e.g. which could be plantations, chemicals, smokestack industries, and/or others) to create sector-level templates which can then give sector-specific guidance to large enterprises, and the SMEs in their supply chains, to initiate on-ground actions to adopt more responsible business practices to ensure decent work.
- (iii) Design based on baseline studies: The evaluation noted baseline studies were commissioned by the project in Malaysia and Lao PDR. Such studies, if undertaken at the inception stage, can be beneficial in two ways: (a) contextualize project activities to target groups, (b) help ILO gain visibility for making a knowledge contribution in relatively less-researched areas. The scope of baseline studies should include rapid assessments of the SMEs' affordability and burden of compliance needs, any top concerns (for example: OSH), as these often become firm-level decision drivers to adopt the RBC / BHR agenda. A cluster of interventions can benefit from common baseline studies commissioned with pooled resources.

Assessing country-specific gendered DW needs in operations of enterprises in the supply chains is another dimension that can be included in the scope of baseline studies. The findings from such studies can then provide specific inputs to training sessions and other country programme activities that can influence firm-level and sector-level decisions to adopt more gender sensitive responsible business practices.

- (iv) Measure impact that indicates systemic changes: In the previous sections, the evaluation has discussed the importance of setting realistic targets, and strengthening causal linkages between activities, their outputs, and the linked outcomes. The outcomes themselves may be interconnected and mutually reinforcing as well. Future RBC for DW projects in Asian supply chains can be expected to move from laying foundations to developing targeted and sector-focused approaches that deliver more 'tangible' results through demonstrated 'pilot' implementations. Hence, it is likely that donors, constituents, and other stakeholders will increasingly demand adoption of more quantitative indicators in monitoring and evaluation frameworks that measure impact of project outcomes to usher systemic changes. Setting up

those indicators to measure impact on SME operations and their behavioural changes will then need to be addressed appropriately.

'Pilot' implementation projects, to become successful and demonstrable, are to be undertaken in economies where some foundational work has been done, nascent ecosystems exist (which can then be built upon), and from where project successes can be showcased by the donor, the ILO, and the respective country, for wider adoption in the region. Such projects will typically need a strong mandate from the national government, clear commitments from the concerned tripartite stakeholder groups (some of them can be ILO constituents), separate resource allocations, and dedicated managerial focus from the implementation team.

- (v) Incorporate mechanisms to handle contentious issues: At a foundational and awareness raising level, the project design can handle a mix of issues, but future programmes that will build on such foundations will need to take more targeted approaches. A few contentious issues (such as the zero-recruitment fee in some countries having significant issues of migrant workforces) can take up a disproportionately higher amount of social dialogue time and trigger iterative consultation processes especially where SMEs are involved. It is thus recommended that a few such contentious issues are identified for each programme country, and be segregated for separate discussions (may be with a set of more concerned stakeholders) so that progress towards a broad consensus on less contentious issues can be achieved within reasonable timelines. This could be done synergistically with other national or development cooperation projects that have more explicit focus on each thematic area (e.g. wages, migration, grievance handling, social security for gig and platform workers). Such coherent approaches will increase the impact building on the work done by other projects, and help decrease duplications which may, otherwise, impose unnecessary burden on constituents.

**Recommendation 2:** Deepen digital activities in future projects with an aim to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of outputs, and sustain the impact of interconnected outcomes.

As of now there are digital outputs from the project, and country teams have made efforts to adopt digital tools in their activities. Going forward, there is a need to take a more panoramic (may be regional) view where every project adopts a digital plan interwoven in all its lifecycle processes, widen the scope of leveraging digital platforms and tools for all main activities, and direct resources and managerial focus to converge multi-country efforts. Otherwise, activity level efforts can become fragmented, individualized, whereas needs exist to work towards institutionalizing

digital efforts for every project and programme. Well-designed digitalization activities can also improve the interconnectedness of outcomes, potentially making them mutually reinforcing thereby helping enhancing sustainability of impact achieved through project intervention activities. Five illustrative dimensions are stated below to serve as pointers to strategize future initiatives.

- (i) Improved knowledge harvesting systems to support project management: KII findings have informed the evaluation that digitalized dashboard reporting of project progress that gives an overview of the entire project (especially if it is a multi-country project) can be useful to donors and officials with oversight responsibility. This can supplement (but not substitute) regular reporting processes. Moreover, ideas floated in group work brainstorming sessions may not find their way into documented proceedings, and video recording of entire sessions that are made available are seldom revisited or referenced for decision making. Available smart tools can be better positioned to capturing such activity outputs and reporting. Data mining of past and current repositories using advanced tools can also help project teams more effectively. The development and adoption of such tools by project can be instituted at the regional level, and aligned to any streamlining required in ILO process and their controls, aimed to optimize project management time on reporting and dissemination activities.
  
- (ii) Digitalization measures in workers' organization: KII findings from EBMOs have informed the evaluation that the issues brought forward by workers representative in bipartite fora are often well known while there could be a scope to discuss include other issues that need to be discussed in a well-structured social dialogue. This would need by trade union secretariats to use digital platforms to survey, source inputs and feedback from their members. Discussions on this topic with some of the workers' organizations during KII sessions show they are open to this idea, which if implemented well can be useful. However, they do not have institutional capacities and resources to commission such dialogue specific surveys, analyzing inputs and suggestions from their members received at scale, and transforming them into agenda(s) which can either be prioritized or kept in the general agenda for social dialogue.

The above digitalization measures, if implemented, can help advancing the RBC / BHR agenda, and inform future programming in two ways: (a) improving inclusion of younger workers who maybe union members, but carry a perception that their voices are not heard where it matters. Such digitalized surveys can also give inputs to trade unions on gender issues as digital platforms can provide safe spaces to women to anonymously give their

suggestions, and expectations. Challenges of linguistic inclusion exist in some countries, and their sub-regions. Digitalized surveys on multi-lingual platforms can also help overcome language barriers in sourcing inputs and suggestions from workers in these sub-regions, thereby enhancing inclusion. If open survey approaches are taken, it can give opportunities for SME workers who are not unionized to share their views and suggestions (as the BHR agenda is for all enterprises and their workers); and (b) would pave the way for instituting a structured, digitalized grievance handling mechanism. While most large enterprises and listed entities have grievance handling mechanisms to comply with regulatory reporting needs, the SMEs will need to institute such measures as adoption of RBC / BHR practices deepen. However, the cost to maintain such grievance handling mechanisms could increase the burden on individual SMEs and become a discouraging factor in adoption of RBC / BHR practices in supply chains. The workers' organization and trade unions can step in to offer RBC / BHR grievance reporting services (using digital platforms) at scale which will be more credible to workers, and at the same time distribute platform operating costs on a large SME subscriber base thus imposing minimal additional costs on individual SME. Such well-structured initiatives can be considered for support by institutions and through public funds.

(iii) Creation of digital assets: The project created some digital assets, good practices compilations, and documents that can be referenced in future. These documents and videos were open access as well as posted in ILO partner sites with due acknowledgement as a generalized dissemination measure. However, adopting a digital strategy would explore how the viewership of such artefacts could be improved, how sharing across platforms can be beneficial, and targeted dissemination be made to communities of practice and stakeholder groups of common / aligned interests. Creating other digital knowledge assets such as checklists, guidelines, interactive application guidance for onsite work can also be explored. While success stories and achievements are necessary for peer-learning with actual example, instances of learning that need to be captured from mistakes made, raising awareness of practices that need to be avoided can also be disseminated effectively through animated digital content based on real life experiences and protecting identities at the same time.

(iv) E-learning courses: the evaluation has reviewed reports from the Sharoshi Federation to the ILO suggesting adoption of e-learning methods to roll out BHR training to their wider member base. A tiered approach is proposed where initial course work is done online followed by in-person group work activities and practical training sessions. Similar needs can be expressed

by other key partners in future. On the other hand, professional support modules on ESG / RBC, being developed by the project in Malaysia through MEF-UNIMAS, is expected to be leveraged by ILO social partners in future. Both these examples indicate demand for e-learning support from the ILO which can grow over time. Hence, there is a need to take an aggregated view across projects that are likely to use e-learning delivery methods and systems, making overarching preferred platform choices (and not take a case-by-case view), shortlist some appropriate content generation tools, align / empanel a set of service providers, all of which will optimize costs, and deliver the best value for the institution and its clientele.

- (v) Contribute to development of digitalized national reporting systems on SDG 8: The KII findings revealed there could possibilities where work done by the ILO can be missed to be recorded in national SDG reporting systems. It is thus recommended that ILO engages with governments (Ministry of Labour / Human Resources) to discuss the value that could be achieved if development digitalized national reporting systems on SDG 8 are built which capture all work being done by all institutions in the country, international agencies, national implementing entities, civil society organizations, as well as the private sector. These engagements could be country specific and the ILO could technically contribute to such government-led and funded initiatives. Among the four countries covered in this project, Malaysia could be chosen a candidate country for such a ‘pilot’ engagement. This can be included in the new DWCP that is being finalized between the ILO and the government.

Adopting more comprehensive digitalization efforts in projects need to be commensurately supported by allocation of more resources and expanding the scope of activities. For example, producing more digitalized training tools could have a value for sustainability and align with extant project activities but working with social partners (and other stakeholders) on digitalized grievance handling systems or encouraging adoption of a digitalized national reporting systems on SDG 8 would need the ILO to take slightly different approaches to design such interventions.

## **12.2 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON COUNTRY SPECIFIC FINDINGS**

**Recommendation 3, India:** Operationalize the bipartite roadmap, begin with the “training” pillar.

It is recommended that appropriate actions are initiated soon to operationalize the bipartite roadmap launched in this project. This will build on the foundations laid and will help sustain the momentum generated by beginning to promote RBC for DW, and deliver tangible value to the constituents, concerned stakeholders, and the ILO’s partners. A collaborative platform

operationalized soon after the launch (even if it begins with only one of the pillars) can become a bipartite confidence building measure. Subsequently, this collaborative platform can be expanded to cover more bipartite pillars and then become more resilient to handle contentious issues under other pillars that are likely to emerge sooner than later (also discussed in section 9.5.2).

The evaluation KILs with all four EBMOs and both workers' organizations revealed, of the five pillars stated in the roadmap, beginning work on the synthesized priority of the "training" pillar would be the least contentious, and possibly the most productive in the short-term. A collaborative platform set up under the "training" pillar can garner public, private, and other institutional funds (supported by the government) to become a self-sustaining market system in the medium-term. The employers acknowledged they need to assume a leader's role under the "training" pillar, and the workers understood their responsibility to support their employers by participating in upskilling programmes as deemed necessary in the changing world of work.

**Recommendation 4, Japan:** Expand operationalizing "SPP" initiatives in at least two new sectors

The evaluation has found evidence of early impact of the JEITA's SPP initiative and its likelihood of sustenance. This creates a baseline from where similar "SPP" – SME focused initiatives – can be conceptualized and launched in other sectors of national priority, with such "SPP" models being nuanced to meet their respective sectoral needs. The design of such future projects needs to be more comprehensive (it could be either stand-alone or a cluster projects), planned for longer durations, adequately resourced, commitments secured from dominant actors in supply chains, and considers donor expectations over at least the next five years.<sup>43</sup> An initial mapping exercise may help to check sector-specific needs (can be through an enhanced baseline study), and securing commitment from potential EBMOs and other partners before designing any intervention for the selected sectors. Importantly, the exit strategies of such projects need to be well-designed to achieve wider multiplicative effects that can become self-sustaining without requiring repetitive similar interventions from the donor. Partnerships with the Sharoshi Federation, and capacity building of their members, can continue to be an important component of such future projects.

**Recommendation 5, Lao PDR:** Contextualized replication of the JEITA SPP initiative by developing one or two sectoral pilots according to national priorities.

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<sup>43</sup> In Japan, JEITA and major enterprises have been working on human right issues in their supply chains since the 2000s, even before the UNGP, NAP or the national guidelines came into effect. The SPP initiative was proposed by JEITA who have been one of the front runners in RBC / BHR adoption, and had multiple years of internal consultation before the SPP's realization. The need for political will and strong demand from the EBMOs who want to commit their budget, time, and resource to work on this initiative cannot be overstated.

To ensure the sustainability and continuation of results achieved through RVC Phase II in Lao PDR, future support should consider contextualized replication of the JEITA SPP initiative by developing one or two sectoral pilots according to national priorities that can serve as models for further adoption by other sectors. At first, the piloting exercise could prioritize one or two sectors from those identified in the Tenth National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2026–2030), viz: (i) electricity; (ii) agriculture and agro-processing; (iii) mining and mineral processing; (iv) tourism; (v) industrial and processing zones serving as local production bases; and (vi) transportation and logistics. Targeting priority sectors to develop these pilots would allow for more concentrated support, ensure stronger demonstration effects, and promote learning in several other sectors.

The pilot should target SMEs, which often require simplified and tailored approaches to adopt new practices effectively. The initiative should move beyond awareness-raising and offer a reasonable amount of practical implementation support to the SMEs. The design of such a future project could include technical assistance activities, enterprise-level coaching followed by mentoring, hand-holding support for some time to demonstrate how RBC and HRDD can be applied in practice, and create digital assets for use in further roll-outs. The pool of informed stakeholders and trainers created in the RVC Phase-II project, along with the ILO constituents, could contribute to pilot initiatives. All actors, acting in tandem, could help sustain the knowledge gained from this project, strengthen local ownership to continue dissemination of RBC practices.

**Recommendation 6, Malaysia:** Develop BHR sectoral templates, coherent yet differentiated from compliance requirements of the i-ESG framework

Evaluation findings show there is a short-term need to build on the foundational work done under this project to sustain the momentum generated. Findings from Japan in this project (and earlier learning from India drawn from developing NGRBC 2019 guidelines, and follow-on promulgation exercises) show creation of RBC/BHR sectoral templates to deepen engagements at the sector level can be a plausible next step to effectively implement NAPBHR in Malaysia. Such a future project could leverage the beginnings made in the E&E and automotive sectors in this project but commence BHR engagements with other sectors of national priority such as plantations and chemicals. Like the Recommendation 5 made for Lao PDR, the Malaysian pilots should target SMEs in the selected sectors, and offer a reasonable amount of practical implementation support to the SMEs through technical assistance activities, enterprise-level coaching followed by mentoring and hand-holding support for some time, and create digital assets for use in further roll-outs. However, an important contextualization of technical assistance to be provided in the Malaysian pilots to create sectoral BHR templates need to take into consideration the i-ESG

compliance requirements for enterprises, discussed in section 9.2.2 point (iii). The sectoral BHR templates implemented through the future projects need to be coherent with i-ESG framework requirements; while placing minimal additional compliance burden on the enterprises, they need to stand independently on their own merit, and be differentiated from the i-ESG framework.

Appointment of National Focal Points to promote MNE Declaration: Building on the example of India, recommendations for Lao PDR and Malaysia could further emphasise the operationalisation of the roadmaps developed through the tripartite-plus workshops. These roadmaps reflect constituents' interest in establishing national focal points, which could serve as key mechanisms to advance policy coherence, awareness, and dialogue on RBC. The MNE Declaration encourages countries to appoint tripartite national focal points (involving government, employers, and workers) to promote the Declaration principles. The focal points can help raise awareness, build capacity, and facilitate dialogue among stakeholders on the role of MNEs in supporting decent work and inclusive growth. Presently 23 ILO Member States have designated national focal points (Annex – 7).

This important aspect needs to be considered by the programme countries, as well as other countries where ILO has taken initiatives to promote RBC / BHR. In Malaysia, where additional RBC-related ILO projects are planned and the government is advancing the implementation of the NAPBHR, such a mechanism could act as an umbrella framework to coordinate efforts, including through sector-specific approaches. In Lao PDR, this mechanism could support the country's preparation for its planned LDC graduation in November 2026 by strengthening its capacity to promote decent work, enhance competitiveness, and attract sustainable foreign direct investment.

A summary of recommendations (Table 10) specifying who is called upon to act, priority level, timing needs, and resources requirement is given below.

**Table 10: Recommendations**

Recommendations	Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
<i>Based on common findings</i>				
Deliver higher value to smaller enterprises in future RBC for DW projects	ILO project management and ILO country offices, and tripartite constituents	Medium	High	Medium-term
Deepen digital support to future projects to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and sustained impact of outputs	ILO regional office, ILO project management, ILO country office, and tripartite constituents	High	Medium	Short-term

Recommendations	Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
<i>Based on country specific findings</i>				
India: Operationalize the bipartite roadmap, begin with the “training” pillar.	ILO India country office, sectoral EBMOs, and tripartite constituents	High	Medium	Short-term
Japan: Expand operationalizing “SPP” initiatives in at least two new sectors	ILO Japan country office, sectoral EBMOs, tripartite constituents	High	High	Short-term
Lao PDR: Contextualized replication of the JEITA SPP initiative; develop one or two sectoral pilots according to national priorities.	ILO country and regional offices, sectoral EBMOs, and tripartite constituents	Medium	Medium	Medium-term
Malaysia: Develop BHR sectoral templates, coherent yet differentiated from compliance requirements of the i-ESG framework	ILO country and regional offices, sectoral EBMOs, and tripartite constituents	High	Medium	Short-term

**ANNEX – 1 SUMMARY OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES****Table 11: Schedule of activities for the inception stage, and key dates**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities / tentative meeting agenda</b>	<b>Participants / Meeting Invitees</b>
09-Jan-26 (Day 1)	Kick-off meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO Project Officials</li> <li>• ILO Evaluation Team</li> <li>• International evaluator and the Lao National evaluator</li> </ul>
	Proposed work plan shared with the ILO Project Team	International evaluator
13-Jan-26	Opening meeting with the ILO Project Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifications on data sheets, and project documents</li> <li>• Discuss data collection activities in Lao PDR, India;</li> <li>• Discuss tentative mission plans to Malaysia, and Japan</li> <li>• Finalize overall work plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO Project Manager, and the ILO Country Leads</li> <li>• International evaluator and the Lao National evaluator.</li> <li>• The ILO Evaluation Manager</li> </ul>
17-Jan-26	Draft inception report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International evaluator</li> <li>• Lao National evaluator</li> </ul>
20-Jan-26	Comments on inception report	The ILO Evaluation Manager
30-Jan-26	Revise inception report, discuss, and finalize the report	All concerned

**Table 12: Schedule of activities for data collection, and key dates**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities / tentative meeting agenda</b>	<b>Participants / Meeting Invitees</b>
21-Jan-26 to 23-Jan-26	Meeting with the ILO project team and some of the ILO specialists By international evaluator (virtual meetings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International evaluator</li> <li>• Lao PDR National evaluator (in-person meeting at Vientiane)</li> </ul>
23-Jan-26 to 30-Jan-26	Data collection in Lao PDR By country-based evaluator	Schedule agreed with the Lao PDR project lead

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities / tentative meeting agenda</b>	<b>Participants / Meeting Invitees</b>
27-Jan-26	Introductory meeting with the ILO India team (meeting at ILO Delhi Office)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO India project lead</li> <li>• International evaluator</li> </ul>
29-Jan-26	Observation of national multi-stakeholder workshop for India, to be held at Delhi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO India project lead</li> <li>• International evaluator</li> <li>• MULTI specialist</li> </ul>
01-Feb-26 to 06-Feb-26*	Data collection in Malaysia By international evaluator	Schedule agreed with the Malaysia project lead
09-Feb-26 to 13-Feb-26	Data collection in India By international evaluator	Schedule agreed with the India project lead
13-Feb-26	Meeting with the remaining ILO specialists By international evaluator	Schedule agreed with the respective specialists
15-Feb-26 to 20-Feb-26*	Data collection in Japan By international evaluator (some logistics assistance is needed)	Schedule agreed with the Japan project lead
25-Feb-26	Data collection debriefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International evaluator and the Lao PDR national evaluator.</li> <li>• ILO Project Team.</li> <li>• The ILO Evaluation Manager.</li> </ul>

\*This includes mission travel dates

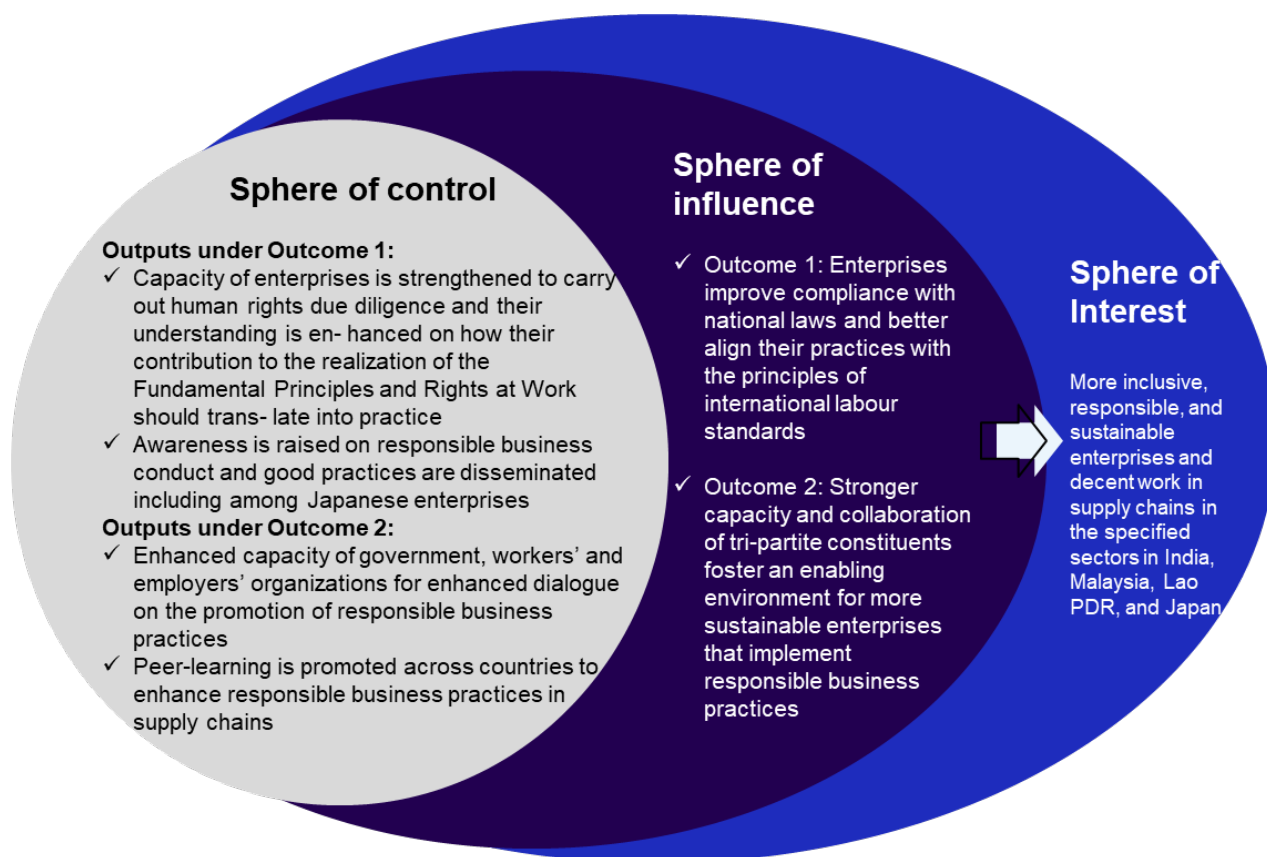
**Table 13: Schedule of activities for reporting, and key dates**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities / tentative meeting agenda</b>	<b>Participants / Meeting Invitees</b>
23-Feb-26 to 08-Mar-26	Analyze the collected data and evidence, draw insights, draft the evaluation report  Circulate first draft of the evaluation report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International evaluator</li> <li>• Lao PDR national evaluator</li> <li>• ILO Project Manager, and the ILO Country Leads to be consulted, if needed</li> <li>• ILO Evaluation Manager</li> </ul>
09-Mar-26 to 11-Mar-26	First review by the ILO, fact-checks, provide first round of observations, and comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO Project Manager, and the ILO Country Leads</li> <li>• ILO Evaluation Manager</li> </ul>

Dates	Activities / tentative meeting agenda	Participants / Meeting Invitees
12-Mar-26 to 14-Mar-26	<p>Incorporate corrections (as may be needed), address the comments received from ILO, revise report</p> <p>Circulate second draft of the evaluation report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International evaluator</li> <li>• Lao PDR national evaluator</li> <li>• ILO Evaluation Manager</li> <li>• ILO Project Manager, and the ILO Country Leads</li> </ul>
16-Mar-26 to 23-Mar-26	Second review by the ILO: collate detailed comments, suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO Project Manager, and the ILO Country Leads</li> <li>• ILO Evaluation Manager, and EVAL (Regional) Team</li> </ul>
19-Mar-26	Stakeholders' validation meeting; sharing of key findings; gather final feedback before finalizing the evaluation report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International evaluator and the Lao PDR national evaluator.</li> <li>• ILO Project Manager, and the ILO Country Leads.</li> <li>• The ILO Evaluation Team</li> <li>• Other stakeholders, as needed</li> </ul>
24-Mar-26	A compiled list of the detailed comments and suggestions, to be shared by ILO with the evaluators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO Evaluation Manager</li> <li>• International evaluator and the Lao PDR national evaluator</li> </ul>
25-Mar-26 to 30-Mar-26	Incorporate comments received from the ILO Evaluation Team and other stakeholders, revise and submit the final evaluation report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International evaluator</li> <li>• Lao PDR national evaluator</li> </ul>
01-Apr-26 to 15-Apr-26	ILO HQ EVAL final review and incorporation of comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International evaluator and the Lao PDR national evaluator.</li> <li>• ILO Project Manager, and the ILO Country Leads.</li> <li>• ILO Evaluation Manager, and EVAL (Regional, HQ) Team</li> </ul>

## ANNEX – 2 THEORY OF CHANGE VISUALIZATION

The Theory of Change (TOC) conceptual framework, as proposed in the Development Cooperation Document, builds on key impacts and lessons learned from previous ILO interventions in the field and learning from RVC – Phase I and is visualized in Figure 2 (below).



**Figure 2: Theory of Change conceptual framework (source: ProDoc)**

**ANNEX – 3 MATRIX OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

**Table 14: Matrix of Evaluation Questions for Relevance and Strategic Fit**

RELEVANCE AND STRATEGIC FIT					
Question	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
<p><b>Relevance of project activities to the stakeholders:</b> To what extent, and in what ways, were the project activities relevant for the stakeholders in each country?</p> <p><b>Validity of intervention design:</b></p> <p>(i) To what extent was the intervention designed to address institutional needs, and priorities in each country?</p> <p>(ii) To what extent were the project outcomes designed to be relevant to P&amp;B 2024-25 Output 4.2, and SDG targets 8.5, 8.8?</p> <p>(iii) To what extent do project activities, outputs, outcomes, correspond to causal linkages expressed in the TOC?</p> <p><b>Relevance of results achieved:</b> To what extent, and how well, did the project outputs and linked outcomes support the needs and priorities of:</p> <p>(i) the national stakeholders, and</p> <p>(ii) the wider national development frameworks and DWCPs?</p>	<p><b>Design</b> Final ProDoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Inception (6 months)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Implementation arrangements</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ProDoc</li> <li>• Country Govt. Docs / Policies</li> <li>• DWCPs</li> <li>• ILO P&amp;B 2024-25</li> <li>• Official statistics</li> <li>• Progress Reports</li> <li>• Project Manager / Team interviews</li> <li>• ILO Specialist interviews</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> <li>• Participant survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk reviews</li> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> <li>• Web survey of workshop participants (to the extent possible)</li> </ul>	<p>Identify the stakeholder / ILO official / informant to be interviewed from the list of stakeholders provided in consultation with the ILO Project Manager and project team.</p>	<p>Triangulation (wherever, and to the extent possible).</p> <p>Assess the relevance of consultative process.</p> <p>Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming</p>

Table 15: Matrix of Evaluation Questions for Coherence

COHERENCE					
Question	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
<p><b><i>Leveraging synergies (internal):</i></b> To what extent did the project leverage synergies and partnerships with other ILO projects and programmes?</p>	<p><b><u>Design</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ProDoc</i></li> <li>• Country Govt. Docs / Policies</li> <li>• DWCPs</li> <li>• Progress Report</li> <li>• Project Manager / Team interviews</li> <li>• ILO Specialist interviews</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> <li>• Participant survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk reviews</li> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> <li>• Web survey of workshop participants (to the extent possible)</li> </ul>	Identify the stakeholder / ILO official / informant to be interviewed from the list of stakeholders provided in consultation with the ILO Project Manager and project team.	<p>Triangulation (wherever, and to the extent possible).</p> <p>Assess the relevance of consultative process.</p> <p>Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming</p>
<p><b><i>Leveraging synergies (external):</i></b> To what extent did the project activities leverage synergies and partnerships with projects / programmes of constituents, governments, social partners, national institutions, and other development agencies?</p>	<p><b><u>Inception (6 months)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Implementation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Activities (including joint activities with other agencies)</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>				
<p><b><i>Implementation of TOC logic:</i></b> How consistently was the TOC logic applied across activities and across countries to achieve project objectives?</p>					

Table 16: Matrix of Evaluation Questions for Effectiveness

EFFECTIVENESS					
Key Questions	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
<p><b>All countries:</b> To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs, and how effectively have the outputs contributed to achieve desired outcomes in the countries?</p>	<p><b>Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Output</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ProDoc</li> <li>• Country Govt. Docs / Policies</li> <li>• DWCPs</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Implementation agreements</li> <li>• Progress reports</li> <li>• Project Manager / Team interviews</li> <li>• ILO Specialist interviews</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> <li>• Beneficiary findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk reviews</li> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> <li>• Web survey of workshop participants (to the extent possible)</li> </ul>	Identify the stakeholder / ILO official / informant to be interviewed from the list of stakeholders provided in consultation with the ILO Project Manager and project team.	<p>Triangulation (wherever, and to the extent possible).</p> <p>Assess the relevance of consultative process.</p> <p>Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming</p>
<p><b>Home and Host countries (synthesized findings):</b> To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs, and how effectively have these outputs contributed to achieve the desired outcomes particularly for cross-border operations of the Japanese Multinational Enterprises?</p>					
<p><b>All Countries:</b> How effective was the project in stimulating interest of the participating enterprises to be catalyst and promote a culture of compliance with national laws and respect for the principles of ILS at the country and regional levels?</p>					
<p><b>Management Effectiveness:</b> Were the management and governance arrangements and the M&amp;E systems (including risk analysis) of the project adequate and effective?</p>	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Risk registers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ProDoc</li> <li>• DWCPs</li> <li>• Progress reports</li> <li>• Project Manager / Team interview</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> </ul>	ILO Project Manager.	Assess management effectiveness to achieve the planned outputs, expected

<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>					
Key Questions	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
Has the project produced any unexpected outcomes? If so, what were the activities / factors that contributed to the unexpected outcomes?	<p><b><u>Implementation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Manager / Team interviews</li> <li>• ILO Specialist interviews</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> </ul>	Identify the stakeholder / informant to be interviewed in consultation with the ILO PM	outcomes, capacity that was built, manage risks, and obtain the best out of partnerships.
Identify (a) the factors that facilitated, and (b) that hindered (if any) the project from achieving its results? Were any of these factors the same as that found in RVC – Phase I? If so, how were their effects either amplified to achieve even better results or mitigated to control inhibitors to project progress?	<p><b><u>Final Evaluation of RVC – Phase I</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations</li> <li>• Lessons Learnt</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Implementation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Risk registers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Manager / Team interviews</li> <li>• ILO Specialist interviews</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> </ul>	Identify the stakeholder / informant to be interviewed in consultation with the ILO PM	Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming

**Table 17: Matrix of Evaluation Questions for Efficiency**

EFFICIENCY					
Question	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
<p><b>Adherence to schedules and time efficiency:</b> Was the project efficiently managed in terms of activity completion according to stipulated timelines? Could these have been improved?</p>	<p><b>Design</b> Final ProDoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Output</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Budgets</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ProDoc</li> <li>• DWCPs</li> <li>• Budget Docs</li> <li>• Progress reports</li> <li>• Project Manager / Team interviews</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk reviews</li> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> <li>• Web survey of workshop participants (to the extent possible)</li> </ul>	<p>Identify the stakeholder / ILO official / informant to be interviewed from the list of stakeholders provided in consultation with the ILO Project Manager and project team.</p>	<p>Triangulation (wherever, and to the extent possible).</p> <p>Assess the efficiency of outputs (qualitative assessment).</p> <p>Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming</p>
<p><b>Utilization of human resources:</b> Did the project efficiently recruit and manage human resources according to its design? Could these have been improved?</p>					
<p><b>Adherence to budgets and resource efficiency:</b> Were the financial resources efficiently utilized in this project and according to stipulated budgets?</p>					
<p><b>Value for Money:</b> Assess the added value of the project and the outputs from the project activities versus their value for money (qualitative assessment).</p>					

Table 18: Matrix of Evaluation Questions for Impact

IMPACT					
Question	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
<p><b>Impact, as achieved:</b> To what extent, and through which pathways, did project outcomes</p> <p>(i) contribute to a more enabling environment for responsible business conduct, including improved policy alignment and evidence of practice in all four participating countries?</p> <p>(ii) foster decent work in regional and global supply chains?</p>	<p><b>Design</b></p> <p>Final ProDoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Output</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Inception (6 months)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes after consultations</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ProDoc</li> <li>• DWCPs</li> <li>• Budget Docs</li> <li>• Progress reports</li> <li>• Project Manager / Team interviews</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk reviews</li> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> <li>• Web survey of workshop participants (to the extent possible)</li> </ul>	<p>Identify the stakeholder / ILO official / informant to be interviewed from the list of stakeholders provided in consultation with the ILO Project Manager.</p>	<p>Triangulation (wherever, and to the extent possible).</p> <p>Assess the impact of outcomes, national priorities, DWCPs.</p>
<p><b>Partnerships:</b> Going forward, what measures can be taken to strengthen coordination, maximize synergies, improve collaboration with existing and new partners to enhance impact?</p>	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>				<p>Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming</p>

**Table 19: Matrix of Evaluation Questions for Sustainability**

<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>					
Question	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
<p><b>Exit strategies, by design:</b> Assess what exit strategies were designed to achieve sustainability of the interventions beyond the project duration? How were the exit strategies factored into project design? To be analysed by each country, and then be explored for any common finding.</p>	<p><b>Design:</b> Final ProDoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory of Change</li> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Implementation arrangements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ProDoc</li> <li>• DWCPs</li> <li>• Budget Docs</li> <li>• Progress reports</li> <li>• Project Manager / Team interviews</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk reviews</li> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> <li>• Web survey of workshop participants (to the extent possible)</li> </ul>	Identify the stakeholder / ILO official / informant to be interviewed from the list of stakeholders provided in consultation with the ILO Project Manager.	<p>Triangulation (wherever, and to the extent possible).</p> <p>Assess the impact of project outcomes for sustainability.</p> <p>Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming</p>
<p><b>Effect of external developments:</b> What factors (policy, institutional, or donor-related) has either affected or is likely to affect sustaining the programme results, or continued relevance?</p>	<p><b>Implementation</b> Key external development, that can affect sustainability of project outcomes</p>				
<p><b>Likelihood of sustenance (India, Lao PDR, Malaysia):</b></p> <p>(i) To what extent are the desired changes observable? This may be possible only to the extent of initial results that has come.</p> <p>(ii) What is the capacity to sustain? How strong is the commitment of the Governments, MNEs, other stakeholders to continue</p>	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Skill-Will Matrix<sup>44</sup></li> </ul>				

<sup>44</sup> This indicator can be developed referencing the ILO's Market Systems Analysis (MSA) methodology. However, the Skill-Will matrix it will be a high-level, light-touch assessment being limited to the scope of this evaluation question; it will not be a detailed assessment on its own adhering to the full MSA methodology.

<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>					
Question	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
<p>initiatives supported by the project?</p> <p>(iii) To what extent are the project's results likely to be sustained in the long term?</p>					
<p><b><i>Likelihood of sustenance (Japan):</i></b> Can synthesized insights be drawn from impact of outcomes of RVC – I and RVC – II phases on sustainability of the intervention?</p>	<p><b><u>Final Evaluation of RVC – Phase I</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Implementation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final evaluation report of the RVC Phase I</li> <li>• Progress reports</li> <li>• KII findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk reviews</li> <li>• KII: semi structured interviews</li> </ul>	ILO Project Manager	Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming

Table 20: Matrix of Evaluation Questions for Cross Cutting Issues

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES					
Question	Measure / Indicator	Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Stakeholder / Informant	Analysis / Assessment
<p><b>Gender equality, non-discrimination, and disability inclusion:</b> To what extent, and in what ways, did the project incorporate principles of gender equality, non-discrimination / social inclusion, and disability inclusion? To be analyzed for:</p> <p>(i) project design, and</p> <p>(ii) being achieved during implementation</p>	<p><b>Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Output</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ProDoc</li> <li>• Progress reports</li> <li>• Project Manager / Team KIIs</li> <li>• Other KII findings</li> <li>• Beneficiary findings (women participants, if possible)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk reviews</li> <li>• KII, semi structured interviews</li> </ul>	<p>Identify the stakeholder / ILO official / informant to be interviewed from the list of stakeholders provided in consultation with the ILO Project Manager.</p>	<p>Triangulation (wherever possible).</p> <p>Assess the outputs, and outcomes vis-à-vis the achievement of cross-cutting issues.</p>
<p><b>Social dialogue:</b> To what extent, and in what ways, did the project strengthen social dialogue among social partners and international stakeholders, including Japanese enterprises and public institutions:</p> <p>(i) at the country level?</p> <p>(ii) at the regional level?</p>	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> </ul>				<p>Org. Learning, key takeaways for future programming</p>

## ANNEX – 4: KEY INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE

### INSTRUMENT # 1 (questions selected according to the key informant's role)

Responsible Value Chain – Phase II project

*Expected duration 30 – 40 minutes (1 hour with interpretation), this instrument will be shared with the respondent at least two days prior to the interview.*

<b>Interview Date and Time</b>	
<b>Type of respondent</b>	
<b>Name of respondent</b>	
<b>Name ILO Unit / Stakeholder Office</b>	

#### Opening question:

1. Please describe your role in the RVC – Phase II project. *(The interviewer will use this information to determine which questions are relevant to ask the respondent. If the respondent's involvement was limited and/or very focused on any of these areas, some of the following questions may be dropped or be made more specific).*

#### Relevance and Strategic Fit:

2. How useful was the project background research, and the outputs of the first six-month inception stage, in helping the project team to structure the implementation stage of work, such as to raise awareness on issues of relevance, conduct training workshops, and initiate other capacity building activities for the ILO constituents, enterprises, and key stakeholders? (for ILO Project Team, ILO Specialists, design stage constituents)
3. To what extent were project activities aligned with the needs and expectations of ILO constituents and other key stakeholders in the targeted sectors and countries?
4. In your view, were some categories of ILO constituents or stakeholder groups better served than others? If so, in what ways? How well did project activities address the specific challenges of women workers and other vulnerable groups (to the extent applicable)?
5. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the project design in terms of advancing ILO objectives to promote decent work in supply chains, host, and home countries? As well as Japan in particular.
6. How useful was the RVC – Phase I course materials, Phase I evaluation findings in helping to design RVC – Phase II project? (For ILO project team and other units)
7. How relevant and appropriate were the course material developed or adapted (national laws and international labour standards), technical tools, guidelines, and associated training activities to address project needs and capacities of their intended users in the four countries?

#### Coherence:

8. How well did the project align with ILO priorities as articulated in planning and strategic documents at the Country Offices? For Japan, in particular? And at the regional level?
9. How closely were project activities aligned with recommendations from ILO and other authoritative reports focused on advancing decent work, responsible business practices, and

related action plans in the host countries? And in Japan – both as a host country, and independently?

10. In what ways did RVC – Phase II complement/create synergies other ongoing supply chain projects in the region (such as RISSC which has common Japanese stakeholders), related projects at the country level? And for other stakeholder-constituents, donors, governments, social partners, national institutions, and other UN or development agencies to enhance results and impact?
11. What external developments (policy, institutional, or donor-related) has either affected or is likely to affect the programme's implementation, results, or future relevance? (such as the introduction of four new Labour Codes in India subsuming 29 existing labour laws).

#### Effectiveness (results):

12. In what ways did you contribute to project results?
13. How effectively was the project managed, and what aspects of management contributed to its strengths or revealed areas for improvement?
14. To what extent has the project achieved its envisaged outputs in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia, and how effectively have these outputs contributed to achieve the desired outcomes and thereby achieve the intended impact / development objectives within the respective host country contexts?
15. To what extent has the project achieved its envisaged outputs in Japan particularly in relation to the Small and Medium Enterprises, as well as the Japanese Multinational Enterprises (MNEs)?
16. What commonalities and differences can be observed (if any) in intervention outcomes based on the project's engagement with Japanese MNEs across the host countries (India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia), and how can these variations be explained by country-specific contexts and institutional settings? (For ILO project team and specialists)
17. Has the project produced any unexpected outcomes? If so, what were activities/factors that contributed to the unexpected outcomes?
18. How effective was the project in stimulating interest of the participating enterprises to be catalyst and promote a culture of compliance with national laws and respect for the principles of ILS, transparency, and social dialogue at the country and regional levels? To what extent were the constituents able to fulfil the roles expected in the programme strategies? How could these be improved?
19. How would you assess project contributions to SDG 8 targets (8.5, 8.8).

#### Effectiveness (management arrangements):

20. Were the management and governance arrangements and the M&E systems (including risk analysis) of the project adequate and effective? (For ILO project team and specialists)
21. Were institutional arrangements with partners and the role of tripartite constituents appropriate and effective? Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of these arrangements?
22. Identify (a) the factors that facilitated, and (b) the challenged that hindered the project from achieving its results, outcomes, and objectives (if any)? Were any of these factors the same as that found in RVC – Phase I? If so, how were their effects either amplified to achieve even better results or mitigated to control inhibitors to project progress?

#### Efficiency:

23. Given the time and resources available, were the planned activities realistic? Following the theory of change, and the results chain, were the outputs and expected outcomes realistic?
24. Was the project efficiently managed in terms of its human / financial resources, and activity completion according to stipulated timelines? Were the resources efficiently utilized in this project? Could these have been improved? Any examples that can be cited.
25. Is there anything that you think might be learned from RVC – Phase II in terms of using limited development cooperation budgets efficiently? Such as, are there any noteworthy examples of:
  - leveraging government or private sector resources to deliver outputs?
  - resource sharing with ILO country offices, other ILO / UN projects, or external partners?
  - mobilizing technical and administrative support from ILO regional and HQ specialists?
  - amplifying project messages through communication and outreach activities?
26. Assess the added value of the programme and the impact of the programme interventions versus value for money. This will be a qualitative assessment.

#### Impact:

27. To what extent did the project contribute toward improvements in awareness/knowledge and capacity among ILO constituents and other key stakeholders? Which activities were the most useful/impactful?
28. Are there any examples of recent policy or enterprise-level measures in the host countries that may contribute to sustainable improvements in responsible business practices ensuring decent work in regional and global supply chains? In what ways did the project contribute to these developments?

#### Sustainability:

29. To what extent has the project supported the capacity, long-term buy-in, leadership, commitment, and national ownership by the partner country governments, social partners, and other relevant stakeholders to creating the enabling conditions for MNEs to translate their learning into positive and lasting change on the ground? What were the challenges?
30. To what extent are the project's results likely to be sustained in the long term, and what additional actions are needed to achieve lasting, independent, and credible improvements in responsible supply chains, compliance with ILS, and social dialogue?
31. How strong is the commitment of the Governments and other stakeholders to sustain the results of project support and continuing initiatives supported under the project? How has the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity to ensure suitability of efforts and benefits?
32. As this project RVC – Phase II is a continuation of RVC – Phase I, and the final evaluation report of RVC – Phase I is available, an attempt will be made in this evaluation to corroborate the evaluation findings between these two phases and draw synthesized insights on sustainability of the intervention impacts as well as future programming. (For ILO project team and specialists)

#### Cross-cutting issues:

33. To what extent and in what ways did the programme promote gender equality, social inclusion, and disability inclusion in the intervention activities, and how adequately were these objectives supported through technical expertise, backstopping, and alignment with the ILO's normative mandate?

- 34.** To what extent and in what ways did the project strengthen social dialogue among social partners and international stakeholders, including Japanese enterprises and public institutions; and how did this dialogue mechanisms contribute to advancing decent work and addressing human and labour rights risks across different levels (home–host, national, sectoral, and workplace)?

**Lesson learned and Recommendations:**

- 35.** What suggestions do you have to improve the design and delivery of future supply chain focused projects based on your experiences with the RVC – Phase II project?
- 36.** What follow-on actions do you recommend for the ILO and its constituents build on project successes or address enduring challenges?

**Concluding question:**

Is there anything else you would like to add?

**ANNEX – 5: WEB SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE****INSTRUMENT # 2: WEB SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS**

S.No.	Respondent Employer Profile (RVC-II programme participant)	Response
	Interviewee name	
	Gender	
	Age	
	Country	
	Type of Organization / Institution	1. Government / Public Sector Enterprise 2. Private Enterprise
	Designation / Title	
Q1	To what extent did the workshop materials and discussions address the key challenges that are related to Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) in your context?	Not relevant/Relevant/Highly relevant
Q2	Were the topics covered aligned with your organization's needs on RBC and applicable <b>international</b> labour standards?	Not relevant/Relevant/Highly relevant
Q3	Were the topics covered aligned with your organization's needs on RBC and applicable <b>national</b> labour standards?	Not relevant/Relevant/Highly relevant
Q4	How would you rate your understanding of RBC <b>before</b> the workshop sessions?	No understanding / Limited understanding / Good understanding
Q5	How would you rate your understanding of RBC <b>after</b> the workshop sessions?	No understanding / Limited understanding / Good understanding
Q6	Did the activity improve your understanding of applicable <b>international</b> labour standards?	No improvement / limited improvement / significant improvement
Q7	Did the activity improve your understanding of applicable <b>national</b> labour standards?	No improvement / limited improvement / significant improvement
Q8	Have you applied any learning from the activity in your organization?	Yes/No
	If yes, please describe any policy, procedural, or practice changes made.	Conditional, text box
Q9	Has your organization initiated strengthening of HRDD processes after the workshop?	Yes/No
Q10	Was the workshop format appropriate for the present purpose?	Not appropriate / Somewhat appropriate / Appropriate
Q11	How likely (your expectation) will the changes or learning from this workshop be sustained over time?	Unlikely / Somewhat likely / Likely
Q12	What aspects of the workshop should be improved in future?	Text box
	a) Organization and logistics	
	b) Format of the workshop	
	c) Course Material / Content	
	d) Speaker / content delivery	

**ANNEX – 6: LESSONS LEARNT AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES****A. LESSONS LEARNT****Project DC/SYMBOL: RAS/24/02/JPN (umbrella): RAS/24/50/JPN, and RAS/24/51/JPN****Name of Evaluator: Partha S Banerjee****Date: 30 March 2026**

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

<b>LESSON LEARNT ELEMENT</b>	<b>TEXT</b>
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	<b>Lesson 1: Improving effectiveness of the training imparted.</b>
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	The evaluation has discussed the unevenness in the effectiveness of the training sessions delivered especially if they were virtual sessions on knowledge intensive topics such as the HRDD. There is a scope to include more practical and real-life examples in the course work for audiences who are beginning to learn RBC and HRDD concepts. A review of project documents and KII findings indicated group work and follow-on practical activities (such as the initial JASTI audits by Sharoshis) were generally found to be more effective.
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	Large Enterprises, Multinational Enterprises, Small and Medium Enterprises, Employers' Organizations, Workers' Organizations
<b>Challenges /negative lessons – Causal factors</b>	At the same time, in-person trainings are more expensive, logistically more challenging, and not easily scalable.
<b>Success / Positive Issues – Causal factors</b>	An important learning was to include discussion topics on any top concerns for a particular cohort during the awareness raising sessions. For example, OSH emerged as a top concern in Lao PDR and offered an appropriate point of entry in the awareness raising sessions to introduce RBC and HRDD concepts.
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	These have been set out in Table 9 on Recommendations in the main report.

<b>LESSON LEARNT ELEMENT</b>	<b>TEXT</b>
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	<b>Lesson 2: More focus is needed on SMEs.</b>
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	Almost 80 percent (or more) of the enterprises in India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia are small and medium-sized. While the project worked with SMEs in these three countries, a more systematic approach needs to be adopted. In Japan, the project kept a focus on SMEs, built it into the designed activities, and achieved effective results that were reasonably commensurate with the time and resources that were allocated to this project. Taking cognizance of this unevenness in achievements, a more structured approach has been recommended for future programming considerations.
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises, Employers' Organizations, Workers' Organizations, Governments
<b>Challenges /negative lessons – Causal factors</b>	A recurrent theme which emerged in most KIIs was the project training material could have included more granular action-oriented checklists, sectoral templates, case studies of how SMEs in their sectors have done it which can be an important takeaway for future programming. The evaluation discussed this feedback with ILO specialists during their KIIs, and they confirmed they received similar feedback / indications from participants during their sessions or thereafter. The ILO Employers Activities and Enterprise specialists, Employers Organizations need to be involved more deeply during the intervention design.
<b>Success / Positive Issues – Causal factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan: Good practice compilation for the peer learning of SMEs, BHR Sharoshis. The project, through a shortlisting process, has selected a set of good practices which is likely to encourage other SMEs adopt similar practices. One of the case studies covered the gender dimension. This compilation can become a reference document for SMEs, Sharoshis and concerned stakeholders aiming to adopt BHR practices in their operations and supply chains, thereby providing momentum to future work.</li> <li>• Malaysia, Lao PDR: similarly, good practice case studies was compiled (mostly covering SMEs) for dissemination.</li> </ul>
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	These have been set out in Table 9 on Recommendations (Section 12) in the main report.

## B. EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

**Project DC/SYMBOL:** RAS/24/02/JPN (umbrella): RAS/24/50/JPN, and RAS/24/51/JPN

**Name of Evaluator:** Partha S Banerjee

**Date:** 30 March 2026

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<b>Good Practice 1: Partnerships in Japan with JEITA on the SPP initiative having sector-wide impact.</b>
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	The project played an anchor's role by working with JEITA on their flagship SPP initiative which is a cross-industry platform connecting large JEITA member companies in the E&E industry with SMEs in their supply chains. Through the SPP, large enterprises work to provide capacity-building and awareness-raising support to the SMEs, offer practical advice, and create opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, with the goal of building a sustainable supply chain for the entire industry.
<b>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</b>	The tenets of the SPP are: (i) it is an initiative carried out through industry-wide collaboration that goes beyond the individual enterprise; (ii) it places emphasis on engagement between SMEs and large enterprises across the value chain; (iii) it is an initiative that has been developed in collaboration with external experts from Japan Sharoshi Federation and the ILO Office for Japan. In 2024-25, the SPP provided support to SMEs to formulate human rights policies and, in 2025-26 it is scheduled (now work in progress) to support SMEs implement HRDD processes and establish grievance handling mechanisms. The SPP's support include: management study meeting to encourage commitment from executives, workshops for practitioners from the participating companies to learn about RBC and BHR, individual consultations with a BHR Sharoshi to support the formulation of human rights policies tailored to company needs, and a final closing meeting in which each company presents its initiatives.
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	The participating SMEs come from across Japan and range from small enterprises with fewer than ten employees to those with over 300: represents a diverse range of industries, extending beyond electronic component manufacturers to software and other sectors.
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be replicated in BHR / HRDD / RBC for DW projects in Japan for other sectors (discussed in section 12, recommendations).</li> <li>• Can serve as a 'model' initiative in Lao PDR (discussed in section 12, recommendations), or in other developing Asian economies</li> </ul>
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, CPOs or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPO of Japan.</li> <li>• ILO's 2024-25 P&amp;B Output 4.2.</li> <li>• MNE Declaration of ILO's MULTI/RBC.</li> </ul>
<b>Other documents or relevant comments</b>	More information on JEITA SPP and publications are accessible at <a href="https://home.jeita.or.jp/csr/spp/">https://home.jeita.or.jp/csr/spp/</a>

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<b>Good Practice 2: Launching the India bipartite roadmap to promote RBC for DW</b>
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	The launching of the bipartite roadmap was a culmination of a structured year-long process of engagement between employers' and workers' organizations. This effort assumes even more significance in an environment where there are divergent positions between the employers, government, and workers' organizations on the new Labour Codes which have taken effect from November 2025.
<b>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</b>	The roadmap outlines shared priorities and joint actions to promote RBC across enterprises, including MSMEs, with a focus on fair employment practices, occupational safety and health, non-discrimination, social protection, green and digital transitions, and strengthened social dialogue mechanisms, among others.
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	<p>There are five pillars in this roadmap, aligned to the MNE Declaration but contextualized to the Indian context: (i) General Policies, (ii) Employment, (iii) Training, (iv) Conditions of work and life, and (v) Industrial relations.</p> <p>Six employers' organizations and six workers' organizations have already committed to acting on the roadmap, with more expected to join this collaborative initiative.</p>
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	Can be replicated in other developing Asian economies
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DWCP of India</li> <li>• CPO of India.</li> <li>• ILO's 2024-25 P&amp;B Output 4.2.</li> <li>• MNE Declaration of ILO's MULTI/RBC</li> </ul>
<b>Other documents or relevant comments</b>	ILO India website, more information can be accessed at <a href="https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/india%E2%80%99s-social-partners-present-bipartite-roadmap-promote-responsible">https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/india%E2%80%99s-social-partners-present-bipartite-roadmap-promote-responsible</a>

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<b>Good Practice 3: Beginning collaboration with the academia to permeate RBC / BHR practices for DW through Higher Education systems.</b>
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	To promote RBC and HRDD in business practice, it is essential to strengthen the broader enabling environment, including governments, universities, and educators. University faculty members play a critical role in disseminating BHR concepts to the next generation through teaching, research, and project-based learning.
<b>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</b>	In Japan, a workshop-based training was designed based on findings from a rapid needs and feasibility analysis conducted through a purposive survey of academics. Interviews were held with 11 faculty members from seven (7) universities, and the results were analyzed and reflected in the training structure. The workshop aimed to achieve the following objectives: (i) enhance foundational understanding of BHR, including RBC and HRDD; (ii) increase motivation and confidence to integrate BHR concepts into university education; and (iii) promote knowledge-sharing and peer learning among university educators.
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Japan (January 2026): a regional academic seminar was held in collaboration with Konan University, conducted in a hybrid format and attended by 23 university faculty members (8 in person and 15 online). A key output of this session was shortlisting of 10 concrete ideas on how to introduce BHR topics in higher education.</li> <li>• In Malaysia: an academic seminar to enhance awareness of RBC among academia and university students at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) Johor</li> <li>• In Lao PDR (March 2026): RBC seminar with academia in collaboration with National University of Laos, Faculty of Economics and Bus. Mgmt.</li> <li>• In India: an RBC e-learning module is being developed jointly by UN Global Compact and ILO India. It is planned to be registered with Management and Professional Services Skill Council to allow more credibility and reach to private sector professionals</li> </ul>
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	Can be replicated in Higher and Professional Education systems of other developing Asian economies
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPO of Japan.</li> <li>• MNE Declaration of ILO's MULTI/RBC</li> </ul>
<b>Other documents or relevant comments</b>	For Japan: Final report on ILO workshop: " <i>Foundations of Business and Human Rights and Applications to University Education</i> " prepared by the ILO Consultant

## ANNEX – 7: NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS TO PROMOTE MNE DECLARATION

The Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration)<sup>45</sup> is an ILO instrument to guide governments, employers, workers' organizations, and multinational enterprises on RBC and social policy.

The MNE Declaration is the only global instrument on RBC that has been drawn up and adopted by governments, employers, and workers from all over the world. It is also the only ILO instrument that directly addresses companies (multinational and national) on the RBC policies and practices they should adopt. The MNE Declaration addresses governments and social partners, recognizing their distinct and complementary roles and responsibilities.

***Appointment of National Focal Points:*** The MNE Declaration encourages countries to appoint tripartite national focal points (involving government, employers, and workers) to promote the MNE Declaration and its principles. The focal points can help raise awareness, build capacity, and facilitate dialogue among stakeholders on the role of MNEs in supporting decent work and inclusive growth.

As of February 2026, 23 Member States have designated national focal points: Portugal; Senegal; Côte d'Ivoire; Norway; Sierra Leone; Jamaica; Pakistan; Nepal; Ghana; Togo; Madagascar; Mozambique; Cabo Verde; Brazil; Peru; South Africa; Lesotho; Cameroon; Argentina; Nigeria; Namibia; Botswana and Türkiye.

### ***Constituting national focal points: prevalent options***

- *National focal points comprising representatives from more than one ministry or national agency.* For example, in Nigeria, national focal points represent: The Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, The National Human Rights Commission, The Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), Employers- The Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA), Workers - The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Workers - The Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC).
- *National focal points comprising representatives from an investment promotion agency.* For example, in Cameroon, national focal points: The Ministry of Labour and Social Security; Employers - Cameroon Employers' Association (GECAM); Workers - Trade Union Confederation of Workers of Cameroon (CSTC); The Investment Promotion Agency and Civil society - Observatory of Public Liberties in Cameroon (OLPC)
- *National focal points comprising representatives from a social dialogue institution.* For example, in Senegal, national focal points represent: The Ministry of Labour Employers - National Employers' Council (CNP); Workers - National Confederation of Workers of Senegal (CNTS); and High Council for Social Dialogue.

Countries can explore other constituting options which can suit their context even better.

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<sup>45</sup> See, <https://www.ilo.org/about-ilo/organizational-structure-international-labour-office/ilo-department-sustainable-enterprises-productivity-and-just-transition/tripartite-declaration-principles-concerning-multinational-enterprises-and>

**ANNEX – 8: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES****A. ILO DIRECTORS AND PROJECT TEAM INTERVIEWED**

<b>Name of ILO Directors</b>	<b>Roles</b>
Mr. Nozomi Tomita	Director, Japan Country Office
Ms. Michiko Miyamoto	Director, India Country Office, DWT South Asia
Ms. Xiaoyan Qian	Director, Lao PDR Country Office
Mr. Tuomo Poutianien	Dy. Regional Director, and Director Malaysia Country Office
<b>Name of ILO Project Team Member</b>	<b>Roles</b>
Ms. Yuki Kobayashi	Programme Coordinator, Project Manager
Ms. Mami Kamoshita	Programme and Operations Officer, Japan project lead
Ms. Yukari Kanamori	Technical Officer, India project lead
Mr. Thanakone Oudomvilay	National Project Coordinator, Lao PDR project lead
Mr. Md. Zharif Shafiq Badrul Hisam	National Project Coordinator, Malaysia project lead

**B. ILO SPECIALISTS INTERVIEWED**

<b>Name of ILO Specialists</b>	<b>Roles</b>
Mr. Norikazu Takebe	Chief Technical Advisor, ILO/Japan Programme, ILO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP), Bangkok
Ms. Githa Roleans	Unit Head, MULTI/RBC, ILO Geneva
Ms. Josee Laporte	Specialist, MULTI/RBC, ILO Geneva
Mr. Ravindra Peiris	Sr. Specialist, Employers' Activities, DWT South Asia
Ms. Yuki Otsuji	Specialist, Workers' Activities, DWT South Asia
Mr. Gary Rynhart	Sr. Specialist, Employers' Activities, DWT ROAP Bangkok
Mr. Ravindra Samithadasa	Sr. Specialist, Workers' Activities, DWT ROAP Bangkok
Ms. Sanchir Tugschimeg	Principal Officer, Relations/TC (Asia) ACTEMP, ILO Geneva
Ms. Minna Maaskola	Sr Technical Specialist, Training and Capacity Building, BETTERWORK, ILO HQ Geneva
Mr. Kelvin Sergeant	Enterprise Technical Specialist, Job Creation and Enterprise Development, DWT ROAP Bangkok
Ms. Bharti Birla	Enterprise Development Specialist, DWT South Asia, ILO India

**C. CONSTITUENTS, STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED****COUNTRY: INDIA**

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>
Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt of India	Mr. Supriya Ranjan Datta	Dy. Secretary
	With Mr. Ashish Kaushik	Section Officer
Employers Federation of India (EFI) / Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)	Mr. Sougata Roy Choudhury with Ms. Namita Pandey	Director General EFI, and Executive Director CII

	Ms. Vaishnavi Gupta	Executive Officer, EFI/CII Executive Officer, EFI/CII
All India Organization of Employers (AIOE) / Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)	Mr. Satish Anand and Mr. Mayank Dias	Adviser, Hindalco Industries Ltd and Executive Committee Member AIOE  Dy. Secretary, The Employers Association, Delhi
Standing Conference Of Public Sector Enterprises (SCOPE)	Ms. Samriddhi Jain	Dy. General Manager
Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)	Mr. Saji Narayanan	Former President
Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)	Mr. R D Chandrasekhar	National Secretary
Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA)	Mr. Sunil Mutha  and Ms. Raginee Singh	Dy. Chief Executive Officer, Technology and Industrial Competitiveness, ACMA  Dy. Director
Yazaki (India) Pvt. Ltd.	Mr. Yutaro Murakami  with Mr. Nishant Mohurle	Manager, Corp. Governance and Legal Affairs  Purchase Officer

**COUNTRY: JAPAN**

ORGANIZATION	NAME	DESIGNATION
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)	Ms. Masayo Ogawa  and Ms. Mami Irie	Deputy Director, BHR Policy Office, Trade Policy Bureau  BHR Policy Office, Trade Policy Bureau
Japan Business Federation (Keidanren)	Ms. Emiko Nagasawa  and Ms. Saki Tashiro	Senior Adviser, Labor Legislation Bureau  Labor Legislation Bureau
Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association (JEITA)	Ms. Kaoru Kuniba  and Mr. Ogawa Yuichiro	Manager, Policy and Strategy Department Management and Planning Division  Deputy Manager, Policy and Strategy Department, Management and Planning Division
Japan Council of Metalworkers' Unions (JCM)	Mr. Hideyuki Hirakawa	Asst. General. Secretary and Director, Int'l Affairs Bureau
UA Zensen	Ms. Hitomi Akiyama	Senior Assistant Director, Policy and Political Affairs Bureau
Sharoshi Federation (Focused Group Discussion)	Mr. Akifumi Goto Ms. Keiko Nakata Mr. Tsutomu Komoda	Vice President Vice President Member of Committee on BHR

ORGANIZATION	NAME	DESIGNATION
	Mr. Ryosuke Obara Mr. Kohei Igarashi Ms. Risa Inagaki	Secretariat: Director, Business Strategy Dept. Manager, Int'l Affairs Division Chief, Int'l Affairs Division
Panasonic Holdings	Ms. Arikawa Michiko and Ms. Shitoto Anna  and Mr. Shinya Irie	Chief, Sustainability Management Project Corporate Strategy Division Chief, Procurement Compliance Section 1, Compliance Operation Department  BHR Planning Section, Social Sustainability Department
Nikko Denki Tsushin Co. Ltd. (Aobadai, Aoba-Ku)	Mr. Kazuo Yamanaka with Mr. Shigeo Ishihara and Mr. Shinichi Eto  and Ms. Yuu Takahashi	President  Director, General Affairs Division  Head of Business Promotion Office, General Affairs Division  General Affairs Division
Motomura Confectionary (Saga Prefecture)	Mr. Makoto Sakaguchi	Executive Vice President and Director
BHR Sharoshi (adviser, Motomura Confectionery)	Ms. Emi Nakashima	Deputy Director, Himawari Labour Management Support Office / Representative Director, Himawari Social Insurance and Labor Consultant Office Co. Ltd.
Data Service Co. Ltd.	Mr. Tetsuya Sakamoto with Mr. Tomomi Nakamoto	President & CEO  Director, Administration Department

**COUNTRY: LAO PDR**

ORGANIZATION	NAME	DESIGNATION
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Mr. Thipphasone Soukathammavong	DDG of Department of Planning and International Cooperation (DPIC)
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Ms. Linlee Manivong	Technical officer, DPIC
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Mr. Somchit Aminthalath	Director of Labour Inspection Division, Department of Labour Management
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Ms. Nouk Phoxay	Technical officer, Labour Inspection Division, Department of Labour Management
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Mr. Moukda Sengvilay	Director of Labour management Division, Department of Labour Management
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Mr. Phitsana Xayasanh,	Technical Official, Department of Labour Management
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)	Mr. Soukthixay Sihaphon	Technical Officer of OSH Centre, Department of Labour Management

ORGANIZATION	NAME	DESIGNATION
Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) / SS International Sole Co. Ltd	Mr. Viboon Sithimolada	Board of Director Member; also RBC and ESG facilitator (business development service provider)
Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI)	Ms. Daovading Phirasayphithak,	Deputy Secretary General
Lao Federation of Trade Union (LFTU)	Ms. Phonekeo Souvannaphoum	Head of International Relations Division; Cabinet office
Lao Federation of Trade Union (LFTU)	Mr. Viengthanin Phompadith	Technical officer, International Relations Division; Cabinet office
Lao Federation of Trade Union (LFTU)	Ms. Khamphuvieng	Head of worker training division, Department of Propaganda
Lao Federation of Trade Union (LFTU)	Ms. Phonethida Phanthavong	Technical Officer, Department of Propaganda
Ministry of Industry and Commerce	Ms. Nitida Phongsavath	Deputy Director of National Implementation Unit, Permanent Secretary Office
Enterprise & Development Consultants Co., Ltd. - RBC and ESG facilitator (business development service provider)	Mr. Thone Boungvatthana	Managing Partner and Consultant

## COUNTRY: MALAYSIA

ORGANIZATION	NAME	DESIGNATION
Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR)	Ms. Emyzai binti Zainuddin with team of key officials: Mr. Safri bin Mohd Sarip Ms. Marina Ms. Nadia Farhana Binti Radzi Mr. Anwar Firdaus Ismail	Senior Assistant Secretary, International Division Assistant Secretary, Policy Divsn.  Assistant Secretary, International Division
Legal Affairs Division (BHEUU), Prime Minister's Department	Mr. Kevin Geh with Md Shahredza Ridhwan	Director (Policy and Research)  Administrative Officer (Policy and Research)
Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF)	Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan with Ms. Goh Lea Koon	Advisor  Principal Consultant
Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC)	Mr. Kamarul Baharin bin Mansor with Ms. Rose Hamzah	Secretary General  PA to the Secretary General
Malaysian Rubber Council (MRC)	Ms. Suzanna Mohamed Dahan with Ms. Nur Amirah Abdul Rahman and Ms. Syazwan Najmi	Deputy Director, Sustainability  Sr. Executive, Sustainability Assistant Director, Sustainability
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM)	Dr. Md. Zulfadli Rozali	Head of Department Virtual Learning Development Centre for Virtual Learning (CVL)

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>
		Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM)
Japanese Chamber of Trade and Industry in Malaysia (JACTIM)	Mr. Kazuya Kitae With Ms. Shoko Meguro	Chief Coordination Officer  Secretariat
Asahi Kosei Bhd.	Mr. Khairi Habibullah with Ms. Nadia Wani	Officer, Admin & Hum. Resources  Officer, Admin & Hum. Resources
WASCO Energy Bhd.	Mr. Chuen Seng Teoh	Head Sustainability
Warisan TC	Ms. Ong Yin Ee	Head Sustainability
Hino Motors Sales (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.	Ms. Lee Lai Peng with Ms. Lynda Lim And Mr. Hadi Hashim	Dy. Gen. Mgr. (Human Resource)  Asst. Manager PR & Marketing Manager Admin, General Affairs
Pharmaniaga Berhad	Ms. Fazleena Jasin, With Ms. Nurul Huda Zainuddin	Head Sustainability  Principal Assistant Director, Sustainability
QSR Brands (M) Holdings	Ms. Molly Chong Xiao En	Head Sustainability

**ANNEX – 9: BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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International Labour Organization (2021a) *Checklist 4.2 : Preparing the Evaluation Report*. Geneva. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms\\_746808.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf).

International Labour Organization (2021b) *Checklist 4.8 : Writing the Inception Report*. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms\\_746817.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746817.pdf).

International Labour Organization (2021c) *Checklist 4.9 : Rating The Quality Of An Evaluation Report*. Geneva. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms\\_746818.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746818.pdf).

## **ANNEX – 10: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Background and purpose**

The ILO project “Building Responsible Value Chains in Asia – Phase II” builds on Phase I to advance responsible business conduct (RBC) and decent work in supply chains. Funded by Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and guided by the ILO MNE Declaration, it strengthens enterprise compliance with labour standards and enhances the capacity of governments, employers, and workers’ organizations to foster sustainable business practices. Phase II (April 2024–March 2026) expands to India, Lao PDR, and Malaysia, continuing in Japan, with a focus on manufacturing sectors, inclusive dialogue, peer learning, and tailored training for SMEs.

The project targets two outcomes: improving enterprise compliance and strengthening tripartite collaboration. Its Theory of Change emphasizes three pathways: empowering enterprises to integrate RBC and HRDD, building constituent capacity for dialogue, and supporting policy development to institutionalize RBC principles. Through partnerships with JETRO, JILAF, and alignment with ILO Decent Work Country Programmes, over 5,000 participants have been trained, and national strategies advanced. Next steps include scaling enterprise engagement, finalizing roadmaps, expanding e- learning, and deepening collaboration with academia and industry.

The final independent evaluation will assess relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact, providing evidence-based insights on achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. It will inform future programming by the ILO and METI, document good practices, ensure compliance with ILO evaluation policy, and contribute to regional learning and knowledge sharing for sustainable supply chains.

### **Scope of work**

The evaluation will cover the entire Phase II period (April 2024–March 2026) and assess activities in India, Japan, Lao PDR, and Malaysia. It will review the project’s design, implementation, and results against its objectives, outcomes, and outputs as defined in the project document and logical framework. The evaluation will also examine contributions to SDG 8 targets (8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8), national development plans, UNSDCF, P&B, DWCP, and relevant CPOs, as well as cross-cutting issues such as ILO’s normative mandate, tripartism, gender equality, non-discrimination, and the UN principle of leaving no one behind.

Scheduled to start in November 2025 and conclude by 20 March 2026, the evaluation will adhere to the ILO Evaluation Framework and Strategy, Policy Guidelines for Evaluation, and UNEG Principles. Recommendations must be evidence-based, linked to findings, and provide actionable guidance for stakeholders. Gender equality and non-discrimination will be integrated throughout the process in line with EVAL guidance note 4.5 to ensure inclusive stakeholder participation.

### **Detailed tasks**

The international consultant will lead the overall evaluation process, including the design of the methodology, coordination, and report writing, and will conduct fieldwork and stakeholder consultations in India and Malaysia. He/she will work closely with two national consultants; one based in Lao PDR and one in Japan. Interpretation support will be arranged where necessary to facilitate effective engagement with stakeholders who may not be fluent in English. The international consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Responsible for all evaluation deliverables.

- Lead the evaluation process and provide overall guidance, including the development of evaluation instruments for data collection at the country level.
- Coordinate closely with the evaluation manager, project team, and stakeholders throughout the evaluation.
- Conduct a desk review of all relevant documents and undertake field missions to meet key stakeholders.
- Prepare the inception report (including methodological details) and deliver the draft and final report within agreed deadlines and in line with ILO and international standards.
- Carry out fieldwork in India and Malaysia and organize a stakeholder workshop at the end of the mission.
- Lead debriefings with key stakeholders to present main findings and recommendations.

### Expected deliverables

Output	Timeframe
1. Inception Report Prepare an inception report detailing refined evaluation questions, methodology, data collection tools, work plan, and integration of gender equality, informed by a desk review and initial consultations.	20 Dec 2025
2. Stakeholder Consultations and Preliminary Findings Conduct interviews, focus groups, and a consultation workshop to collect data and validate preliminary findings with stakeholders in all target countries.	8 Feb 2026
3. Draft Evaluation Report Develop a draft report including methodology, findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations, based on evidence from data collection and consultations.	Feb 25 2026
4. Final Evaluation Report Submit a final report incorporating stakeholder feedback, meeting ILO quality standards, and including all required annexes and documentation.	20 Mar 2026
5. Summary Outputs Provide a concise summary of the final report and a PowerPoint presentation to communicate key findings and recommendations to stakeholders.	20 Mar 2026

### Reporting arrangements

The international lead evaluator who will report to the evaluation manager. The international evaluator will lead the evaluation, ensuring the delivery of all evaluation deliverables on agreed deadlines.

### Detailed qualifications, experience and skills required

The required qualification of the international evaluator:

- Advanced university degree preferably in economics, business management, social science or related qualifications.
- At least 10 years professional experience, including with ILO, UN or similar development corporation projects
- Extensive international experience in the fields of project formulation, execution, and evaluation

- Recent experience with UN results-based management monitoring and evaluation methodologies
- Understanding of the development context in the Asia-Pacific region, together with associated regional work experience
- Familiarity and experience in the areas of decent work, responsible business, and global supply chains.
- Previous involvement and understanding of ILO procedures is an advantage
- Excellent verbal (communication, interview) and drafting/report writing skills (in English).
- Demonstrated ability to lead and work in group and deliver quality results within strict deadlines.

### Indicators for evaluation of outputs

Output	Indicator for evaluation of outputs	Timing
Submission of inception report by Lead evaluator	Timing, quality of work	20 Dec 2025
Conduct field visits and data collection in selected project sites	Timing	8 Feb 2026
Prepare and submit first draft report	Timing, quality of work	Feb 25 2026
Address comments from stakeholders and finalise the report	Timing, quality of work	10 Mar 2026
Conduct validation workshop to collect feedbacks from stakeholders	Timing, joint facilitation role during the stakeholders' validation workshop	16 Mar 2026
Submission of final evaluation report that incorporates feedback/address comments from stakeholders by Lead evaluator	Timing, quality of work	20 Mar 2026

### Payment terms

- First payment of 20% upon receipt of the inception report to the satisfaction of ILO Country Office.
- Second payment of 30% upon receipt of the draft evaluation report to the satisfaction of ILO Country Office together with the travel costs as per ILO Travel policy.
- Third payment of 50% upon receipt of the final evaluation report and comments log table to the satisfaction of ILO Country Office.
- The daily fee will be based on the ILO fee range table in USD, converted to local currency using the United Nations Operational Rate of Exchange effective at the time of establishing the contract.

### Travel arrangements (if applicable)

The international consultant will lead the overall evaluation process and will conduct fieldwork and stakeholder consultations in India, Japan, and Malaysia.